ENVIRONMENTAL HUMANITIES IN PRACTICE

Experimenting with Water-Focused Participatory Research Methods

Toward New Forms of Question Asking in a Time of Socio-ecological Upheaval

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Abstract Recent decades have seen a transformation in how water and human-water interrelations are conceptualized in the environmental humanities and social sciences. Such adaptation of theory has been tied to an interest in developing transdisciplinary water research methodologies, particularly in projects focused on practical outcomes. Nonetheless, this article's authors note an incongruence in how such advances in theory are often not actually applied in practice. Going a small way toward addressing this, the authors argue that there is space for experimenting with more-than-human participatory research praxes to intentionally generate previously imponderable questions. This article describes the authors' experiences in Aarhus, Denmark, of combining "floating seminar" and arts-based methods, including body maps and public engagement. Through these experiences with passersby-who-became-participants, and with the nonhuman world, the authors' attentions were drawn to unexpected issues and questions centered on human-water relationships. Here, they reflect on emerging methodologies, and invite curious others to join them in developing them further.

Keywords Anthropocene, arts-based methods, body maps, more-than-human, questions

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Introduction

Recent decades have seen transformations in the ways water and human-water interrelations are conceptualized. Instead of the hydrological cycle, Erik Swyngedouw has, for example, proposed the "hydro-social cycle," reflecting the co-generation of water and human society—a position supported by ample research.[1] Others have expanded the concept of water itself—as being, as sensuous, as product—often echoing Indigenous knowledges.[2]

This work has been tied to an interest in developing transdisciplinary water research methodologies.[3] Moving beyond disciplinarity holds great potential because it echoes the hydro-social cycle itself which seeps between natural-cultural domains of existence that many disciplines have formally treated as separate. While they might otherwise strongly disagree, everyone, from the UN to anthropologists and Indigenous scholars agree that boundary-crossing visions and research practices will be necessary to address water-related problems of the Anthropocene.[4]

However, literature and our experiences working in water management projects suggest that such advancements in theory are often not applied in practice.[5] For example, water monitoring devices (WMDs) installed during a recent drought in Cape Town, South Africa, set water limits assuming four to six person households.[6] While applicable to many households, it was not in the lower-income homes where many WMDs were installed. Even where only four people sleep, we learned that many more rely on taps and water services in each household.[7] Similarly, areas set aside for the city's stormwater management are imagined by authorities to be human-free zones even while children play there and others use them as shortcuts. In practice, social-ecological complexities, knowledges and layers of meaning are often reduced to colorful add-ons to technocratic solutions that focus on "too much, too little, too dirty" water.[8]

One reason that technocratic fixes are relied upon is time, with municipal budgets and grants often wanting outputs in two- or three-year cycles. Of course, long-term

1. Swyngedouw, "Political Economy and Political Ecology"; Wagner, *Social Life of Water*; Linton, *What Is Water?*

2. See Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*; Yates, Harris, and Wilson, "Multiple Ontologies of Water"; Watts, "Growling Ontologies"; Todd, "Indigenous Feminist's Take."

3. Kelly et al., *Rivers of the Anthropocene*, 170.

4. See, e.g., United Nations, *Climate Change and Water*; IPCC, *Climate Change and Land*; Bang, Marin, and Medin, "If Indigenous People Stand with the Sciences." We do recognize that "Anthropocene" is a contested term (see, e.g., Moore, "On the Nature and Origins"; Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene") but lack the space to engage further.

5. See, e.g., Grey and Kuokkanen, "Indigenous Governance of Cultural Heritage"; Strang, "Integrating the Social and Natural Sciences."

6. We learned this through interactions and workshops associated with a project that has not yet produced published outputs.

7. For more on WMDs, see Enqvist et al., "Informality and Water Justice."

8. See, e.g., Kuusisto, "Liikaa, Likaista, Liian Vähän," 36.

ethnography can help surface watery intricacies of life, identifying and refining research questions in response to unfolding realities on the ground. Some transdisciplinary projects aim for this slow science ideal—with practical ends in mind, to bring engineering, ecology, and humanities disciplines into patient conversation.[9] As often as not though, lack of time and or funds make this an impossible-to-reach ideal, leading to frustrations and disappointments for researchers and concerned communities alike.[10]

Where time and/or funding is pressed in this way, participatory research methodologies perhaps offer a useful halfway house of sorts. While there may be no substitute for long-term engagement, they do at least allow for the speedier development of initial, coproduced questions attuned to people's perspectives and concerns.[11] Nevertheless, we note with Michelle Bastian and coauthors the need for more attention to the more-than-human in participatory research methods.[12] Contributing to this emerging body of crossover literature,[13] we suggest how participatory research methods might be used to expand our research sensitivities to water and its socio-ecological relationships. How do we expand our research methods and fields of attention to more effectively take in the unexpected, so that we might formulate different kinds of questions that might receive different kinds of answers?[14]

What Is a Question?

For philosopher Lani Watson, "a question is an information seeking act," not necessarily involving a linguistic dimension.[15] Watson offers the example of someone looking up and down an unfamiliar road before crossing. A simple information-seeking act. A question.

Taking up Watson's perspective, we suggest that one way to elicit new kinds of questions is to experiment with less directed ways of information seeking, in registers that attempt to decenter the linguistic and therefore, potentially, the human. To move in this direction, we combined a "floating seminar" with body mapping exercises in public spaces. Our approach is somewhat different to those described by others[16] in that we

9. Stengers, *Another Science Is Possible*; Fent et al., "Confronting the Climate Crisis." The DANIDA-funded Pathways to Water Resilient South African Cities project, with which one of us works, uses local ecological knowledge to develop plans, including considering habitats for toads and birds within existing stormwater management infrastructures. See "Pathways to Water Resilient South African Cities (PaWS)," Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen, https://ign.ku.dk/english/paws/ (accessed November 9, 2023).

10. Also raised in Cundill, Roux, and Parker, "Nurturing Communities of Practice." See also Workman et al., "Global Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Approaches."

11. McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research*.

12. Bastian et al., *Participatory Research in More-than-Human Worlds*.

13. See, e.g., Roberts and Phillips, *Water, Creativity, and Meaning*.

14. To paraphrase Stengers and Despret, *Women Who Make a Fuss*, 85.

15. Watson, "What Is a Question."

16. E.g., Bastian et al., *Participatory Research in More-than-Human Worlds*; Roberts and Philips, *Water, Creativity, and Meaning*.

consciously worked to keep our methodologies as open as possible, with no particular research question, nor issue in mind, beyond water and people in Aarhus. The result, we suggest, is one possible experimental approach that, in a short amount of time, can generate questions that might not have otherwise been thought of. This is a bit like casting a research net in the way that a widely disseminated questionnaire might, but with the ability to draw in more-than-human worlds in ways that questionnaires cannot.

Floating Seminars

The traditional academic seminar has many strengths, including the extended exchange of ideas on a shared matter of concern. Typically, a group of academics sit behind desks in a room in which a chaired discussion expands on issues raised through a PowerPoint presentation. This has limitations. In such a setup, "we meet as disembodied intelligences," as Shepherd points out, "as eyes that see, as mouths that speak; we speak one of the imperial ("global") languages. . . . [Our] remarkably disembodied [principle forms of academic engagement] reinforce a set of distinctions: mind versus body, reason versus emotion and imagination, thinking versus feeling."[17] Evoking Descartes, the phrase "disembodied intelligences" speaks to entire histories in the philosophy of knowledge and the disciplining methods and institutions that play a key role in colonial modernity. Shepherd's Walking Seminar seeks to unsettle some of these distinctions, and limitations, as one way toward cultivating knowledge-making practices that might help establish a "more ethical ecology."[18] By walking together for an extended distance through a landscape, a group interested in co-learning engage each other and the world around them in qualitatively different ways to the "white box" of the seminar room.[19] Physically negotiating social-ecological realities requires a practical correspondence with the undulations of path and place. Sights, sounds, and smells mingle with actively engaged bodies in a quite different context for thought, which encourages different kinds of questions, insights, and interventions.

In keeping with the thought and spirit of walking seminars, we piloted a "floating seminar" on the Aarhus Å (stream) and Brabrand Sø (lake). This involved inviting eight academics and nonacademics to spend a day paddling canoes, learning, and discussing experiences. We expressly did not limit our invitees to any particular academic background, inviting whomever we thought might be interested in taking part, with a broad interest in the urban ecologies of Aarhus. We also did not orient the seminar toward any research question beyond a general interest in the Aarhus Å and what ideas and questions might arise through our collective and individual embodied engagement with it.

Before we got into our canoes, participants prompted the potential beginnings of water-related conceptual and speculative novelty. Including ourselves, eight floating

17. Shepherd, Ernsten, and Visser, *Walking Seminar*, 11.

18. Trisos, Auerbach, and Katti, "Decoloniality and Anti-oppressive Practices," 1205.

19. Shepherd, Ernsten, and Visser, *Walking Seminar*, 11. See also similar walking methodologies—e.g., Springgay and Truman, *Walking Methodologies*.

seminar neophytes met at *Folkestedet* (The People's Place), a community center next to Aarhus Å. Over coffee, we introduced ourselves and our interests—professional and otherwise—discovering significantly more than eight. We were three anthropologists (Participant 1, Cohen, Abrams), a public health expert (Abrams), two neuroscientists (Participant 2, Participant 3), two surfers (Participant 3 and Abrams), a geographer (Participant 4), two heritage studies specialists (Participant 4 and Høybye), a species ambassador (Participant 5), a social worker (Høybye), a scholar songwriter (Høybye), and a material culture educator (Participant 5).

We spoke of water. Participant 2 intrigued us with ideas in neuroscience that conceive of the brain—metaphorically and physically—as a riverine network.[20] Høybye mentioned how water is the first "thing" we know laying in the womb. Every participant added perspectives and experiences that highlighted diverse ways of engaging, not only with water, but with the idea of water.

Launching on the water (fig. 1) immediately brought a sense of calm to many participants, while the intimacy of paddling two per canoe allowed for extended conversations in the environments we were moving through. The experience would bring attention to the sensory affordances, perspectives, and relations that had until that point remained hidden—a small movement toward water and its modes of being and becoming playing an active role in question-generating processes.

In many cases, our participants did not even know that they did not know about such things—for example, the shifting river smells, sights, and sounds; or observing how at water level, banks of reeds obscure the river from the city it flows through and is ecologically entangled with, and vice versa. As the lives of urban riverine species came surprisingly into view, assemblages that were new to us grabbed our attention. A tangle of spider webs spanning the underside of a road-bridge sparked discussion among a number of paddling pairs, a lifeworld we had not imagined to be part of the Aarhus Å. Another surprised pair found themselves meters from two large bulls, watching them through the reeds. Participant 4 had never gotten so close to a moorhen. "Normally they scram as soon as you approach, but not this one, in its own place."

Water Maps and Body Mapping

As part of our effort to develop this method in collaborative ways, we built collaborative and reflective elements into our engagements, intentionally inviting participants to contribute. Thus, directly after the seminar, we prepared and ate a meal together and reflected slowly on how to improve and scale-up future floating seminars. The following day, we invited wider publics to take part and contribute.

To do this, we held an arts-based engagement along a public path between Aarhus Å and Folkestedet, allowing us to draw the attention of passersby. At the center of the engagement was mapping; examples of a body map and water map were offered

20. For example, Travis, *Your Brain Is a River*.

Figure 1. Launching on the water. Photograph by Amber Abrams.

alongside the opportunity to make their own.[21] One way of body mapping involves people creating a life-size representation of their body and drawing or writing in experiences and relationships that participants associate with their bodies.[22] Creating images can visualize experiences that are not easily conveyed verbally, and body mapping can be an effective tool for eliciting unseen or forgotten relationships and memories.[23] In addition, the perceived informality of drawing and painting can subvert expectations of research activities, potentially helping to avoid response bias.[24] Body mapping thus seemed a good fit for our aim of catching *that which we did not know we did not know* about water and people in Aarhus, and beginning to formulate questions we did not know to ask.

We were interested to see how open-ended prompts that asked people to "draw your own water map" or "water-focused body map" might unfold. We were thinking with Ingold that the "immersion of the organism-person in an environment [is an] inescapable condition of existence" and that such drawings should be understood not only as an outward representation of an inward reflective process but also as a continuation, in a different mode, of embodied *enskillment* processes through which we become attuned to the places we live with.[25] Understood in this way, such maps, we envisioned, not only might depict known relations and experiences but also could precipitate new relations and awareness of relations previously not considered. In this sense, we felt it worth exploring how embodied relations to water were mapped or drawn by those experiencing them, in whatever form that might take, when prompted to reflect on water and their body together through drawing.

Initially, this mapping was influenced by our work histories exploring health and well-being, and by the notion that maps are useful in imagining waterworlds and in thinking through relations around and of water.[26] Since this pilot, we have read Chen's work on "mapping situated waters," which encourages "thinking with watery places."[27] Chen's efforts in mapping as "a set of actions" that can "gather, present, and articulate imagined understandings of place" and work to unpack "an implicit or explicit set of relationships among . . . waterways, populations of the human and more-than-human, and other lively agents" align with our efforts to layer ways of asking participants to think with and through water and bodies.[28]

21. Abrams has been developing this mapping activity in classrooms and other research fora, starting with a brief theoretical discussion of social relations around water alongside time for individual "map" making.

22. Skop, "Art of Body Mapping."

23. See Cornwall, "Body Mapping in Health RRA/PRA"; Christensen and James, *Research with Children*, 160. See also Devine, "Moon, the Stars, and a Scar."

24. Christensen and James, *Research with Children*.

25. Ingold, *Perception of the Environment*, 153; Ingold, "Ways of Mind-Walking"; Ingold, *Being Alive*, 58.

26. Hastrup and Rubow, *Living with Environmental Change*; Krause and Strang, "Thinking Relationships through Water."

27. Chen, "Mapping Waters," 274, 292.

28. Chen, "Mapping Waters," 274, 279.

We began the day with Abrams, Cohen, and Høybye creating our own body maps in front of sizeable, handmade signs that read (in English and Danish) "What does water mean to you?" We also invited floating seminar participants to create body maps in this public space. Participant 5 and Participant 3 (among others) kindly obliged. We spent the day experimenting with these methods to see what might come from such an open and public display of our body mapping process. Two things became apparent. First, body mapping and the floating seminar format complemented one another well in helping seminar participants elucidate ideas about and relationships with water. This is reflected in Participant 3's and Participant 5's body maps and associated interviews we conducted in the presence of their maps (see figures 2 and 3). Second, the public creation of body maps effectively drew people in, stimulating conversations and feelings about water.

> You've got me thinking about the water I interact with on a daily basis. . . . [*pointing to rain clouds*] The quality of the water is so different. The clean and filtered water of the shower just seems to glide off and clean your skin, whereas the rain water, it feels stickier and like thick with something. . . . [*pointing to the showerhead*] It cleans your skin, but if you are out in the rain, it seems to clean your mind a bit more, so it's these different types of water, and the way it interacts differently with your body and the different ways we can use it. . . . It's something we interact with every day. It's so automatic, and yesterday when I got off the river from canoeing, I went and had a drink, which was a completely different experience. Then I took a shower and my mind was racing with all the things we had spoken about, and just how paying attention to something can completely change the experience of it, and the way you interact with it, and the way you value it especially. (Participant 3, 2019)

> [The water], I think I experienced it through the paddle. The paddle was an extension of my body, like it was also a tool. . . . I felt how the water was pushing or I was pushing against the water, but I felt as well, as though it was soft somehow. It was strong but it was soft. And the slowliness of the movement was doing something with the way I felt and was breathing, so I really slowed down. . . . Then when we came back, the water was so still that we could see the reflection of the bridge, the construction in the water and it felt like everything was one piece of concrete. . . . There were the spiders and then there were the swallows having a nest there with their young. But over there was not that many living beings in there, so . . . this contrast was very strong for me. (Participant 5, 2019)

Our approach offered glimpses into the benefits of combining floating seminars with, for example, body mapping methods as participants depicted the more-than-human worlds of Aarhus Å and surrounds. Through this process, participants literally drew themselves into entanglements that, in many instances, they previously had not considered—including with spiders, swallows, different affective affordances of the Å's water, and water more generally. Along with reflections on hard, human, concrete

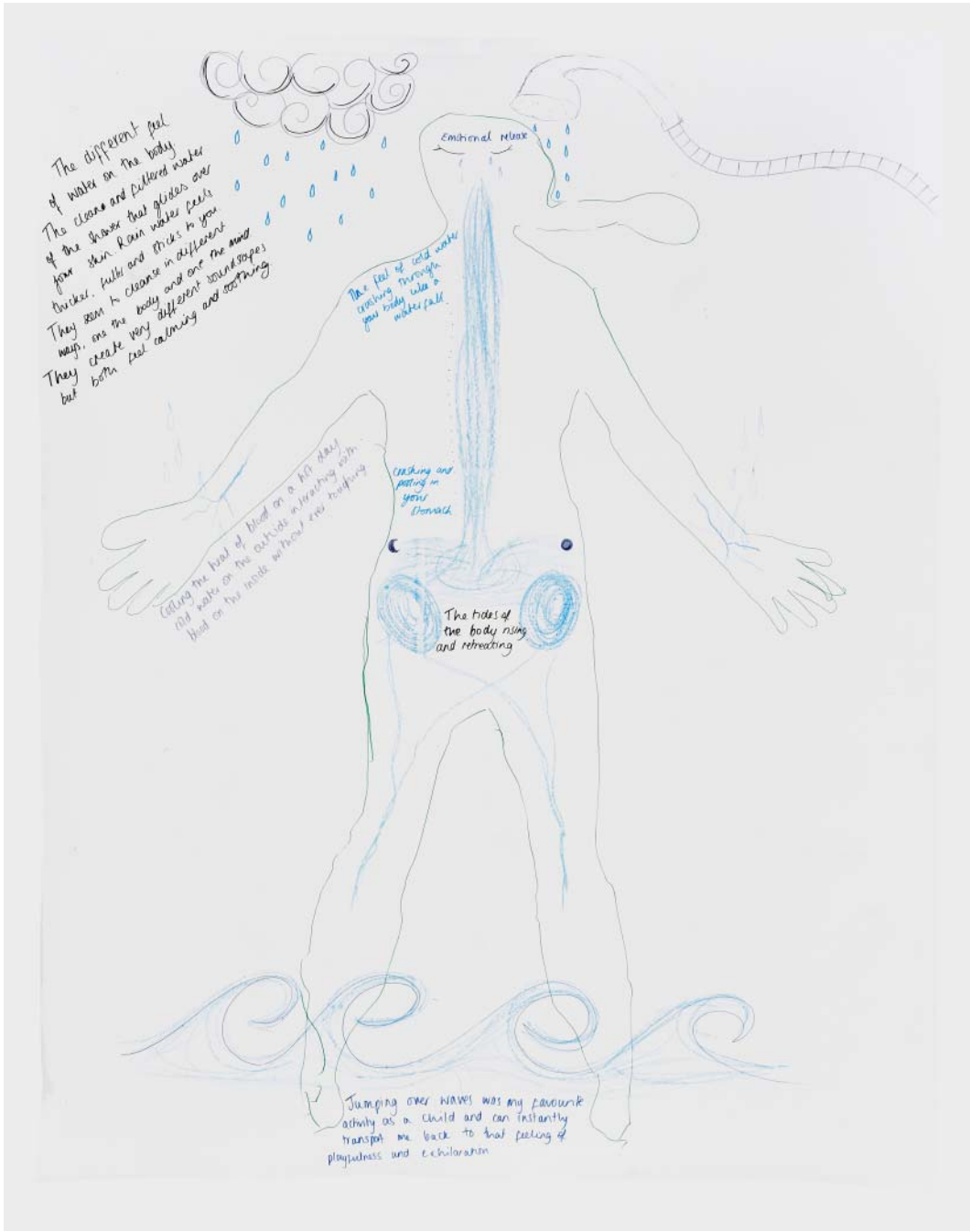

Figure 2. Participant 3's body map. Photograph by Hans-Henrik Hoeg.

infrastructure imposed into the natural world, participants articulated a "set of relationships among landscapes, waterways, human and more-than-human populations, and other lively agents" through these maps.[29] We find complementarity between our

29. Chen, "Mapping Waters," 279.

Figure 3. Participant 5's body map. Photograph by Hans-Henrik Hoeg.

efforts and Astrida Neimanis's notion of "embodying water," where "thinking is also an embodied act; concepts are also embodied. We understand them because our bodies as finely attuned sensory apparatuses live them, in one way or another."[30] The process of being on the water, the skills of navigating new types of balance and movement required in paddling, we suggest, contributed to different ways of thinking and relating.

An unexpected outcome of our engagement was learning that mapping in public spurred interest (see fig. 4) and discussion.[31] As a Danish speaker, Høybye was best

30. Neimanis, *Bodies of Water*, 41.

31. On emplacement, see Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*.

Figure 4. Passersby approaching Høybye making his body map. Photograph by Joshua B. Cohen.

placed to engage with the public intrigued by what we were doing, as reflected in some of the following encounters.

Drawing People In

Passersby generously shared water memories and experiences. An elderly woman, a local resident since childhood, spoke of growing up and sharing a bathtub of cold water with her siblings. "It was worst in the winter, but later I became a *vinterbader*'" (literally, winter bather), suggesting, perhaps, that these early chilly encounters had prepared her for the enjoyment of cold water in adult life. She described this practice as "invigorating."

Another woman explained that "it's easier to express through the arts because it is about feelings." Then she commented on musical elements in my body map. I explained that they referred to songs and song creation, which sparked her interest because she was a musician. She found her colleagues and before long there was a jam session going on around the body map, my visitors playing ukulele and singing while I played kazoo. Cohen and Abrams joined in singing as they completed their body maps.

These experiences helped me realize the potential of body maps and other arts-informed projects as facilitating transformative spaces for elicitation. While direct involvement in the creation of body maps lends obvious qualities as outlined by floating seminar participants above, for the people-who-pass-by and become drawn into the ongoing activity of someone working on a body map, there is also potential for the elicitation of stories and lived experiences. While creating my body map, the surrounding world reacted to my "inward" sketching with everything from deep, personal memories to the spontaneous sharing of live music. Had I instead handed questionnaires to people asking how water made them feel, the same stories might not have emerged, and certainly less opportunity for shared songs would have arisen.

Reflecting on Our Watery Experiment

Being on the water and learning and cocreating in situ opened new spaces for thinking. Theoretically, we aligned with Neimanis in asking participants to engage with the tacit experience of being on water and asking our bodies to become "attuned" to the sensory needs of, for example, navigating balance.[32] We wagered that being on water would spark an understanding of the interrelations that such waterscapes necessarily demand; that more-than-human relations would necessarily arise in the interactions with watery spaces; that being on the water accesses perspectives we might not otherwise have been attuned to.

Because the group was briefed that this was a methodological exploration, we had already primed participants to engage in watery thinking and not just watery tourism. Our participants' words reveal some of the interesting thinking that emerged:

32. Neimanis, *Doing Sensory Ethnography*.

> Paddling the river is like going down a tube—floating seminars spark very different insights, sensations, thoughts, and questions than walking or cycling seminars might. (Participant 4)
>
> The water reeds hide the river from the world and the world from the river. You hear signs of the wider world as you paddle, but rarely see them. (Participant 1)
>
> I like the world being not for me—it's for the birds or other animals—they don't need a dock; the reeds offer them places to nest and hide. (Participant 2)

These comments highlight how new ways of thinking may have emerged as participants navigated new spaces and embodied experiences. We brought our learning and thinking space to the water when we left the seminar room in order to feel with our bodies the watery landscapes, and, because it was an open-ended seminar, we also co-created meaning with other participants as we felt inspired by such poignant and visceral expressions.[33] The ethic behind this was to put our bodies where our minds spend their time and focus, hoping that through embodied processes, different ways of thinking might emerge.

Our participants reflect on the embodied experience in unexpected ways—for example, raising the difficulty of finding comfort in their bodies. A new sense of balance was required, and the physical exertion was "different," encouraging the use of muscles not often called upon. One participant reflected on paddling as more accessible than a walking process, particularly for someone who might be wheelchair-bound.[34] Being on the water changed the angle from which people were seeing; our participants raised the eye-opening perspective of being close to the water-land interface; of noting the pollen collecting on the water surface; of watching the water "kissing" the banks and tree roots, rather than branches, as another participant suggested.

Thinking through what might be missed or who may be left out—this was speculative experimentation, and we acknowledge multiple limitations. We cannot, for example, fathom how other species experienced our presence. Yet we can highlight that being on the water put us in closer contact with some (spiders, ducks, moorhens, waterfowl, dragonflies, cows) and gave us different perspectives on others (roots meeting water; being part of the watery flow) outside our everyday live. Particularly interesting was the repeated theme of seeing things from a new angle as eye-levels changed, and with it, what people attended to in the watery space.

Experimenting with mapping as a method was informed by notions of waterworlds and social relations around water.[35] Subsequently we have engaged with Chen's

33. Shepherd, Ernsten and Visser, *Walking Seminar*.

34. We acknowledge that watersports are more accessible to those with economic resources, and thus a floating seminar might be seen as exclusionary; both iterations, in Aarhus and the planned Cape Town one, were or would have been free.

35. Hastrup and Rubow, *Living with Environmental Change*; Krause and Strang, "Thinking Relationships through Water."

writing on mapping which suggests that mapmaking can be a decolonial process that highlights how water is a "lively being" while unpacking "relations of watery community rich with entangled forms of life."[36] Since our process had participants paddle first, and because we wanted to attend to the physicality of paddling—knowing that among the diversity of participants, for some, paddling was exhausting—we decided that a leisurely reflection process on the paddling day was more appropriate than regimented feedback. In line with the hopes that the paddling would spark different ways of thinking, we suggested drawing/mapping the next day specifically because it was a creative process, outside of a seminar room, in company with others, that might disrupt expectations of research, feedback or even reflection. We chose mapping in the spirit of our continued efforts to expand ourselves outside of the comfort of our research roles.

Having activated bodies with paddling, we thought mapping might be a useful place to reflect on what the paddling brought forth—and so we prompted this thinking alongside other prompts with mapmakers. We imagined that layering maps and paddling activities would provide rich data—it did, but just as illuminating was the reaction of passersby to our mapping. Here, in highlighting the generative nature of this open mapping—the ways in which it expanded thinking, and topics for questions in the future—brings us back to our initial discussions of question generation.

Conclusion: On Questions and Responsive Methodologies

In many ways, the engagements described above can be read as one big "information seeking" event. Less directed than Watson's example of looking for traffic, ours was more of a general wondering: "What and who is out there?" More accurately, perhaps, the engagements described here can be understood as a myriad of more-or-less open questions, mostly posed nonlinguistically, through which certain contours of socio-ecologies, including perspectives and conceptual framings, begin to take form.

Bringing together an eclectic group of interested individuals with a loosely defined plan, and tracing what kinds of water-related insights emerge, is a question. Spending time on the river together, paying sensory attention to what emerges, is a question—and one that may create new approaches to water, or even research itself. Trying out a stroke with our paddles to test the resistance of water is a question, not just for our bodies. "What does water mean to you?" is a question. Trying different colors and forms in a body map to discover what might best express memories and experiences is a question, as is the act of doing this in the process of recalling further memories and connections. Undertaking such activities in a public space, and awaiting responses, is a question. These questions that beget questions, or ways of engaging that allow us to see into spaces that we didn't even know existed, can prize open spaces for new ways of

36. Chen, *Mapping Waters*, 294.

thinking; it is with this sense that we suggest these layered (and embodied) methods might create new approaches to water.

It would do a disservice to the Aarhus Å to suggest that it—and the insects, arthropods, ungulates, birds, and plants who live with it—were equal participants in posing and answering these questions. They surely were not. On the other hand, the floating seminar format did allow the movement and presence of these to impinge on our experiences and reflections. The expressive possibilities of body- and waterworld mapping meant that we were able to reflect on these in registers not limited to the verbal. With our theoretical leanings toward new materialisms, we might prefer to say that each of our questions foregrounded previously undiscerned relations—rather than the somewhat cognitive and disembodied figure of information per se.[37]

Whatever the conceptual and terminological framing, we recognize that it would be unlikely for such a pilot to garner entirely new kinds of research questions. Nevertheless, our experimental take on questioning did surface a notable dearth of work in certain areas. For example, on how shared experiences afloat in Danish water bodies might be calming and or cultivate attachments to or concern for those water bodies. On how nonhumans' social lives in Denmark interrelate with human recreational activities in places nonhumans live. On the ways in which people in Denmark experience its varying waters—tap water, rainwater, river water, and how this might relate to issues of health, well-being, and ecological belonging.

These kinds of methods suggest possibilities toward fresh ways of asking questions of the socio-ecologies we are concerned with. In this, we see ways toward finding research questions that are attuned to the natural-cultural waters of this specific context of Aarhus, Denmark, and that are potentially less captured by existing discourse, academic trends, and funding concerns. Responsive methodologies such as these become increasingly important as unexpected social-ecological events and entanglements outside of established frames of epistemological and cultural reference emerge and proliferate.

Experimental work, like layering methods to try to surface new questions, is by definition imperfect, an initial idea in pursuit of improved iterations. We hope the ideas presented here might provoke thought, argument, contestation, and experimentation with comparable approaches. In a spirit of collaboration, we would be excited to hear from anyone taking up or evolving the approaches presented here.

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37. Coole and Frost, *New Materialisms*.

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MARTIN HØYBYE has released his own albums as well as contributed to many recordings by other artists internationally. His songwriting tends to revolve around social and existential issues, and recurring themes are community, time, interhuman connection, and identity in a seemingly disjointed world. On June 14, 2023, Martin successfully defended a PhD thesis in which he explored personal and collaborative songwriting to engage with questions of going through "Anthropocene moments."

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