Socio-Materiality as Phenomenon:
Growing Transition Culture

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1. Methodological Dimensions of *Everything Gardens and Other Stories*

Introduction

Everything Gardens and Other Stories (Russi 2015, hereinafter *Everything Gardens*) is my contribution to a growing body of scholarship challenging academic practices of talking *about* (rather than *from within*) the social. In this chapter, I endeavour to ground the study I undertake in the book, by discussing the sources of a methodological approach for overcoming a pre-emptive limitation of the field of inquiry by means of a definition, in favour of an investigation of practice 'from within'. To articulate a methodological position involves justifying the process by which an account has been produced (Howell 2013, 9). Here, my entry point into an endeavour of this sort is through distancing the study undertaken in *Everything Gardens* from the expectation—typical of a positivistic approach—to rush for a definition. The commonplace act of definition is a way of restricting the social imagery to only that, which the academic might be comfortable with, speaking from within a particular scholarly tradition of argumentation. It undertakes an *a priori* selection of the possibilities for life together that the social phenomenon of Transition, which I present in the monograph, is capable of disclosing.

In contrast to this, *Everything Gardens* experiments with a different approach. In the book, I work my way into Transition starting from where it began (e.g. the embodied disquiet arising from information about peak-oil), without taking this as the point of reference for an over-anxious act of definition. My intention is, instead, to follow that initial disquiet in its unfolding. What guides my exploration of Transition is not so much a concern for accurate representation of a 'social movement' existing 'out there' in seemingly unproblematic and self-contained form. Instead, it is the moral-practical interrogation of an evolving milieu, trying to understand how it 'hangs together' and what sorts of interventions are called forth from within the concerns that become apparent inside it.

Against this background of considerations, the present chapter offers a discussion of the relevant methodology—justifying how I have come to produce the account offered in the book—by appealing to a number of resources that I have relied upon. More specifically, it lays out the methodological scaffolding for

the paradigm of inquiry that infuses *Everything Gardens*, which strives to afford an attention to process, i.e. to the continuous and contested coming-into-being of socio-material formations, as opposed to taking for granted reified definitions spelling out what the Transition movement is meant to achieve.

This type of approach is one largely informed by the phenomenological tradition in philosophy and sociology, the outlines of which I sketch in section i. Subsequently, the works of Harold Garfinkel and Bruno Latour reveal deep resonances and fruitful insights for applying phenomenological thinking to the study of the social. It is to their contributions that I turn in section ii. Section iii goes on to flesh out the sense of a much more fluid social ontology constellated by shifting configurations of human-object entanglements. The protagonists of this discussion become Latour (again) and Hodder; Hodder's work, in particular, marks the possibility of imagining ethical deliberation as taking place in a predicament of fundamental entanglement, which is coterminous with the unfolding of social life. Section iv takes these considerations in the direction of challenging rigid distinctions between what is 'human' and what is an 'object' (which reflects in the looseness of my definition of culture throughout the book) and the conflation of questions of epistemology and ontology in fluid, hybrid social milieus. This is where I look at Karen Barad's thinking and familiarise myself with the notion of intra-action. This is also where I set Barad in conversation with Pickering's work on socio-materiality and with Goethe and his contribution to the phenomenology of nature (as articulated in the elegant prose of Henri Bortoft). Where this conversation culminates, for me, is in the little-known work (at least in sociology) of John Shotter. Shotter's work manages to articulate the beginnings of a movement of the social in shared, pre-linguistic sensings experienced in our bodies. In his work I find the necessary resources to follow the contested and contingent development of unfinished, living cultural traditions (an aspiration shared with Ingold's programme of phenomenological anthropology). Building on those resources, I suggest that the coming-into-being of socio-material formations engages us equally on the ontological (as co-creators) and on the moral level (as beings entangled in the relationships we choose to continue, and exposed to their demands). Finally, section vi offers a further summary of the extent to which the methodological considerations presented here are reflected in *Everything Gardens*, and in the practical methods that informed the research leading up to it.

<u>i. Phenomenological moorings</u>

The conversation I am about to sketch in the following sections—about the self-specification of the social, its temporality, as well as about the entangled and co-creative (or symmetrical) quality of agential trajectories deployed within it— has a history. In fact, the earliest formulation of this direction of inquiry is perhaps the one afforded by Edmund Husserl at the turn of the twentieth century. Husserl's original concern was the (modernist) aspiration to ground philosophy as a rigorous science. For this purpose, he brought to bear on that inquiry his experience as a mathematician. He observed how logical and mathematical propositions, as experienced, appear meaningful 'even in the absence of a theory about what kind of existence they may have' (Detmer 2013, 63). Extending this insight to objects of experience more generally, Husserl argued that their meanings could disclose themselves to us, without us having to worry about ascertaining their ontological status (e.g. deciding whether or not they exist as 'things in themselves', as Kant had postulated). He therefore explored the practice of 'bracketing' ('phenomenological reduction' or *epoché*), which consisted in focusing solely on the way things appear to us, apart from any assumptions one may hold about their independent existence (Harman 2007, 42). Building on that initial suspension of one's 'natural' presuppositions about the structure of experience, Husserl advocated for a further bracketing ('eidetic reduction') of the perspectival contingency through which an appearance is encountered, in order to grasp the necessary features of a phenomenon, its *eidos* or essence. This was not, for Husserl, to be understood as an inductive process (abstracting from multiple instances) but it was more a case of dwelling in the appearance of a phenomenon of interest, and imagining as many variations of it as possible (Detmer 2013, 153). This 'imaginative free variation', to lead to an intuition of the essence of a phenomenon, is remarkably close to Goethe's approach to the study of plants. Goethe (who lived a couple of generations before Husserl) spoke of the need to dwell in 'exact sensory imagination', in order for the unity and continuity of the plant to shine through its particular features, so that the latter would stand out as the living manifestations of an unfolding, organic whole:

> Organs which can be quite different in outer appearance are recognized as being manifestations of the same form, so that the plant now appears as the repeated expression of the same organ—

which nowhere appears externally as such. Seeing the plant intuitively in this way is to experience its 'coming into being', instead of analyzing the plant in its finished state (Bortoft 1998, 46–47).

By beholding relatedness-in-difference in the bodying forth of a living whole, Goethe grasped the possibility of letting the plant '[become] its own language' (Bortoft 1998, 47), an objective remarkably close to Husserl's concern for intuiting the essence or *eidos* of a phenomenon. At the heart of Husserl's (and Goethe's) speculation is, therefore, the sense that consciousness affords the conditions for the disclosure of meaning through lived experience (Moran 2000, 144). This orientation in Husserl's thinking articulates phenomenology as a fundamental inquiry into the conditions of meaning formation (Moran 2000, 108). To this end, Husserl introduced the correlatives of *noesis* and *noema*. These could be roughly understood, respectively, as (i) the mode through which an experience is encountered and (ii) what is experienced as a result. The noesis-noema correlation supplants the subject-object correlation of Cartesian dualism, in that it entails a 'refocusing from what is conceived to the act of conceiving, *while engaged in the act of conceiving that which is conceived*' (Bortoft 1996, 281). The noesis-noema correlate, therefore, suggests an intensive—rather than extensive—articulation of consciousness, by defining 'the condition of possibility of experiencing both the subject and the object' (Stewart and Mickunas 1974, 37).

In this sense, Husserl's remarks on the noesis and the noema echo in the scholarship of, among others, Bruno Latour (discussed in section iii) and Karen Barad (discussed in section iv). In his attempt to institute greater symmetry between the agency of humans and of nonhumans, Latour moves away from reified notions of subject and object and brings into focus instead the processes of subjectification and objectification whereby subjects and objects come into being (van Loon 2012, 199–200; see also Harman 2009, 107). Similarly, Barad's concern with apparatuses through which agential cuts—the distinctions that determine entities separate from one another—are effected appears in line with Husserl's correlation between a certain poise or mode of prehension (noesis) and the progressive specification of a phenomenon (noema) through the agential cuts that are so enacted. Consciousness, in this sense, is disclosive of the world. Which is why the study of consciousness, by unveiling the 'intimate intentional relationship between consciousness and the world'

(Stewart and Mickunas 1974, 47), ultimately led Husserl towards the end of his career towards a more pronounced focus on the 'lifeworld': 'the life-world is a world as phenomenon, as correlative of our intentional experiences' (Moran 2000, 181).

And the lifeworld was also the focus of two later students of Husserl: Alfred Schutz and Martin Heidegger. Schutz built on Husserl's insight about the 'generative immanence' that is coessential to being present in the world, so as to overcome all-too-easy simplifications about how action unfolds. Specifically, enactments are not decided upon observation of a separate environment, its interpretation by reference to some external criterion of judgment and subsequent implementation of a plan. On the contrary, trajectories of action are actively negotiated at the interface where resources generated inside the tradition of a particular group culture meet 'the strivings that our consciousness is spontaneously aiming towards in the situation it thus finds itself' (Lock and Strong 2010, 41). In this sense, Schutz's focus on the tension between the anticipations built into a particular tradition and the possibilities of disruption of—and innovation upon—any ingrained expectations (Inglis and Thorpe 2012, 90) anticipates somewhat both Garfinkel's notion of 'indexical meanings' (and his focus on their social production), described in the next section, as well as Shotter's use of the notion of a 'living tradition' as perched between drift and the possibility of new 'organizational moments' (Shotter 2011b), which I discuss in section v.

Martin Heidegger, another student of Husserl, shared a similar attention for the lifeworld, and articulates in greater detail the phenomenological stance. So, for instance, he made it explicit that phenomenology is bound up with a concern for ontology (i.e. for how the world is disclosed in and through consciousness) rather than for epistemology (i.e. for becoming conscious of a supposedly 'out there' world): it is in this sense that he described his work as 'fundamental ontology', to embrace the participatory process by which the world emerges in human existence (Moran 2000, 197). In particular, being-in-the-world is always entangled with resources that are ready-to-hand, and on which it relies (Verbeek 2005, 78), as opposed to staring at those as though they presented themselves before a detached observer (Lock and Strong 2010, 59–60). In this sense, it is to Heidegger's that one can liken positions—such as those of Pickering (Pickering 2008, 4, section iv below), Mol (Mol 2002, 50, section iii

below) Ingold (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001, 152, section v below) and Latour (Verbeek 2005, 102–103, section iii below)—that posit a condition of fundamental entwining of humans and nonhumans (Hodder 2012, 28–9).[1] Heidegger saw his position as a departure from what he—perhaps unfairly—perceived as the limitations of Husserl's 'bracketing' procedure, which he thought involved a certain detachment, so that being was examined as if from the outside, rather than from within. He therefore saw his project as one way of sticking more closely to the 'generative immanence' that inheres to being present *in* the world. A central condition of this immanence is *temporality*, that is the unfolding of being in time, and the ensuing tension between sticking to the resources handed down in tradition and the projection of new possibilities (Moran 2000, 243).[2]

This tension is one that would be further elaborated by Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer, who talks of 'events in a tradition' in a manner that is strikingly close to Shotter's 'organisational moments' (section v below), as instances where emergent difference makes itself present, in relation to the extant development of a particular shared form of life (Lock and Strong 2010, 69).

On this reading, it follows that being is always to an extent indeterminate, in the sense that—by virtue of its unfolding through time—it is marked by the continual production of opportunities to enact new distinctions, from within a particular lifeworld. Therefore, being-in-the-world appears to have an essentially ethical dimension, in that the question of how to relate to otherness is a defining feature of being as entangled presence. This is a point that has subsequently been made explicit by Levinas (Moran 2000, 349–50), and upon which Barad draws in order to outline the ethical call that is inherent in the very 'worlding of

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[1] Albeit with the important distinction that Heidegger's characterisation of being-in-the-world is very much restricted to human participation, and is hence thoroughly asymmetrical in its starting point (Harman 2009, 67).

[2] If we understand being-in-the-world as bundled to an orientation towards future possibilities (Bolman 2013)—immanent to its temporal unfolding—it is not improbable to find resonance between the work of Heidegger and Deleuze's refocusing of phenomenology towards becoming, in the sense of the constant production of difference (Ma 2005, 112).

the world' (Barad 2007, 391 ff., section iv below). Merleau-Ponty also contributed to this perspective, by adding that the responsiveness elicited by such indeterminacy is experienced and related to in the body (Moran 2000, 414 & 419; see also Inglis and Hughson 2000, 124–25), a claim that echoes, for instance, Shotter's inquiry[3] into the bodily disquiets at the root of all shared forms of life: where the cultural formation of imaginative universals first proceeds from probing for and gesturing towards shared *sensory* topics (section v below).

ii. Garfinkel's ethnomethodologies

The methodological stance towards practices of social inquiry that emerges from the phenomenological conversation—particularly its attention towards the process of self-disclosure of a shared form of life—finds a useful continuation in the writings of Harold Garfinkel. In his seminal contribution, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Garfinkel 1967), he introduces the idea that, if sociology is to understand 'the organized activities of everyday life' (Garfinkel 1967, vii), then it is important for it to be able to account for the ways in which the social is assembled precisely as 'an ongoing accomplishment of the concerted activities of everyday life' (Garfinkel 1967, vii). To develop a toolbox that makes this possible, Garfinkel coins the term 'ethnomethodology'. Ethnomethodologies are, more specifically, the 'vernacular' (Scott 2012, 30 ff.) methods that participants in any social order adopt in navigating and stabilising that very order 'from within' (Garfinkel 1967, viii). One interesting feature that Garfinkel remarks in the accounts members produce to make their activities intelligible to each other is the use of 'indexical' expressions. These are references, *indices,* to semantic surroundings that are simply taken for granted, but which are indispensable to give an utterance its intelligibility.

The importance of indexical expressions is to disclose the presence of situated rationalities that members in any social interaction produce as part of the process of their acting together. There is a sense, therefore, in which Garfinkel's work manages to stress the active production of 'organised settings' for the conduct of everyday life (Garfinkel 1967, 33). These constitute the

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[3] Which he picks up from Wittgenstein's concern for the pre-linguistic moorings of language games (Lock and Strong 2010, 336).

background against which indexical expressions can and do play an active role in enabling rationalities by which social interaction acquires situated intelligibility. People, in other words, speak 'into' an organised setting to which they constantly seem to refer to. Simultaneously, in their acting 'into' a setting, they equally contribute to performing and stabilising the vernacular order necessary for their talk to retain its intelligibility.

One interesting direction in which Garfinkel's insights have been developed is in the line of inquiry known as Science, Technology and Society (Law 2004, 12 ff.). Bruno Latour's ethnography of laboratory practices (Latour, Woolgar, and Salk 1986; Latour 1987), for instance, is one example of how even the most 'rigorous' of organised social settings—scientific inquiry and practice— does not achieve complete closure, and relies for its viability on a surrounding context, which it must produce. In this respect, John Law (2004) uses the term 'hinterland' to refer precisely to the fact that any situated social practice can be visualised as having threads departing from it that take root into something outside of that very practice. For any organised setting to be possible, a hinterland has to be actively assembled (Law 2004, 27 ff.) and the study of the social therefore becomes the study of assemblages (Law 2004, 31).[4]

The contested, constructed and fragile nature of scientific epistemes removes the possibility to consider these as superior to any other organised context for social action. It no longer makes sense, then, to keep hammering away at some 'object of study' with tools and languages developed outside of the very context that is being examined. As Garfinkel once again advises, a focus on 'ethnomethodologies' deprives of legitimacy efforts to afford explanations arrived at 'using a rule or a standard obtained outside actual settings within which [relevant] properties are recognized, used, produced, and talked about by settings' members' (Garfinkel 1967, 33).

The sensation emerging from these contributions is one where social phenomena appear to pull themselves by the bootstraps: their appearance is not occasioned from outside the phenomena themselves, but hatched from within. This means that social phenomena appear through an appear*ing*, which takes the shape of a progressive fashioning of the very conditions for the

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[4] This is, in turn, a term taken from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1988, 90).

organised continuation of their appearance. In this sense, sociological research—by trying to follow the making of assemblages through which realities are actively instituted—morphs (at least in my own practice of it) into *phronesis*. Phronesis, a concept first introduced by Aristotle, I understand as reflective judgment: a form of decision-making that develops its criteria as the decision gets underway (Ferrara 1998, 41 ff.). This type of judgment, context-dependent and tentatively articulated, does not work by subsumption but is inherently metaphorical and *ad hoc*, case-based (Flyvbjerg 2001, 135–6). Therefore, a phronetic-inspired approach to researching the social, like the one I have tried to follow, is not so much oriented to the development of explanatory theories about an observed situation. It is, instead, a hermeneutics of practice, in the sense of seeking to understand the situational ethics and navigational judgment that orients participants entangled in a particular socio-material and historically unfolding milieu (Flyvbjerg 2001, 136–37).

Ultimately, the problem of looking at (social) phenomena in their unfolding calls for an account of how organised settings are instituted, and how people 'go on' inside these, perched simultaneously in a work of indexing and referencing shared settings, as well as acting to change these based on situated forms of judgment that owe their intelligibility to their being deployed *into* an already existing context. It is to an understanding of this dialectic that Latour and Hodder contribute.

iii. Entanglements in Latour and Hodder

Bruno Latour, whose ethnography of laboratory practices I mentioned earlier, became fascinated with the ways in which particular phenomenal realities are actively stabilised. In *Science in Action,* he directed his focus towards inscription devices, for example, which enable the 'translation' of one material form into another that can be plugged into subsequent manipulations (Law 2004, 20; Latour 1987, 68–9). In *Reassembling the Social*, he discusses objects more generally and elucidates their contribution to 'assembling the social' through a comparison between human and baboon sociality, referencing the work of Shirley Strum (1987). Namely, he suggests that baboons face the problem of providing stability to their social interaction without possessing material equipment through which relationships can be sheltered from the need for constant renegotiation and reassembling (Latour 2005, 197–8). For Latour,

therefore, the immanent complexity of human societies is made possible through the use of objects, which become the centrepiece of the approach known as *actor-network theory*. The basic idea behind actor-network theory (ANT) is that every node of agency (or actant) 'leaks' junctures towards other (human and nonhuman) actants, and it is against those connections that it asserts its efficacy. In this sense, every actant can be 'zoomed into', to unearth a network of dependencies through which it is effectively assembled. A necessary role in this process is played by objects, as these offer the promise to embody particular modes of relating into a material substrate that introduces a degree of automation (and, therefore, stability) in the replication and reproduction of actor-networks.

On this reading, the task of social inquiry becomes, to the aspiring actor-network theorist, to 'trace' an actor-network. To navigate human-thing assemblages and probe their joints to see how those assemblages hold together and emerge from a distributed process of negotiation across different sites of agency straddling both the human and the nonhuman camp. For this reason, Latour suggests to focus on movements of the social, on the 'sparks' left behind as actor-networks re-constellate themselves over time, so as to capture their dynamism.

These considerations are not exclusive to Latour, however. For instance, they resonate strongly with the work of philosopher Annemarie Mol. In her study *The Body Multiple* (2002), she examines the production of 'atherosclerosis' in a Dutch university hospital. In that work, she contends that it is better to refer to *atheroscleroses*, in the plural, because the disease that is spoken about in the singular is actually enacted in different modalities depending on the site of diagnosis or treatment where 'it' is acted upon: from the outpatient clinic to the pathology laboratory, down to the operating theatre and the radiology department. Moreover, all such sites of practice simultaneously interfere with each other and negotiate forms of coordination (Mol 2002, 83–84; Law 2004, 53). In sum, Mol further contributes to an awareness of the abstractions at work when a reality is divorced from the process by which it emerges, namely from its coming into being and recursive production (Law 2004, 55–57).[5]

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[5] Mol also notes how, since concrete practices have the ability to enact and instantiate realities that can be radically different to one another, questions of

My next step moving on from Latour's work has been Ian Hodder's *Entangled* (Hodder 2012). Hodder, an archaeologist by training, distances himself from Latour to a degree, by virtue of wanting to ascribe even greater symmetry between the agency of humans and that of nonhumans. For Hodder, while humans place reliance on things, the latter also exert their own demands for care and maintenance that require the adoption of dedicated social arrangements to accommodate thing-dependencies (Hodder 2012, 71 & 187–8). In his account, the dependence (as in 'relying/leaning on') and dependency (as in being 'stuck' in a relationship of maintenance) between humans and things is visceral to the point that it becomes difficult to really tell the two apart. Towards the end of *Entangled*, he also links to scholarship looking at how the concept of 'mind', which is typically understood as something instantiated in brain circuitry, can be understood instead as a distributed ecology that has bodies 'entangled' with a wider material milieu (Malafouris 2013; Noe 2010). In other words, the material world is understood to offer a scaffolding for cognitive processes, acting as a kind of outsourced mind.

This contribution offers a very useful resource to re-situate ethical questions inside the 'hurly-burly' of the everyday. This is because an expanded conception of mind to include object ecologies dramatically expands the context in which decisions emerge. If, in fact, things (and their unpredictability) cling to humans as much as the opposite is also true, then they also constitute the context 'into' which humans are to find the resources to make decisions about how best to navigate particular circumstances. There is, in other words, a sense in which entanglements exert demands that nudge ethical sensibilities in particular directions. This is a point made by Carolan (2011, 148; see also Berry 2004, 200), who argues that taking a stand on a problem is not merely a matter of stating a 'normative' position but, rather, one of creating a fact, a body, a thing that embeds a particular orientation (for what to do next) in a material site of agency that will translate that orientation into a pressing demand to be heeded to. In this way, questions of ethics become deeply entwined with

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'ontological politics' are central to the plane of practice. These questions have to do with the dilemmas that confront the enactment and the mattering of particular realities, disclosing commitments (to specific forms of life) that can be furthered by making one intervention over another (Mol 2002, 174–178).

questions of what 'matters', in the literal sense of what entanglements can be facilitated to turn our ethical affinities into material dependencies.

iv. Intra-action and related-difference

Karen Barad takes furthest this elision of *a priori*, ontological differences between qualitatively different entities, such as human and nonhuman, or subject and object. In my reading of her work, it makes little sense to demarcate ontological differences as though one found oneself on the outside looking in, merely describing what one is purportedly seeing from an external standpoint. Instead, she suggests that differences and boundaries—far from being taken for granted—ought to be precisely the object of study in their production. That *it is from within the phenomenon that we have to grasp its conditions of possibility*. And it is from within the phenomenon that the possibility of 'externality' emerges.

She asks us to stop thinking in terms of inter-action, between supposedly self-contained entities (Barad 2007, 137), and to begin looking instead at intra-actions. These are the relationships of mutual constitution through which agencies differentiate one another as distinct and external to each another, but always *within* the progressive unfolding of a phenomenon. In this sense, therefore, phenomena materialise through the intra-actions of agencies that are constituted *in* the mattering itself. Ultimately, then, there are only phenomena in their appearing. And, in the appearing, patterns of mattering emerge, affording distinctions that demarcate separate intra-acting agencies, even though these 'are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements' (Barad 2007, 33). This is the sense in which the 'externality' of differentiated agencies is produced from within the phenomenon. Externality, Barad adds, is produced through an apparatus that enacts an agential cut, a distinction, that enables the making-determinate and intelligible of separate intra-acting agencies within the phenomenon (Barad 2007, 148 & 175). So that, ultimately, these agencies are *produced* as external to each other, despite being enfolded in the common generative process of the mattering of the phenomenon.

From the conflation of epistemology and ontology that becomes possible within Barad's 'agential realism', yet another consequence has to do with the possibility for ethical action: 'ethics is not simply about responsible actions in

relation to human experiences of the world; rather, it is a question of material entanglements and how each intra-action matters in the reconfiguring of these entanglements, that is, it is a matter of the ethical call that is embodied in the very worlding of the world' (Barad 2007, 160). Ethics is less of a commitment, and more of an 'incarnate relation' (Barad 2007, 392). Intra-action means that everything is part of the world and its becoming, so that responsibility is reconfigured not so much as the rolling out of pre-fashioned commitments onto some 'external' reality. Rather, responsibility is inherent in our participating in the ongoing mattering of the world. On this understanding, ethics stresses the participatory quality of every intra-action; it is fundamentally situated and situational, context-dependent. Ultimately, there is no self-standing ethics, in Barad's agential realism, but ethics is—tellingly—the attribute of a relational reaching out: an ethical *call*, 'an invitation that is written into the very matter of all being and becoming' (Barad 2007, 396), to being alive to the emergent possibilities for going on from within the thicket of a phenomenon in its mattering.

Barad's views resonate, on a number of different levels, with those of Pickering. In *The Mangle of Practice* (1995), he sketches a way of looking at world-making centred on the notion of the 'mangle'. Beginning from the idea that the world is filled with agency (Pickering 1995, 6), Pickering suggests that the human and the nonhuman do not just inter-act with one another but are, in many ways, mutually constituted or 'mangled' (Pickering 1995, 23). This, in the sense that human practices typically envelop machines and—by virtue of relating to these—they become themselves more machine-like (Pickering 1995, 16), blurring the distinction between the human and the nonhuman (Pickering 1995, 7). From here to replacing inter-action with intra-action that mutually constitutes differentiated sites of agency in the mattering of the world—as Barad perhaps would have it—does not seem to be an impossible step to take.

In their being 'constitutively intertwined' (Pickering 1995, 17), agencies—human and nonhuman—are mangled together as they relate to each other through a dialectic of resistance and accommodation. The image I have in mind when I picture this dialectic is of a tentative stumbling, looking for openings and passages from within the thicket of the 'plane of practice' (Pickering 1995, 20). Even though Pickering does not explicitly engage with ethics, as Barad does, it emerges from his writings that practice is constantly perched in the effort to

square possible openings for 'going on' from where we are (i.e. for future practice) with the living material-discursive tradition from within which one comes to deploy one's agency (Pickering 1984, 87 & 114; Pickering 1995, 20). Ethics, here, is a matter of reading possibilities and achieving 'fittingness' in a temporally extended mesh.

In this sense, the 'mangle' that Pickering talks about appears akin to the talk of 'phenomena' that Barad adopts. The 'mangle' appears like a temporally extended and materially embodied matrix that bodies forth through the deployment of agency that constitutes itself in the very mattering of the phenomenon, entangled deep within its folds. Pickering's and Barad's work find another possible correspondence in Goethe's phenomenology of nature, the possibilities of which I became acquainted with through the writings of the late Henri Bortoft (Bortoft 1996; Bortoft 2012).

A physicist by training, Bortoft taught at Schumacher College, where I based myself during the fieldwork conducted for *Everything Gardens*. Central to Bortoft's work is the concept of appearance. Appearance, for him, is an unfinished process that is better captured as a verb: an *appearing*. Bortoft, building on Goethe, focuses on the holographic relationship between the phenomenon as a whole and its parts (there is an evident parallel here with phenomena and their intra-agential components, which Barad talks about). He discards attempts to prioritise one over the other, and conveys instead a sense in which these are mutually constitutive of one another. The whole bodies forth through the parts, that themselves find 'fittingness' in the unfolding of an emergent whole. Central to the bodying forth of a whole, of a phenomenon, is a process of relatedness-in-differentiation.

He elucidates this with a few examples that are beautifully illustrative of his delicate phenomenology. The first is Goethe's theory of colours, where Bortoft illustrates how Goethe found Newton's reduction of colours to a mere consequence of differential refractability of light as wave unsatisfactory. This, because this theory had nothing to say on the patterns of internal differentiation of the phenomenon of colour. Why, for instance, do the colours on Newton's spectrum appear in a certain order, and why do other colours altogether appear on spectra obtained through different experimental set-ups? Through an effort of 'exact sensorial imagination', Goethe attempted to dwell in the phenomenon

to grasp the process of differentiation in its making, which presupposes a differencing that reveals outwardly separate qualities as related to one another:

> When we follow the coming-into-being of distinction in this way, we notice that distinguishing has the effect of relating. To mark out 'something', to give a boundary to 'it', is *thereby* to relate it to that from which it is distinguished—i.e. to distinguish 'something' is *at the same time* to distinguish what is 'other' by virtue of that very distinction—and to which it is thereby related. The point here is that the relation is *intrinsic* to the act of distinguishing, and not an external connection between separate 'somethings', which have already been distinguished (Bortoft 1996, 136)

So it is, for instance, that Goethe grasps the different colour spectra as qualities arising from the formative process of lightening darkness or darkening light. What he tries to reach for is the dimension in which outwardly separate presentations are enfolded within a generative unity that creates these through self-differencing.

The same equally applies to Goethe's study of plants. His claim that 'all plant is leaf' (Bortoft 1996, 80), Bortoft does not interpret literally, as if to say that all organs of the plant are actually developed from a leaf. Instead, this is understood as a possibility to grasp the plant in its making and as developing outwardly different parts in a 'formative doing' (Bortoft 1996, 270), 'metamorphic sequence' (Bortoft 1996, 80), or 'intensive depth' (Bortoft 1996, 71). Central to this approach is to try and find, within the phenomenon, the 'grammar' of its unfolding, approaching it on its own terms and making it speak in its own language (Bortoft 1996, 309–20).

In this sense, the contributions discussed in this section gesture towards what might seem the cacophony of differences in a live socio-material medium, and they begin to direct attention instead towards the generative processes (intra-action, relatedness-in-difference) from which those various forms originate, as differential emanations of an unfolding phenomenon.

v. Accompanying life from within: from Ingold to Shotter

In my own thinking about Transition, Shotter's work helped me 'see' the intra-action, agential cuts, the mangled entwining and the 'whole' that authors like Barad, Pickering and Bortoft discuss. Shotter's work manages to 'translate'

those ideas in a manner that made them 'seeable', for me, in the real-life transacting within a social phenomenon like Transition.

A productive way into Shotter's programme is perhaps through the work of anthropologist Tim Ingold, who shares a similar aspiration. One of Ingold's central concerns is to differentiate the knowing *about* seemingly separate and external 'things' from knowing *from within* the formative processes of life (Ingold 2012, 5). This particular concern, of course, is not new to anthropology as a discipline, and can be traced as far back as the work of Malinowski, who first established the problem of grasping the 'native's point of view' (Howell 2013, 120), inaugurating the practice of 'participant observation' (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001, 42–43). On a very basic level, Malinowski's approach to fieldwork provides an early formulation of the yearning to grasp the sense-making processes at work in the 'experiential contrasts' an observer encounters (Rudie 1994, 23). This aspiration has, on one end, informed a discussion about positionality and reflexivity—as exemplified by the work of Rosaldo (Salzman 2002, 807)—and, on the other, it has ushered a focus on the back-and-forth, analogic and inter-subjective character of sense-making: it is to this latter concern that Ingold speaks, from a phenomenological perspective.[6]

The fundamental problem Ingold sees with knowing *about* is that it jumps the gun and undertakes what he calls an 'inversion', something he describes through an image, whereby 'we are tempted to reinterpret the drawn line not as the trace of a gestural movement but as the perimeter of a geometrical form' (Ingold 2008, 1804). We take what is left behind by the drawing of a circle on paper as closed, finished, self-enclosed form, rather than as a knot along a trajectory that leads elsewhere (Ingold 2008, 1803). For Ingold, it is important instead to find ways to follow life in its making, to travel with the formative trails and the loose ends that do not simply move across from form to form, but bind these in an inextricable meshwork (Ingold 2008, 1803, 1805). In view of this, Ingold sees the task of anthropology to lie in corresponding with the dynamism of a life-form 'in its own movement of growth or becoming' (Ingold 2012, 7). Tracing the internal movement of life turns anthropology into a study of

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[6] In this, Ingold innovates on older interpretive approaches—such as Clifford Geertz's (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001, 103–104)—that consider culture as given and interpretation as the one-way 'cracking' of its code.

possibilities, which entails joining 'with people in their speculations about what life might or could be like' (Ingold 2012, 4).[7] In this sense, to grasp the unfolding of social phenomena it is necessary to develop the necessary agility to navigate the creeping excess of social forms, and follow them in their intra-twining and intra-lacing as they multiply entanglements and possibilities for differentiation. It is to this sense that Shotter's scholarship also speaks. His own thinking copiously references the work in literary criticism by Bakhtin (1986), and the latter's concern with the dialogical. Moreover, in a particularly useful piece, he compares Bakhtin's view of the dialogical character of intra-action with Karen Barad's agential realism (Shotter 2011b).

In that piece, he offers an interesting way into the dynamism of the social field by focusing on utterances. Utterances mark their own boundaries, enacting 'agential cuts', because they delineate the openings that give others the possibility to respond to them. However, at the same time, they only make sense within an ongoing flow of speech. Utterances enact agential cuts while delineating agencies that are simultaneously enfolded within a speech phenomenon, not outside of it (Shotter 1993, 120; Shotter 2011c, 7).

Moreover, while introducing utterances as speech acts, Shotter's understanding of these is not as strictly linguistic phenomena, but dovetails with Barad's understanding of agency as having an intra-twined material-discursive character (Barad 2003, 819–20). They are 'as much material as mental; as much felt as thought, and thought as felt; they have neither a fully orderly nor a fully disorderly structure, neither a completely stable nor an easily changed organization, neither a fully subjective nor fully objective character' (Shotter 2011b, 48). In addition to this, events in a speech flow 'are also non-locatable— they are "spread out" among all those participating in them. They are neither "inside" people, but nor are they "outside" them; they are located in that space where inside and outside are one; nor is there a separate before and after […], neither an agent nor an effect, but only a meaningful, "enduring" intra-acting

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[7] A similar disquiet is also voiced by anthropologists working in the anarchist tradition (Lynd and Grubačić 2009). These speak of 'accompaniment', which entails dwelling in another's world to explore together possible ways forward by engaging in emergent forms of non-hierarchical mutual aid (Lynd and Grubačić 2009, 103–104).

whole which cannot divide itself into separable inter-acting parts' (Shotter 2011c, 8). Finally, utterances are also disclosive (Shotter 1993, 72; Shotter forthcoming; quoting Bakhtin 1986, 119–20), in the sense that they 'show' and perform—and thereby bring to life—some events and not others, based on the 'the different agential cuts we make on the basis of the guiding expectations with which we go out to meet whatever is happening within our surroundings' (Shotter on Barad, p. 12).

Within this flow of intra-action, Shotter is particularly interested in new 'organisational moments'. Those are instances where a distinct 'something' emerges from the intra-twining of agential trajectories. In this sense, Shotter embarks on nothing short of a complete reversal of customary thinking about the social: 'In the past, in our social inquiries, when we talk about such entities as "society", "social relations", "culture", "organizations", "language", "communication", "persons", "the self", and so on, we seem to have presumed that we all know perfectly well what the "it" is that is represented by the concept of the entity we are talking about' (Shotter 2011b, 52). In contrast to this analytical mode, he proposes an ecological mode, aimed at tracing 'what people (including ourselves) go on inside of' (Shotter 2011b, 51).

The birth of an organisational moment Shotter describes by reference to Giambattista Vico's assertion, whereby it was '[f]rom Jove that the muse began' (Shotter 1993, 64). Specifically, he expands Vico's indication thus:

> [A]s everyone runs to shelter from the thunder, all in a state of fear, an opportunity exists for them to realize that it is the *same thing* that they all fear; and a look or a gesture will communicate this. What we might call 'a moment of common reference' exists between them (Shotter 1993, 64).

And yet, the fear so discovered is one that points beyond the thunder itself (as its immediate trigger), but which cues all the other instances where the associated bodily sensation is equally manifested. So 'the fable of Jove, the imaginary universal, "len[ds]" form to, and [is] "rooted" in, the prior establishment of a sensory topic, a sensuous totality linking thunder, with the shared fears at the limits of one's being, and with recognizing the existence of similar feelings in others because of shared bodily activities' (Shotter 1993, 65). In other words, a shared moment of common reference creates a recognisable 'something', a resource that enables metaphorical articulation of experience

through a process of relating later bewildering encounters to the feelings experienced in that earlier sensory topic. In this sense, shared moments of common, embodied reference act as the sensory matrix from which more determinate forms (like the fable of Jove) begin to emerge and *into* which action becomes progressively entangled (Shotter 1993, 136–7).

These incipient organisational forms Shotter calls 'imaginary universals', which are 'intricate, holistic, imaginary structure[s] of intra-related feelings of tendency that would enable [one]—on encountering a particular phenomenon—to sense what next [is] likely to follow from it' (Shotter forthcoming, 19). Delving into the birth of an organisational moment, Shotter suggests how it would begin with bewilderment, with an arresting encounter, which starts to dissipate only as one dwells in it, and starts discerning a distinct 'something' emerging 'in the dynamic relations, the differences, we can sense between our outgoing exploratory activities and their incoming results' (Shotter 2011b, 39). It subsequently becomes possible to articulate this 'something' by reference to its similarity with other sensings already familiar to us. Eventually, he adds, 'it is only after we have made use of a number of such [metaphorical] images to guide our further exploratory movements, that we can come to a sense of, come to feel completely acquainted with, the actual field of possibilities giving rise to them' (Shotter 2011b, 39) And once we come to feel confident about knowing our way around such fields of possibility, only then will we have acquired competency in 'resolving on different ways of "going on" within them according to the different "ends in view" we might wish to pursue' (Shotter 2011b, 39).

The reference to 'going on' is particularly able to encapsulate the nature of social inquiry 'from within'. When navigating our intra-actions, a central problem Shotter discusses is that of finding an orientation. An image he often uses to convey a sense of this problem is that of the utterance as a 'prosthetic stick'. Negotiating one's way in the social field is about achieving a 'grip' on our surroundings, such that we can become aware of what openings are available to us at any one time, and that we can be drawn to those attachments that best 'fit' with the flow of events that has shaped the situation up to that moment. The

social, in sum, is a matter of being enmeshed in 'living traditions',[8] of collectively embodied and temporally extended (discursive-material) arguments that 'call' out responses from those embroiled in them, and provide the resources for their further specification. A 'living tradition' he also calls a 'providential space', in the sense of an 'organized setting' that self-specifies as it unfolds, by providing the resources that constrain and enable its further evolution, transformation or dissolution (Shotter 1993, 68). And social inquiry, then, is about accompanying the everyday ethical dilemmas, deployed in our always tentative organisational forms, which manifest as moments of hesitation in our going from 'here' to 'there' (Shotter 1993, 48) to afford continuation to a living tradition in its appearing as a phenomenon.

It is an inquiry of this sort that I have attempted in *Everything Gardens*. Specifically, on the back of these methodological considerations, I have adopted an *orientational* focus, which foregrounds the concerted search for viable practical orientations in the face of arresting encounters that demand new culturally mediated responses. This is in opposition to an *instrumental* focus, which approaches social formations as strategies oriented towards reified programmatic definitions. An orientational focus is one that tries to accompany—in keeping with Ingold's and Shotter's programmes of inquiry—the process by which Transition, as a socio-material formation, etches itself into shape as it comes into its own.

This simple, but significant, shift opens to view a whole new realm of everyday negotiations: those dilemmatic moments where uncertainty surfaces as to how a particular trajectory of concerted action and inquiry ought to be continued, in a manner appropriate to changed circumstances and to the

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[8] The idea of 'living tradition' resonates with the notion of 'habitus' advanced by Mauss (1979) and developed, for instance, by Bourdieu (1984). It is especially close on the formulation proposed by Inglis (2005, 21), as embodied 'ways of thinking, feeling and acting […] characteristic of the group'. It is a short step, from here, to argue that a living tradition 'is rooted both in people's embodied knowledge and in their embodied evaluative attitudes, and is a historically extended argument, conducted both in speech and action, as to how both their knowledge and their attitudes might best be formulated' (Shotter 1993, 153).

demands elicited by arresting encounters. The way I have attempted to relate to and re-present this horizon is twofold. On the one hand, I chose to adopt research methods that would afford the opportunity to become conversant in the 'vernacular' ethnomethodologies by which participants in the unfolding of Transition manage to negotiate this milieu against the grain of contingency and of its erratic process of growth and consolidation (see section vi below).

On the other hand, in the narration crafted in *Everything Gardens,* this focus has translated into an attunement to the interplay between differentiation and continuity, as Transition evolves a cultural repertoire to sustain a growing array of experiential possibilities. I was aided in this by Goethe's prompt to behold the relatedness-in-difference through which a phenomenon's unfolding proceeds, such that the production of difference always occurs as the emanation of a common generative movement. In relation to Transition, this has focused my attention, first of all, on the dynamics whereby it remains open to continual specification, endeavouring to sustain an expanding array of everyday activities and collective practices by evolving a matching range of material and discursive cultural resources. So, for example, the concerted search for resources to address the consistency between ends and means in the work of Transition becomes recognisable under the name of Inner Transition, and enshrines an openness to the practices of 'inner work'. Secondly, as the culture of Transition specifies itself across a variety of realms of concerted activity, the challenge arises to ensure their reciprocal accommodation, so that they can remain recognisable as participant parts in the unfolding of the same cultural phenomenon, rather than as tangents divorced from one another. To continue the earlier example: in the monograph I equally tease out the dilemmas that confront the specification of Inner Transition, as it negotiates an acceptance by working around resistances ingrained in received binaries between the 'secular' and the 'religious'.

This interplay between continuity and differentiation also resonates with Shotter's notion of a 'living tradition', as an argument open to continuation and the continual unfolding of which prompts iterative revisitations of its very meaning, in order to afford responses to supervening orientational difficulties. In *Everything Gardens*, I suggest that this tension can be witnessed in Transition in the interplay between inclusivity vis-à-vis new experiential possibilities, and the flurry of internal negotiations through which the import of its extant cultural

resources comes to be reworked, so as to make them speak to the difficulties of finding new footings as Transition is carried into novel experiential grounds.

Last, but not least, in *Everything Gardens* I also attempt to show—following the work of Latour and Hodder—how the practical dilemmas that present themselves to the unfolding of Transition are channelled by the specific demands and anticipations inscribed in the tapestry of discursive and material resources that conjure Transition to life. For instance, the need emerges for appropriate resources to support everyday modes of relating in mindful and compassionate ways (the remit of Inner Transition) only after a 'community' has been assembled around other sorts of practical tasks and attachments (like, say, tending to an alternative currency scheme). In this sense, the cultural tangle of Transition affords both a practical orientation for 'going on', as well as calling forth difficulties specific to its particular material and discursive trajectory, affording access to distinctive sets of new difficulties (and not others). Here, the notions of Barad's 'ethical call' and Mol's 'ontological politics' speak to the unfolding of Transition, as described in *Everything Gardens*, locating ethical deliberation in the process of evolving (of 'mattering') the material-discursive attachments that carry a Transition culture.

vi. Why Everything Gardens

In view of these considerations, *Everything Gardens* can then be read as a challenge to the seemingly 'natural' argumentative move undertaken in copious other literature on the topic. In fact, many academic writers on Transition tend to posit at the outset of their inquiry a definition of what Transition is meant to be 'about'. In an oft-visited reading of it, Transition is about devising possibilities/innovations for life after peak-oil. While I would agree that this has been one of the self-descriptions engendered from within Transition, especially around its inception, academic commentary seems to have turned it into a cage. [9] Once peak-oil becomes the informing goal of a monologic order of connectedness according to which Transition is meant to be explained, a

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[9] Shotter's words put this in a most telling manner: 'Something which was at first merely an assumption takes on the appearance of a definition; and what had a social history of its production appears as an atemporal, ahistorical system of natural necessities' (Shotter 1993, 28).

constellation of relevant questions emerges (Shotter 1993, 197). These questions typically revolve around the making of predictions as to the supposed efficacy of Transition at 'rolling out' its goal into the world. The literature on the topic is vast, and this relapse in a representationalist, two-world attitude (normative goals *versus* the world 'out there') seems to have gripped a fair share of scholarship in human geography on the topic, trying to isolate factors contributing to the success or failure of Transition initiatives. The title of a recent paper by Feola and Nunes (2013) exemplifies this spirit most vividly: 'Success and Failure of Grassroots Innovations for Addressing Climate Change: The Case of the Transition Movement'.

I do not, however, intend to dismiss this strand of scholarship outright. Instead, my aspiration is much more modest, namely to add diversity to an all-too-common way of imagining Transition that overshadows alternative possibilities. Transition is about peak oil *if* that is the only question that is asked of it (Inglis 2005, 98). The point I try to make in my book, however, is that a more holistic sense of Transition is needed to express the multiple agencies that are enfolded in its development (beyond that of the aforementioned academic tribe). And, in this sense, Transition can disclose many different possibilities for life together to the various other Transitioners who found themselves somewhat drawn or attached to its development.[10]

For this purpose, building on the phenomenological literature discussed in the previous sections, I have endeavoured precisely to access the formative movement by which Transition demarcates an emergent form of life, in such a way that does not overlook the orientational dilemmas and agential negotiations that shape its unfolding. Having discarded a comparative approach because it requires a prior definition of the entities being compared, I resorted instead to a

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[10] Incidentally, the attempt—in my recollection of the unfolding of Transition—to chart hitherto overlooked articulations (beyond 'responding to peak oil') of a developing form of social life aligns with a long-standing focus in sociology on 'unintended consequences'; arguably a recurring theme in the discipline, starting in the work of Robert Merton (manifest and latent functions) and developed, albeit in somewhat different directions, by Norbert Elias (figurations) and Ulrich Beck (risk), among others (Mica, Peisert, and Winczorek 2011, 12 & 18–19).

range of qualitative methods[11] in a four-month period of fieldwork spent researching the first Transition initiative in Totnes. During that time I was based at Schumacher College, an educational institution with many ties to the milieu of Transition (Russi 2015, 32 ff.); something which allowed me to approach others navigating the same cultural world in a capacity closer to that of insider or 'participant observer'.[12]

In my time in Totnes, I have also carried out thirty semi-structured interviews, aimed at gathering testimonies either from people directly involved in one or more of the many articulations of Transition, or who straddled that membership alongside other cultural affiliations (for instance to the milieu of 'progressive spirituality'). My focus in those interviews was on asking 'how' questions, aimed at facilitating the sharing of rich personal narratives, as opposed to eliciting justification in response to 'why' questions.[13] Since I discuss these in greater depth in chapter 2 of the book (Russi 2015, 66 ff.), it will suffice here to clarify that the purpose of interviews was to understand how various participants had been drawn into the Transition milieu, and of the orientational dilemmas that had become apparent to them from within it. The choice of interviewees was initially determined by their direct involvement in various Transition projects in Totnes (such as the Totnes Pound, or Inner Transition). From those contacts, it became apparent what further interviews ought to be undertaken, for instance with individuals who straddled affiliations to multiple projects, or who otherwise occupied liminal spaces on the edge of Transition and other cultural involvements without an institutionalised connection to it. The interviewing process was also aided and underpinned by my own participant observation of Transition, as I had a chance to take part or help organise events pertaining to various aspects of Transition, such as food-growing, Inner Transition, the Totnes Pound and REconomy. My personal involvement in these equally offered the chance to experience the negotiations pertaining to objects (such as local and complementary currencies or the institutional forms of Transition entrepreneurial ventures) and bodily practices (such as 'mindful' meeting

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[11] On this, see the discussion I undertake in chapter 1 (Russi 2015, 38 ff.).

[12] I describe the tensions and challenges inherent in the role of 'participant observer' at length in chapter 1 (Russi 2015, 32 ff.).

[13] This is a suggestion I take up from Becker (1998, chap. 2).

techniques) that materialise the cultural lifeworld of Transition. In sum, the overall idea behind the adoption of these methods was for me to journey through Transition, tracking the unfolding of the material-discursive tapestry that demarcates a distinctive form of life. One that iteratively works out the conditions of possibility for its further development, in a way that a definition simply cannot capture.

In chapter 2 of the book, I dwell further on this difficulty of encapsulating Transition in a definition, by means of a sequential reading of the different texts about it that were written from within the Transition milieu, by a prominent figure in Transition's inception, namely Rob Hopkins. If the peak oil and climate change thread dominates the view in the first book (Hopkins 2008), this is juxtaposed to other paths by which people might grow into Transition (and have it grow on them). In a very poignant passage of *The Transition Companion* (Hopkins 2011), Hopkins puts it best: 'Transition creates a space and a context within which people are invited to get going on projects they are passionate about, with the support of a larger organisation and with connections to other projects' (2011, chap. 2). What a formulation of this sort conveys is much closer to 'anything goes' than Transition as 'a community response to peak oil' that is prominent in academic discourse. On the other hand, however, that same definition brings into focus the existence of a 'context' to Transition, so that 'anything goes' as long as it fits within the 'organised setting' that Transition as a living tradition creates, simultaneously enabling and constraining future possibilities for action.

Approaching Transition as still unfinished moving, my aim has been to offer a sense of its 'style' as a lifeworld unfolding through time, by lodging myself deep into the forks in the road where it self-specifies through differentiations that instantiate yet more complex possibilities for intra-relating. So it is, for instance, that I spend a lot of time in chapter 3, trying to provide an account not just of how Transition stems from permaculture, but also of the ways in which it differs from it. Or, in chapter 4, I try to look at the development of Inner Transition, and the negotiations that it gives rise to across the milieu of Transition. The process whereby paths of agency delineate themselves within the unfolding of Transition as a social phenomenon is one that, following Karen Barad, entails the enacting of cuts that craft provisional boundaries along which inclusions and exclusions come into being. And the exclusionary aspect, for instance, I discuss

in relation to the Costa campaign in chapter 8, alongside the seeds of further (intra-)activity it sparks. The mending of the 'Costa backlash' I understand to be directed at providing resources—new moments of embodied common reference occasioned through shared doings, such as through the Food Hub—to be leveraged in acting into those gaps through which we come into contact with other intra-acting agencies by sensing their difference (Shotter 2011a, 120–1 & 135), and to which we are called to offer a new response (Shotter 2011a, 100).

Finally, I do not venture to predict where Transition may go on from where I left it at, as this would contradict the very sense of it as an open-ended movement open to still further specification; a common Transition motto puts it most succinctly: 'let it go where it wants to go' (Hopkins 2008, 172; Hopkins 2011, chap. 9). The goal of the book, instead, is simply to offer up the threads I have been following in my direct experience of Transition, so that its generative tensions and disquiets, and the intensity of its ongoing adjustment and reconfiguration can offer a way into the *excess*-ive character of this living phenomenon, such that it thrives by bursting through any definitional fences built around it. It is in this sense, I believe, the metaphor of 'everything gardens' is an apt one for Transition.

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