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Rhythmic Affectensities Becoming-New:

An Ethics of Expression for Early Childhood Education

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Abstract

Moving beyond the reproduction of static forms and rigidity in thought, action, and institutions in education, ethical becomings require the engagement of an expansion and intensification of a body’s affect or capacity. Ethics, thought with the immanent materialist philosophy of Deleuze (1969/1990, 1968/1994) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1983, 1980/1987, 1991/1994), can provoke and promote a creativity of becoming through the entanglement of a posthumanist univocity. Intending to provoke heightened ethical capacities, a posthumanist orientation opens up potential connections available to diverse bodies, with which to enact multiple becomings-new. Some of this potential is performed in this thesis. The text explores a series of imagined trajectories of becoming, pursuing and attending to transformative movements, for entities as diverse as clay, table, and highchair; concepts such as expression, monster, and intensity; and fictional and conceptual personas including teacher, child, Deleuze, Guattari, and Piaget. This is a becoming-thesis which accumulates affirmative relations of mutual affect and constitution across a range of elements and forces (Braidotti, 2016). Alongside the matters of early childhood education, the thesis deploys, then interrupts and experiments with, various aspects of methodology-matter (researcher, ethics, data, code, and method), contributing to postqualitative directions in methodology.

With objects, bodies, and thinking all seen as expressions of matter’s interrelations, the thesis thinks into the relationship and affect of language with and as matter, challenging the centrality of linguistic representations in human interaction with, and manipulation of, matter. By challenging the recognition and representation of matter which is so dominant in education, the thesis unsettles claims to know, label, and define the potential of human and nonhuman matter. The thesis explores affectensity, a term coined to describe particular intensities of affect, in order to undo habitual relations and meanings. Playing with sense and affect, rather than working through and reproducing established and assumed orders of knowing, gives rise to an experimental assemblage that invites reconfiguration in a becoming-ethical of the expressions of subjects, things, and matter in early childhood education, and in becoming-thesis. An ethics of diversifying and transforming expressive lines enables a constant individuation for thesis, and early childhood education, always becoming-new.
Acknowledgements

I thank all the parts of the chaotic cosmos that enabled this becoming-thesis: Olsson’s “Movement and Experimentation” (2009); laptop; university; Deleuze; Guattari; children; early childhood centre; blocks, bear, road, and monster; keyboard; conferences; creative play; Lorraine Manuela (“this is the way we always do it”); supervisors; drafts and red pen; Sandy Farquhar; passport and working holiday visa; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence’s “Beyond Quality” (2007); Playcentre; coffee; sunshine; notebook; scribbles; ocean, beach and bush; feedback; blu-tack; Helen Bernstone; printer; baby carrier; Piaget; Guide to PhD theses and dissertations; Marek Tesar; desk; books, books, books; post-its; databases; Powerpoint presentations; bees; Nicola Pozwillo; teacher training; Reggio Emilia tour; bereavement; Scrivener; quiet spots; APA style guides; Sefa, Izzy, and Damien; camera; baby; lamp; phone; “Mama’s study day”; electricity; Te Whāriki; language; letters and punctuation; clay; Peters and K. Davies (2011) on working theories; politics; Studylink; being a teacher; long walks; weeds; Skype.

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my family—my husband Glenn, my son Freddy, my mum Marilyn and my dad Norman—without whom my becoming-thesis would not have been possible.
Slide waits…
Still.
Shiny.
Steep, and long.

You stand at the top of Slide, pause, wait, look down, press your feet into Slide and imagine yourself lon-n-ng, with Slide an extension of your feet, becoming-with Slide . . .

“Sit down”. “Sit on your bottom”. An adult, experienced in the ways of the playground, is trying to support you to use this equipment correctly.

But you don’t move, standing, still.

“Come down now, your turn”.
“C’mon, off you go”, because this is what is assumed and expected?
(What creativity beats in the rhythm of not-sliding, in standing-there instead?)
Preface: Reading the Transversal

Representation, language, habit. Expression in early childhood education is gridded by strata which induce the reproduction of form, functions and articulations. In an ethical move against the progressive standardisation of thought and action in becomings, this thesis is concerned with how to enact and enhance creative capacity. Here the containment of a grid might be opposed through the activation of the transversal.

This thesis comes together in, and is cut across by, several transversal lines that enable the reader to construct their own assemblage. “The function of transversals is to assemble multiplicities, yet in such a way that the differences among entities are not effaced but intensified” (Bogue, 2007, p. 2). There are threads amongst chapters that connect (Figure 1) in terms of their focus on concepts (numbered chapters), methods (intensifying sections) or moments of everyday life in early childhood (events). These foci are not exclusive as all chapters engage these aspects—chapters discussing concepts or methods are events in themselves, and every chapter aims to be intensifying of its topic. Transversality engages and overlays each line of development (concept, method, or event) so that vertical lines of expectation, transcendence, and presupposition are always confused and altered by something unexpected, sparking potential for becoming-new (Boldt & Valente, 2016).

The structure of the thesis is therefore non-linear and fragmented. Conceptual explorations are punctuated by early childhood events, previously documented but differing with repetition here for new affect, AND . . . interrupted by intensifying intervals, which make a differing of method, engage its differential virtual structure, and make it resonate AND . . . stretched across encounters in the void or temporary space of potential, of intensities of expression AND . . . passed through refrains, senses and styles AND. This structure aims to make small ruptures, small breaks and openings, because it is in the break that potential becomes diversified, and affect can be expanded.

In the oscillating rhythm created in such organisation, it is intended that the transversals of concepts, methods, and events connect in multiple ways to create a rich network of potential. These are connections in which concepts are disrupted, losing their secure and reliable identities, transforming in the entanglements of language and context in the event. They are also then transformative of the becoming of others (Jackson, 2016), including research and thesis, writer and reader. Rather than the confidence of clear
definition, there is a continuous variation that can accelerate a becoming-new, that explores new possibilities of thinking about and with the world.

Intensifying sections begin with a methodological problem in an intent to generate new methodological sense. A contingent methodological sense emerges in response to problems and works against the formation of transcendent solutions for all time and all contexts. The aim of generating an intensity here is to open up the greatest range of potential for the most enlargening of methodological capacities. These sections are concerned with what methodology might (come to) be.

The chapters titled “events” require some clarification. The events are where what might be termed the data for the thesis can be found, but it would be misleading to present these chapters as the reporting and analysis of data according to the themes of the research. These events do not describe and analyse something that happened in the past, but are actively created in the always now of their being written (Leander & Boldt, 2013), or being read. They are situated as present moments, in the whirl of their coming-into-

**Figure 1. Potential transversals across chapter grid**
assemblage with all the elements (concepts, methods, ontology, epistemology) of becoming-thesis. The act of writing or reading these events extends their becoming in a move towards enhancing their conative potential. In touch with its virtual potential for becoming, the event is always generative. With the event as a creative self-organisation, philosophy becomes not something to be applied, but to be constantly invented and individuated, a way of philosophising “that does not fold back into itself as philosophy” (Rotas, 2015, p. 93).

The event as individuation, an always becoming new, can be felt in disorientation (Manning, 2013). The frame that constantly shifts in “Should Chaos Need a Framing” (Chapter 1); the sceptic whisperings of Deleuze and Guattari interrupting and transforming Piaget’s lecture (event); the mutating style and sense of “This is a Cow and a Cow Says Moo” (Chapter 2), the foregrounding of clay as central protagonist in “Clay Sits on Table” (event), the “Thoughts of Education” event that begins trajectories with ifs and from there adds ands but never conclusions, a chapter that becomes-dance (Chapter 7). The refrain that repeats differentially throughout comprises a celebration of the interval, as a space for generating the new.

It is intended that the reader engages in a becoming-thesis, co-composing with thesis an assemblage which invites and provokes thought. The thesis text aims to move beyond academic writing in employing a variety of styles, tenses, the first, second and third person. Such play with language is necessary in order to confound language’s tendency to create “cultural freeze frames” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 36) and to support thought to go beyond “what is already there to be thought” (Davies, 2011, p. 34). Enacting a materialist immanence in becoming-thesis, I attempt to disrupt the authority of presenting myself as an intentional subject separate to and in control of the text (Van Cleave & Bridges, Rhoads, in press). As such, thesis and I present an experimental form of writing, what Davies (2011) calls “transgressive” (p. 34) writing, which occasionally is able to discard the humancentric “I” and disrupt the certainty of representation, in order to experiment with what is possible.

The work is designed to be read in the order given, but readers with a specific interest may wish to construct their own thesis-machines. For example, an early childhood education machine might be constructed in a focus on “This is a Cow and a Cow Says Moo” (Chapter 2), the events, “Your Curriculum in Affect” (Chapter 6), and
the final chapter “To Dance a Rhythm”. Other suggestions are given in the diagram (Figure 1).

Read in sequence, the thesis picks up speed as each consecutive chapter gets shorter. The aim is for a speeding toward an absolute deterritorialisation, rather than toward a conclusion, to a plane of thought where every kind of meaning is loosened and opened up towards a multiplicity of connections. Here an ethics of expression bursts into dance, as a material practice open to the potential of the universe. To dance is presented as a proposition to trigger “conditions of emergence activating self-organizing potential” (Springgay, 2015, p. 77). Thus the thesis gains strength in a chaotic potentiality but does not remain immobilised there. Continuous variation enables a plethora of methods and conclusions to surface; a sense of style, danced, emerges from the never-ending chaos of a world without form, without obligating the seeming immutability of identity and representation.
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EVENT: THE HIGHCHAIR

Highchair as and in Expression

Highchair; an expression—
—of a set of beliefs about infants, eating, families, and human behaviour;
—in a machinic assemblage of parts that work and have function;
—moulded of plastic or carved of wood;
—shaped by the size and structure of sitting infant bodies;
—connected to a history of increasing age-marked division between human bodies; and,
—cultural constructions about children’s dependence on, and separation from, adults; and,
—supervision, manipulation, surveillance, containment (mess? baby?), control.

AND . . . in entering other circuits of expression, Highchair, and its presuppositions, works to reinforce particular relations between infants, food, and other people. In this way the highchair operates to order space (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017) and action. In other words, Highchair is not only an expression in itself, but also, a content for other expressions in the early childhood centre, contributing to the ongoing becoming of bodies, things and assemblages.

Highchair, as adult-controlled, seated-eating-position for infant-holding, anticipates or presupposes expressions including the solitary consumption of individual food within a sedentary bodily position. The infant’s body is positioned at a height aligned with the carer, enabling the passing of food, and also monitoring and supervision. Infants cannot usually climb into their highchairs themselves, therefore the timing of eating activity can, to a large extent, be controlled by adults. These are Highchair’s presuppositions and affects. This is not to critique the use of highchairs in early childhood education, but to recognise (and perhaps experiment with) the ways in which such presuppositions contribute to other expressions. We cannot always know what forms of content and forms of expression will create in their encounter—being held high to facilitate interaction with the caregiver also allows objects to be dropped, feet to be
swung. While the Highchair shapes the child, and her ideas about social meal times, at the same time, the child endorses the function of Highchair by sitting and eating within it, or not sitting and eating (Cahill, Coffey & Smith, 2016) but instead finding other affects and functionalities in Highchair’s affordances. Highchair is but one component of an eating-assemblage. Enter infant-bodies, food items, drinks, adult in charge: a snack time for infants in a family day care setting (Sumson, Stratigos & Bradley, 2014) . . .
Amanda places the infants in their highchairs for morning tea. She puts Charlie in first and then Kaia. As if desiring engagement with each other (despite the spatial arrangements that prioritise the individual infant as the focus of Amanda’s attention), Charlie and Kaia turn their bodies to face each other and reach across to touch each other on the shoulder.

A series of brief interactions occur between Charlie and Kaia involving tugging on clothes, vocalising, pointing and hand holding while Amanda is busy putting the other two children in their highchairs.

Amanda has placed Charlie’s water bottle on his highchair tray before turning away to get the other children’s bottles. Kaia points towards Charlie’s bottle, vocalising and looking first at the bottle and then towards Amanda, perhaps wondering where her drink is.

In response, Charlie picks up his water bottle in both hands and turns his body towards Kaia, leaning over and passing her the water bottle. She reaches for it with both hands and leans down to take a sip. Kaia and Charlie hold the water bottle between the highchair trays.

As Kaia began to sit up again, both Charlie and Kaia remove their hands from the bottle. It falls to the ground. Both infants quickly sit upright in their chairs, facing the front again and looking to Amanda as she brings Kaia and Angus’ water bottles.
They continue to watch as Amanda, who was unaware of the interaction between Charlie and Kaia, picks up Charlie’s water bottle then replaces it on his tray.

A little later as the children wait for Amanda to cut up fruit . . .

Charlie picks up his bottle and turns to pass it to Kaia again, this time unprompted. By leaning right across the distance separating them, he manages to get it on her highchair tray.

Kaia eagerly takes Charlie’s bottle (although she has her own one in front of her) and takes a sip, placing it back on her tray.

Amanda, by this time, has arrived with the cut up fruit and is placing some on Charlie’s tray. She notices Charlie’s bottle on the wrong tray and says, “Oh, how did you get that drink?” She removes it and places it on the kitchen bench, out of reach. The children then busy themselves eating for a few moments. Kaia picks up her own drink bottle saying, “Ta, ta” and holding it out towards Amanda who is busy at the kitchen bench. When she gets no response, Kaia drops her bottle on the floor. Amanda turns to pick up the bottle saying, “Kaia, no”. Kaia smiles at her briefly and Amanda places the bottle on the bench along with Charlie’s. Kaia then tries to give Amanda her remaining slices of banana, again saying “Ta”. With some encouragement from Amanda, she eats the banana pieces.

Kaia then begins refusing a variety of food including more banana slices, biscuits, sultanas, a packaged bar, and a cheese stick. She shakes her head emphatically, says “No”, presents her upturned palms to Amanda, again as if for emphasis, and hands food back to Amanda.
The only food Kaia shows any interest in is the food belonging to other children. When Charlie is given a fruit-filled bar from a packet which he takes eagerly and begins to eat, Kaia turns to him, pointing at the fruit bar and vocalising.

Charlie reaches across with the remains of the fruit bar. Kaia takes it from him, turning it over in her hands and examining it. Amanda notices and says, “No, no, no, that’s Charlie’s. You can’t bite it and then give it back”.


Mapping Infants-Highchairs-Adult-Bottles-Food Expressions

We might be encouraged by the work of Rautio (2013) to forego linearity and causality (in setting the child’s actions in a teleological path of progress and development) and take instead a horizontal approach to this event, mapping the mesh of forces and bodies producing and re-producing each other as particular kinds of bodies. To map the expressions of this early childhood event in this way, we might start anywhere; a map has many openings and exits without presupposing particular routes (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). To begin with Highchair is to bring into focus the expressions of early childhood education which attempt to regulate, or striate, the potential range of expressions afforded the bodies and things they encounter. As Duhn (2015) argues, we must map these striations, “‘cul-de-sacs’ or dead ends” (p. 921) that structure what it is possible to do and think in early childhood educational settings, in order to move beyond them. And it is the infants’ expressions in cohort with Highchair that draw out the potential that is always present for deterritorialising even the most regulated and fixed expression, as Sumsion et al. (2014) demonstrate in their analysis of this data.
Charlie and Kaia draw on their highchairs’ adjacent positioning and proximity, to share objects and food items, turning these supposed barriers into points of contact. Do they do this to express perhaps friendship and solidarity, or choice over what to eat, or does Kaia explore becoming-Charlie through partaking of his food? Kaia reaches for Charlie’s bottle; she says “ta” for banana slices and then “no”, emphatically shaking her head to everything else, except Charlie’s fruit bar. Charlie usurps the role of carer in passing things to Kaia; he becomes enabler, accomplice, holder of desired and forbidden fruits . . .

Twisting their bodies within the confines of the highchairs, Charlie and Kaia deterritorialise the bodily pose presupposed by the chairs’ design, and indicate a desire for interaction with one another. In their interaction, highchair is re-expressed as a means of solidarity, a means to reach one another, a platform of interaction. Highchair is complicit in the new relations Charlie and Kaia develop. Its incorporation into their expressions of friendship mean that its parts and points, its shape and feel take new configurations, and join new networks of actions and meanings. Not containment but contact. Tugging, touching, then the cooperation and awareness required for both to hold the drink bottle for Kaia to drink. Their bodies straighten and face front, watching Amanda when the bottle drops, showing awareness of their transgression? The bottle, reterritorialised to Charlie’s highchair tray, does not remain in its allocated place. Immediately, as Amanda’s back is turned, Charlie and Kaia continue to mix up relations, Charlie’s bottle in Kaia’s mouth . . .

Highchair offers content for some subversive action (Sumption et al., 2014). A row of highchairs places child-bodies level with one another, within gaze and reach of each other, and presents surfaces for displaying (within reach) the food resources of each child. Highchair is an object with a “lively potential for causing trouble” (Jones, MacLure, Holmes & McRae, 2012, p. 54). It is these elements of Highchair and other objects that assemble with the children’s desire for interaction, sharing objects, and exploring the rules of what belongs to who and what that means in social experience.

A CURRICULAR TRACING
A documented early childhood event also offers the possibility of aligning these infant bodies with particular curricular goals, for example, for communicating, developing relationships, or making choices (Ministry of Education, 1996). To trace curriculum over
this event risks turning production into reproduction (Massumi, 2002a) and may impede new conceptions of, and new potentialities for, Highchair and these infant-bodies. And yet when transcendent categories of analysis and predetermined generalisations make for an imperfect fit, tracing can be productive in the gaps and fissures exposed.

There is potential to trace over this event using statements from Aotearoa New Zealand’s curriculum document, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) such as these:

Children “grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 9).

“Children develop: . . .

- an increasingly elaborate repertoire of gesture and expressive body movement for communication” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 74).
- “language skills for increasingly complex purposes, such as stating and asking others about intentions; expressing feelings and attitudes” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 76).
- “Children . . . develop different ways to be creative and expressive.” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 80).

Here expression is linked to teleological theories of child development in enabling progressive increases of agency, autonomy, and free will (A. Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw & Blaise, 2012). Embedded in these outcomes are conceptualisations of expression as a communicational tool, presupposing rational, self-governing individuals sharing reflective awareness of internally-held thoughts and fulfilling inner needs. This *curricular child* is a powerful child, endowed with competencies and cognitive resources which enable them to both receive information from the world and translate that into contents of mind and, in turn, translate what is held internally into a product (speech, creative activity, movement) that can be understood by others. It presupposes representation—of perception, memories, ideas, attitudes, and feelings—which rests on a belief that there is unity or correspondence between the outside world and its representation in the internal minds and communication of human subjects. Through the clear translation of a world into representations, expression is considered to be unproblematic.
With many “ways to be creative and expressive”, all of which are valued, the curriculum advises adults to encourage children to develop extensive expressive abilities in a range of media. There is no dictate of appropriate expression; the agency to decide on the expression made is held within the “competent” child. Expression and communication are processes controlled by the individual child subject, presupposing that subjects have a range of expressions available at their disposal and select the expressions that best articulate their message or need. This competence is associated with transparency (the child can communicate their innermost ideas and feelings).

This seemingly innocuous theorisation of the processes underlying the words, gestures, and activities produced by children in early childhood centres leaves much unsaid. How does a subject gain access to a range of expressions? If children learn a range of expressions as the “symbols of their own and other cultures” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 78), this means they repeat expressions already heard, the said-befores. There is a cacophony of repetition of language and gesture. If it is the case that children are repeating a preestablished system of expression, forming expressions that follow the format and content of previous repetitions, then how far are children actually expressing themselves?

Yet the object of this tracing is not to get stuck in a critique but “to restore a multiplicity of connections and a state of heterogeneity” (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p. 41) by turning the tracing into a map (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Here is exposed a productive crack or fissure: The assumed transparency of communication and expression is incommensurate with the idea of a range of expressions available for children’s expressiveness, seen as a creativity of expression. With a range of expressions from which children can select to represent their content, idea, or feeling, there cannot be a strict correspondence between content and its representation. For each expression we must ask, how well do content (the idea) and expression (its representation) marry up, in other words, how transparent can expression be? What happens in the gap between idea-content and representation-expression? What are the implications of this gap?

**Highchair Stratified and Destratified**

Stability regains its hold, after the briefest of glimpses of alternative possibilities (why not a double seated highchair, after all?), through a relative uniformity of expression. Kaia says “ta”, thank you, joining in a system of appropriate, comprehensible
language and signs, the endless repetition and continued fortification of discourses that are considered legitimate. Potential lines of flight are recaptured in educational practices that “translate the desire of bodies into the line segments necessary to make ‘education’ happen” (Albrecht-Crane & Slack, 2007, p. 104). If the relationship between content and expression is not self-evident and linear but creative and diverse, then expression is a potential-filled diversity, a differing (Massumi, 2002a). This makes the reproduction of forms (highchairs, institutional practices, phrases, and actions) narrow actualisations from the possibility of all of the potential of expression.

Deleuze-Guattari1 (1980/1987) introduces the concept of strata to explain how the reproduction of particular forms of expression in particular contexts occurs. Strata can be thought of as channelling structures, working to ensure that the development of any expression (a phrase, an organism, or thought) occurs within certain parameters, and thus strata curtail freedom and movement (de Freitas, 2016a). Strata are the “ready made facilitating paths” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 49) of “habitual assemblage” (O’Sullivan, 2010, p. 199). The organic stratum, for example, ensures the reproduction of form within relatively tight boundaries—minor mutations are possible, but the general organisation of body parts within a given species expresses little variation. The stratum ensures high levels of reproduction of the same form.

Early childhood education can also be considered a stratum, organising systems of behaviour for a particular range of “educational” outcomes in child-bodies. As such, the institutional nature of education can work to fix people (and things) into rigid roles (Boldt & Valente, 2016). Thought and action are organised through “mental and material grid[s]” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1479). Form follows previous forms and reproduction feeds further reproduction, cementing and making prevalent particular ways of becoming, ways of being.

When it is the strata that select forms of content for their process of expression, heterogeneous and diverse particles are captured within functional forms. This occurs within the machinic assemblages of bodies, as in practices such as the seating of infants into highchairs for mealtimes, or “collective assemblages of enunciation” (Deleuze &

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1 The use of “Deleuze-Guattari” is intended to diffuse authorial identity and designate instead a machinic authorial assemblage of human and nonhuman bodies including, but not separating out, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. This treatment is not, for sake of clarity, extended to all citations, although it would be appropriate to consider all writing as the product of such expanded assemblages.
such as the phrase *morning tea* and its presuppositions. Strata suck up, or capture, forms and substances in the process of formation and ensure the reproduction of contents and expressions that strengthen the strata further. The strata produce “schooling order machines” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1475) that traverse the learning and teaching environments of early childhood. The strata reproduce “static forms and institutions . . . intractable facts and inevitable results—in short, a tired world devoid of possibilities” (Bogue, 2007, p. 10). They force bodies into “well-known repetitive modes” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1477) and obscure the potentiality pulsating in the relations of the components of any early childhood event.

In setting the strata as an enemy of, or at least barrier to, the free-flowing, opportunistic and potential-increasing force of unencumbered expression, Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) suppose expression to be a dynamic, free energy or force constantly moving toward the new. While strata are the nets that capture the potential of expression (Massumi, 2002a), expression itself is roaming “abroad in the world” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxi). Positing expression to be a free-flowing, vital, enterprising, creative force sometimes caught within the nets of strata which hijack and limit its potential, establishes an ethical imperative for expression. Simply, there are two contrasting movements for the potentiality available to expression: to be stretching always in new and various directions, or to be captured. And here lies a problem of ethics—how to foster the stretch of expression, in new becomings and potentialities for highchairs and other bodies, rather than facilitate or prolong its capture (Massumi, 2002a) in the familiar, the acceptable, the always-is and already-done. Essentially, this means how to ensure a creative collaboration with the potentiality of the world for new expressions (new subjectivities, new forms of institution, new products, new ways of living and becoming) within early childhood education. In this, we might benefit from young children whose creative thought and action is not yet completely shackled by orthodox thought, habit and common sense (Olsson, 2013) and who might thus contribute an “openness to the world” (Somerville, 2015, p. 108).

The curriculum aims for children “to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” (Ministry of Education,
Here are the expected expressions of early childhood education: the expression of a curriculum, the expression of child-bodies as they “grow up”, develop, change, become, becoming certain kinds of bodies (“healthy”, “secure”, contributors). My becoming-thesis asks: What kinds of emergences occur, through what kind of processes? Are there more ethical ways to proceed? What ethics are involved in expression? What kinds of expression, with what affects?
This chapter is intended to frame the space in which the thesis is performed with some ontological and epistemological presuppositions. I explain my positioning, techniques and, for want of a better word, methods, and I introduce key concepts that reverberate in and through the text. This is a thesis that tries to engage chaos and invoke difference and movement. Such a methodology recoils from frames or grids that select, narrow, and focus research, yet without some level of framing chaos might seem impenetrable and insufferable. The framing provided here is quite permeable; an open frame; a frame as a form of constraint that permits and focuses creativity; imagine:

worn, rough edges, splintered and cracked with misaligned corners;
wood faded like driftwood blurring the edge of the frame with the white wall around it;
gaps and cracks bursting open to the incursion of dust, water droplets, tiny creatures, gales and storms;
glass rattling inside the frame; mirroring, distorting what passes; reflecting fleeting, misty glimpses of another world . . .

This fragile framing, constantly undermined by a slow disintegration—processes such as splintering and stretching—allows the outside in. Even as a position, a method, or a concept is explained as part of the frame of the research, it is breaking up and changing; in addition, new elements become part of the frame, and other elements pass out through the gaps that appear. Every thing is event, moving within its own unique sense of duration. The frame is always becoming something new, constituted in the movement and changing relations between its contents and its outside. This chapter is organised around an imagined becoming of the frame, a series of transformations. Following this orienting chapter, the thesis continues in jumps and starts; it circles and meanders in a nonlogical, nonteleological methodology of difference and movement. Readers happy to jump in, may leap!

However, for others, this framing chapter is intended to prepare the reader’s expectations in the continued reading of the thesis.
Chaos . . . disorder, disorganisation: an abyss which induces fear, confusion, perhaps paralysis. Chaos can readily be attributed to many early childhood environments with their plethora of colour, sound, movement; bodies, actions, and innumerable scattered objects. Order, the inverse of chaos, can help us make sense of chaotic environments, to decide on how to act, how to behave. Order is produced through language as well as other logics such as recognition, resemblance and causal relationships (Sandvik, 2010). Labels; drawers and lockers; timetables; puzzles at tables; lids on paints at the easel. Order-disorder, chaos-organisation form binaries in which chaos and disorder take a negative meaning as lack (lack of order, lack of organisation).

There is another sense to the concept of chaos, one that is affirmative of chaos as a wealth of potential. Chaos can refer to the infinity of formless matter and its virtual forces; a virtual plane of possibilities marked as differences. “That cruelty which at the outset seemed to us monstrous, demanding expiation, and could be alleviated only by representative mediation, now seems to us to constitute the pure concept or Idea of difference” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 67). This is a chaos of prematter; a swirl of unembodied, unidentified and nondifferentiated parts yet to be ascribed form, meaning, or function.

Such a conception of chaos draws on Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) philosophy of immanence. Deleuze-Guattari’s “plane of immanence” (p. 298) is a chaotic plane of preorganisation, made up of singularities or haecceities, that is, unformed (pre)matter
prior to its determination. Chaos becomes a series of elements that diverge from each other but nevertheless interact, combine, and function together, producing always difference or singularity (Evans, 2016). This singularity works as an attractor, serving to structure a space of possibility (de Freitas, 2016a). Chaos is generative. The plane of immanence is a space of potential, of virtual possibilities that are available for actualisation in a body, thing, or idea and that remain continuously available for its becoming. It is “mobility, vibration, potentiality and indeterminacy” (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013, p. 46).

If chaos is a plane of “potentialities which can only be acted out by being embodied in matter” (Deleuze, 1983/1986), it also cannot be reduced to these actualisations. Virtual forms do not await in latent form an actualisation that resembles them. Bodies and things as articulations, or expressions, of a plane of immanence, are organised as elongated series, forces, or flows which intersect and connect, and therefore are constantly changing (St. Pierre, 2016). Actualisation is a creative process of the interrelations of chaotic difference and singularity.

Bodies and things are formed in relations of speed and rest amongst a plane of immanent virtual particles that come together in momentary assemblage as “a dimension of rhythms, movements, pauses, accelerations and decelerations” (Bogue, 2007, p. 11). Rather than accrue the stasis of form to bodies, bodies and things become force (Manning, 2013) and form is always in movement. Chaos precipitates movement. At the same time it is this movement of coming-to-formation that gives rise to chaos, as potentiality arises in the indetermination of a space between becomings. Deleuze (1983/1986) also defines the plane of immanence as movement, the movement between diverse parts of one system, and between one system and another, as they swirl in various coming-to-formations.

Chaos is not without its powers of organisation, that is, its own intelligent self-organisation. Chaos consists of heterogeneous elements and parts, but this heterogeneity is accompanied by tendencies for conglomeration, connection, and affect. This is not a chaos in which each element acts entirely independently, without communication or unification with other elements. There would be nothing productive in such a sphere. It is the interactions between forces that imbue the plane of immanence with a “pervasive affectivity” (Bogue, 2007, p. 11), that is, a capacity to create capacity.
Chaos, movement, and potential comprise an ontological mass from which all develops. That chaos exists is affirmed for Deleuze (1968/1994) by the systems of organisation (representation, identity) which only pertain by virtue of the presupposition of such chaos. Chaos is given, order is not; the question, then, is how to explain fixity and the reproduction of order given the ontological primacy of movement and change. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) develops a theory of strata or boundaries built by the repetition of form, almost magnetic or viscous, channelling elements so that reproduction of an existing form creates a strong attracting force, overpowering, repelling, or making invisible other options for becoming. “The question is not how something manages to leave the strata but how things get into them in the first place” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 65). The powerful force which compels life to follow a path already marked out provokes repetition of form and behaviour along barely varying trajectories in all spheres: from cooking scrambled eggs by following a particular order for a similar product every time, to the genetic order of growth in a human embryo. Order and fixity reproduce order and fixity: “Strata are acts of capture, they are like ‘black holes’ or occlusions striving to seize whatever comes within their reach” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 46).

Free of strata, chaos enables individuation—an always becoming-new for every body and thing that can access and apprehend its potentiality within chaos. Individuation is a process, not even a single process, but a multiplicity of phases overlapping in their unfolding (Manning, 2013). At the cusp of individuation the forces of preformation reach an intensity (Manning, 2013). Bodies become indeterminate in their “unfolding relation to [their] own potential to vary” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 29). This moment of indeterminacy offers opportunities to develop becomings-new that increase powers of capacity and action, and to transform in empowering and self-enhancing ways. This is a chaos positively asserted, though nonetheless overwhelming.

Chaos-potentiality is plentiful in the world—the difficulty is how to access it, how to ensure a productive tension between chaos and ordering into form. Short-circuiting the potentiality of chaos leaves us with reproductions, examples to follow, ways to act, ways to be, that in their restriction of, and lack of connection to, the free movement of our desires, are unable to enhance and intensify our experiences of being and becoming. Morning-tea time; a highchair; “I’ll share out your fruit”. Education operates to regulate particular reproductions of being and thinking in order to mitigate the chaos of an all-
encompassing potentiality. Education supports and constricts thinking with the resources it dispenses, providing conceptual habits that are also constraints (Krejsler, 2016), that make it difficult to move beyond ritual and open up to the possibilities and potential that exist inbetween and beyond these repetitive modes of practice. *This is the way we have always done it, said it, and thought it.* Reproduction impacts on the events and activities seen to be possible in the early childhood centre, and on the knowledge and the subjectivities that are (re)produced in early childhood education. Krejsler (2016) suggests then that the concept of a virtual chaos of potentiality, as the basis of all actualisation, is useful in drawing attention to the potential that does become actualised and what does not. It also offers a way to move beyond the “limited, frozen or repetitive versions of subjectivity” (Boldt & Valente, 2016, p. 326) on offer in educational settings.

While chaos-potentiality would generate infinite possibilities for subjectivity, early childhood education aims to produce certain kinds of subjectivities which are deemed positive outcomes for children. There are aspects of homogeneity in these aims, some aspects of subjectivity that are to be reproduced the Same: *children as life-long learners, children who tidy up, children who care when others get hurt* and *adults as educators* (parents are the child’s first educators; adult interaction should enhance learning through play). There might be dissenters, children, teachers, and parents who refuse their positioning—chaos is not easily tamed. These systems for ordering and labelling an otherwise confusing array of subjectivities within a group of children simply define dissenting children negatively as those that lack whatever it is to be reproduced the same. Powerful frames of discourse in early childhood education and expectations for the reproduction of form, facilitate an endless array of decision-making and determination of action that is involved in everyday living with children. Chaos is made a little easier, a little more manageable. But these discourses and expectations also serve to delimit and constrain subjectivities and their potentiality. There is little space to experiment with alternative labels, alternative knowledge, and diverse orders of being.

Early childhood education is a place of such complexity and potentiality that habitual practices are very seductive. Routine and habit provide stability and an efficiency of coordinated activity in what is a complex social activity (Krejsler, 2016). This stability is perhaps even necessary as a platform from which “one launches forth” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 363) into new practices. And yet it is tempting to
seize upon solutions (that is, what worked in one moment as one singularity) and to derive from this a generalised approach. Indeed, within the current educational climate, the increasing expectation for accountability through measurable performance leads often to carefully defined and controlled pedagogical practices (Rautio & Winston, 2015), and tedious, instrumental educational research (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). These can lead to normalising practices and expectations (Biesta, 2010); a normalisation of subject and event. He’s interested in trains . . .; they like running at the moment . . .: observations of children’s interests in early childhood education become generalised in order to operate as tools of recognition.

Curriculum mandates a set of values (for example, in Aotearoa New Zealand, children’s agency in curriculum-making, children’s cultural identities, children’s sense of well-being and belonging, children’s dispositions). These also encourage teachers to engage in acts of recognition as the basis of planning and assessment. Such a reification of what is valued in curricular lists of goals and outcomes risks “an endless repetition of moments of recognition … to confirm the prevailing categories and value-judgements that already appear as given” (Dahlbeck, 2014, p. 19). Because curriculum frames children’s possibilities to engage with a range of life forms and forces (Somerville & Green, 2015), these moments of recognition determined as curriculum both focus and restrict children’s (and teachers’) engagements.

Even when focused on observation of an individual child or group of children, curriculum is often determined via processes of reasoning that draw on past experiences, and relations of cause and effect, inducing a predictable pattern of events in response. Matter is recruited into a teleological plan for a child’s development, something predefined by someone other than the child (Rautio, 2014). If Charlie is interested in trains: we’ll build a track, we’ll make tickets, we’ll go on a train trip, we’ll read a ‘Thomas’ book, we’ll put trains in the sandpit today. Noting an interest for a child propels thinking in sequences that relate particular objects, activities, and ideas together, in predetermined orders that are common-sensical. This is the reproduction of previous curricular provision based on assumptions that the interest always has these particular connections and is always part of this particular ordering of the world. An easy reproduction of the same, but at a cost of a lack of engagement with the difference that is always present. It is not just that Charlie’s interest in trains differs from Mina’s, but that
trains, and a child’s interest or desire, like all things, are made up of differences and variations that propel their continued becoming. Tuning into differences enables more creative movements, more creative curricular programmes. If chaos and the differences to which it gives rise are viewed as a positive force for auspicious becomings-new, then early childhood practices need to both seek chaos-potentiality and value difference. Early childhood practice also needs to work against the easy familiarity of ordering grids of common-sensical and habitual beliefs and practices; work against recognition, resemblance and causal logic.

Rautio and Winston (2015) examine the tendency of teachers to view children’s interactions with objects retrospectively as a contribution to the development of manipulative skills and conceptual thought, rather than to engage with these interactions as events per se, pregnant with potential in the moment of their becoming. Here an engagement with event might involve openness, which Rautio and Winston define as a creativity of response to one’s environment rather than the predefined or habitual, alongside a willingness to forego fixed sociocultural meanings and allow new possibilities to emerge. Rather than submerge the event in a teleological notion of developmental “progress”, the suggestion is to move with the event. The event—the moment of a child and train’s mutual and entangled emergence—is without past and future, and is instead a moment of itself, an end into itself, provoking creative new lines of emergence so that the event is ever-becoming-new rather than being manipulated into, or misconstrued as, a prefixed line of development for the child. For Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) the event is of a special substance, not like a person or thing, but made up only of “incorporeal relations of movement” (St. Pierre, 2016, p. 32) traversing the virtual and actual series or flows which are constantly transformed by and with the event. To transform interests into events is to render them dynamic, productive, capable of change and changing.

Engaging chaos is dangerous work. In developing something new and innovative we might need to “first fall into a catastrophic black hole” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 389). We might need to destratify, deterritorialise to such an extent that nothing is recognisable, then grasp a small thread and garner some consistency, pull ourselves up, reterritorialise, and reframe chaos in a way that produces sense. This sense is not formed with, or as, transcendental truth, fact, or logic. Sense is always
heterogeneous and unconditioned (Voss, 2013), individuated, or becoming-new, for its particular problems and contexts, “engendered in the particular determination of the problem and its conditions” (Voss, 2013, p. 5). Sense is generated when chaos is framed with (often implicit) problems. The problem is an individuated framing that evolves with the bodies and ideas that it encompasses, passes over, or frees.

This conceptualisation of chaos is linked to monist ontologies which take as their starting point the univocity of the world and its inherent and ongoing entanglement. To support an engagement with chaos, then, the construction of “networks, fields, territories that temporarily and provisionally slow down chaos” (Grosz, 2008, p. 3) is necessary. But this does not permit reproduction of the same, and need not follow the contours of transcendental facts; instead these networks and territories need to engage chaos-potentiality in productive ways to enable the most capacious becoming of that contained in the frame. Finding ways to draw on chaos for meanings and functions that enhance our capacities and experiences is the ethical endeavour; chaos is a resource for change and development, for evolution, for conatus, for movement, and we need ways to truly tap into a dynamic and free-flowing chaos without becoming lost in it.

Drawing on chaos is partly achieved through relaxing the organisation and rules which might stifle engagement with potential. In this thesis, it means making the most of gaps in the becoming-form of the thesis, halting the process of becoming-form whenever possible so that the plane of immanence or chaos can be seen beyond, beneath, between. I extend gaps to provide spaces for perceiving alternative possibilities. Yet gaps may be disconcerting for the reader,
as might the lack of settlement and certainty which is necessary to continue to interact with chaos. The thesis’ chapters do not offer a smooth progression of ideas and do not develop a central argument. I intend rough edges, tenuous boundaries, bumps and humps and things that don’t fit; non-sense, complexity, and confusion. A circuitous route is taken, a meandering between concepts, ideas and events featuring offshoots, rebounding, repetition: continuous movement without final destination or teleological aim, rather than the cumulative building of an argument. This is a methodology of movement, which attempts to echo the movement of an ontogenesis of constant becoming by putting things (words, images, quotes, concepts) together and by using their differences as a source of their transformation. With writing as my methodological medium, this is an attempt to plug words (reproduced from an organised system of language) into chaos, to make them function differently. It is to use words in new ways that break with usual, habitual procedures and yet with enough of the shared collective understanding of language that enables readers to put my words into some kind of sense. Method, like its affects, necessarily is individuating, always becoming-new, and thus need not be pinned down in procedure but responsive to its ongoing interactions with research. In the becoming-thesis of my research, method and its components (data, researcher, ethics, code) are rethought and reperformed through differences that intensify and become productive in interaction with ideas of chaos, and immanence, and univocity . . .

The thesis is nonlinear and nonteleological, to avoid the explication of intent which sets up a ground, and a voyage towards a fixed point “a conception that is methodical, pedagogical, initiatory, symbolic” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 26-7). Instead the aim is to stay in the middle, circling, moving outwards and inwards, jumping, changing middles, moving this way and that. The research is all-encompassing; anything can connect, slide in. (Sometimes I try to keep out these unwanted incursions, but is that right? Might they be productive? Who decided for them to join the assemblage, and who should decide?) My philosophical investigation of early childhood issues leads me into other disciplines, into art and politics as well as philosophy. I try not to excessively code my movement, identify overarching meanings for my work or trace existing transcendental forms onto it; instead I try to make many connections, and simply leave openings, many beginnings rather than the settlement of conclusions. Here is an invitation to see what works, and how it works, rather than determine meanings that will
become order-word. Yet this is not to remain in an unactualised realm, if that were even possible—to seek chaos is to decode, or deterritorialise, but on touching chaos new formations spark into actualisation, a complementary reterritorialisation is difficult to avoid.

Written language, and its assumed transparency, is made to vary to develop an ambiguity that can be productive for the reader. I use several phrases and words where I could use one; employing the comma, as an and, and the semi-colon; which implies unspecified connections. The dash is useful—for a quick, playful diversion—as is ellipsis . . . to produce a gap . . . while the colon is avoided: here comes an explanation or example, like the full-stop (done. fixed.). Playful and poetic language aims to disrupt an ontology of identity, resemblance, and recognition, and instead attempts to ride difference, to see where it might take you-me-thesis.

~ rattle ~

ChAos—disorganised, disordered data. Chaos is data; data are chaos—until processed and ordered by research activity. Research activity has become, in many arenas, striated by order and regulation, but ultimately, all research is intimately involved with processes for producing sense, a sense-making tool propelled by problems of understanding, knowledge or discovery (MacNaughton & Rolfe, 2001). Research is always connected with a data-set, which it produces for itself—how circular! (Does this mean we find the data we need for the sense we seek and engendered by the problems that we construct?) Most often research produces data by abstracting elements from chaos and applying order; selecting, simplifying, containing, cutting up data so that it can be worked with. Chaos is simplified by the invention of boundaries and rules for the collection of data: qualified teachers; a diverse cultural representation; paper surveys. Once collected, data are coded, given shape and significance (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013): chaotic data tamed through frames, or grids. There is a funnelling, so that what is produced is squeezed through a small pipe where there is little room for movement—how free is the flow of research after exiting through the funnel’s hole! And yet . . . often its trajectory does not change very much. Squeezing data through the spaces
of research is an intervention in the reality that is researched and there is a danger that it will produce more of the same; banal descriptions of a reality that serve to strengthen this reality and make it less permeable to change.

To operationalise movement in my research process and avoid a funnelling or ordering affect, I attempt to move through data-chaos, abstracting concepts and ideas and working them, seeing what they can produce. As I do so, my concepts begin to solidify, rising in a fully determined form (Massumi, 2013), necessitating that I move again, changing concepts, changing meanings, changing sense. Each concept should work, not to order thought, but to open thought to movement and to its outside (Manning, 2013). Moving sideways, following connections across, not down to deeper meanings.

..snap..

Chaotic data produce my (textual) voice, becoming-thesis. Words, ideas and concepts emerge within processes obscured by notions of authorship. My thesis is an expression; but this expression is not mine in two important senses. Firstly, language is a “collective assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 97) in that all language is socially pre-agreed and generated; we use words over and over again so that my words are repetitions of the words that have come before me and cannot be said to be my creation. More radically, and drawing on Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), I consider expression an ontogenetic force that works through me, as an “inhuman agency that borrows for a moment a pair of lips” (Massumi, 1992, p. 31). Expression becomes autonomous, invested in its own development—a force that draws from chaos to produce flows that enhance its own conative capacity for further expression. For expression to have its own powers of creation and self-organisation it requires resources—elements to link together such as ideas, phonemes, gestures, meanings. These resources are those of chaos-potentiality.

Rethinking expression is one refrains of the rhizomatic exploration which forms the thesis. Children’s expressive activities are often accorded importance in early childhood programmes. Expression is regarded as a key part of what it means to be
human: being able to express one’s inner self fully as part of living well as a human. Expression is considered then to be totally in the control of the communicating person, even if that communication is through the use of socially learned and agreed methods and formal systems. Expression is simply an act of translation, confined to representation of content.

...shatter...

Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) make an interesting move in regarding expression as a process of creation or production in its own right. Expression becomes synonymous with actualisation; “to be actualised is also to be expressed” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 110). If expression is instead regarded as an ontogenetic process, as a process of bringing into being or becoming that is equal to the processes of production of content, then expression is freed from the manacle of representation, and no longer limited to language and gesture-using mammals. It is also released from its subservient role to content. Expression is not, then, a secondary process for representing and transmitting information about objects and events (content); there is not a simple translation of the content of the world into expression.

Instead, expression is always performative; an act of expression is an act(ion). The bodies through which this force works will experience affect—positive or negative—in terms of an increase or decrease in powers of capacity; enhanced or decreased repertoires of possibilities for consequent action and becoming. What is expressed performs incorporeal transformations upon bodies and things, for example, perhaps transforming child-bodies—learners, helpers, troublemakers—or ascribing certain characteristics to activities and events—clever, “good work”, loud, disruptive play. Because it is performative, expression is a political act and thus can be evaluated by an ethics.
Reframing

With chaos a boggy ground of potentiality for research, there is still a need to form something with some consistency, something even loosely held together that can be researched;

something that interposes and counterposes itself in the flux of movement and becoming, so that ‘we’ might disentangle from that flux for a while and—in the engagement with the illusion of data, stand still, take a stand, move on. (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013, p. 222)

Data then, are put to work in an attempt to still the chaos, which nevertheless moves on without pause. This still then is a freeze frame, an image, a ghost. But one with agency, threading back into the flux where it can work to disrupt, transform, or strengthen particular flows. What can this intervention in flows produce? Something “Interesting, Remarkable, or Important” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 82), rather than truthful, explanatory or representative.

Data must be selected in the production of sense for a particular problem, and for the development of consistency, understood as coexistence. Data selection is not a
process that I attempt to control, but a self-organisation. Expression as ontogenetic force produces connections; data-sets grow in productive ways. This is why I present everything as data, allow it to show itself, rather than construct spaces for it and shape it to fit. As Deleuze (1968/1994) says, we always get the sense we deserve, the sense related to the problem we construct. Readers will form new assemblages with this thesis. Can and will my readers construct other problems and therefore another sense? While I seek to affect an ethics of expression through my thesis, in allowing data’s forces the movement to encourage other becomings-new in connection with readers, I risk becomeings unrelated to and unconcerned by the ethical. A paradox of this work is its aim to produce movement in diverse and unregulated directions while also aiming for a specific (ethical) trajectory to expand the potential of expression in early childhood education.

reflect

It is in the attribution of language or other representation that an assemblage is formed for research or pedagogical work (Somerville, 2015). While this thesis is predominantly formed of words, incorporeal ideas and concepts, its data are much more than words and produce material affects that are tangible as well as intangible, multidimensional, and dynamic. One difficulty is the sidelining of the real and material through the preparation of a written thesis, itself real and material and yet what it writes of—philosophers, early childhood settings, children, a myriad of objects—has its own materiality which cannot be included. I am forced to use terms that belie the complexity and entanglement of the material becomings of the world. I write about matter using terms which misrepresent its nature (Myers, 2015) as something separate from myself, which I reflect upon from a distance. These are “stubborn humanist binaries” (Myers, 2015, p. 7). To compose thesis, aligning events and thought with concepts, I am quickly pulled back into representational thinking, “forcing the materiality of practice in a state of representation and over-coding” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 89), the trouble being that “talking about a line of flight is not necessarily the same as taking one” (Bolt, 2004, p. 44).

The real and material, for me as for Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), are essential in
my ontology and subsist outside the discursive. Despite this, as Hekman (2008) argues, “our only access to ontology is through the discursive” (p. 98), and my only way of including the real and material in this thesis is through words or images, themselves real and material. Care is needed not to resort to a discursive way of thinking about the world which assumes all we have access to is language, rather than the materiality of objects themselves. Excluding the agency of the material reality and remaining in a discursive analysis works only to enslave us in language (Lenz Taguchi, 2010), and keeps us mired in human-centric paradigms (Duhn, 2015; Jones & Hoskins, 2016).

But it is in an intra-action with the world that language is called forth (Somerville, 2015). Concepts, words and theories are shaped by encounters with the world; the real and material has affect in influencing language and thought. Language is itself “material intra-activity” (Somerville, 2015, p. 121), at once in all kinds of transformative and evolving relations with the world, rather than a fixed and knowable construct to be put to human use. This makes language a tool for becoming as much as an agent of stratifying representation.

Yet most frequently concepts, words, and theories serve as “order-words” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 91) that come with a range of presuppositions which impose particular understandings and positionings upon us. Language codes the world according to a dominant order (Bogue, 2007), and orders our belief in it. Words, and their collection in regimes of meaning, are forces in movement, not transparent signifiers; part of what Deleuze-Guattari see as machinic assemblages (1980/1987) or desiring production (1972/1983), that is, the social, multi-agential construction of subjects and events. Language orders particular constructions, perceptions, and comprehensions of the world, making it challenging to work outside of these constraints while using language. This creates a tension in the thesis—I seek a becoming-other through an unfettered expression dealing in chaotic potentiality, while language attempts to stratify, to order my thinking and being, and control affects.

While language rarely allows us to glimpse the chaos through which it passes, there are ways to play with language to open it up and perceive its chaotic potential. This means constant movement, and a creativity of articulation. Words become tools for productive affects, for provoking becomings-new, performing “possible worlds in which we might live differently” (St Pierre, 2013, p. 225).
I . . . I . . . I . . . Who is the I that I write with? Deleuze-Guattari’s philosophy of immanence makes problematic a subject-object distinction. I is merely an order-word imposing a sense of a unified subject, whereas all of the elements that make up each I are immanent to the chaotic plane of preorganisation, and constantly becoming-new while forming and breaking away from various assemblages. I is never really untangled, never truly extracted from these assemblages.

Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) suggests we are not seeking “to reach the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I” (p. 1-2). Without the separations that labels imply, every thing is a relational entity, constituted entirely of relations and constantly moving between states through the production of affect. Becoming is ensured as every thing and every body affects and is affected by “flows of emergence felt as energies and momentum” (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 205), by a speeding up and slowing down, by additions and subtractions as things enter the “relational field” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 525) of the assemblage. The I must be placed always in-between—a productive space where difference can intervene and make something new. In this thesis, I hope to present a researching-I who is discernible but shifting, hazy, jumbled, and dispersed among a wider assemblage, as data are lived and join flows of becoming; data and thesis producing a researching-I. This is not to focus on the I, but on heterogeneous forces that connect and gather speed or strength, becoming-thesis.
I repeat. I repeat words, concepts, methods. The difference of repetition is a resource for the movement required in the ontology developed in the thesis. Repetition is contrasted to reproduction as a production of the same, a process which curtails becoming. Deleuze (1968/1994) conceptualises repetition as difference, but this difference is without a concept, making it more or less obscured. In other words, Deleuze argues that there is always difference in repetition: two identical cups are never the same cup, they are always two different instances of cups, even if the only difference between them is their different spatial positions. To assign repetition to the cups is to draw a concept of cup with limits; it is to exclude spatial positioning in the conceptualisation, to halt the concept at a certain specificity. Concepts are used to generalise and group objects: We can develop a concept of horse, and assign it to heterogeneous examples of this species. To do so we block the concept of horse from becoming too specific, so that it can include many examples as repetition of being-horse. Individual horses becoming same by the concept. Difference is external to the concept, although difference is always inherent in the thing.

An internal difference, then, is a difference of becoming, a continuous evolution and movement. This kind of difference swells in contact with chaotic-potentiality, formed within a process of open, dynamic, and creative assemblages developed from excess. This is the difference that a methodology-ontology of movement seeks for becomings-new. This is rhythm.
Reframing

Figure 5. Framings.

Some epistemological, ontological, and political orientations might be becoming clearer, focusing and framing the thesis; although these remain insecure and imprecise orientations, not overly deterministic but functioning instead to disrupt habitual practices and thinking about the world. Contesting conventional ontologies makes possible experimentation while making difficult, or even impossible, our convenient manner of interpreting, understanding, and evaluating our world. Methodologies that depend on reliable notions of subjectivity, agency, knowledge, and ethics become uncomfortable. Commonplace practices and beliefs, such as those which privilege the human as a source of agency and knowledge, for example, or that employ representation as an epistemological tool for knowledge extracted from a knowable, ontologically secure world, become precarious and awkward.

This thesis joins a body of work exploring a politics and an ethics in which anthropocentrism is opposed, and nonhuman matter becomes important in entangled becomings with humans. Alternative ontological, epistemological, and ethical initiatives and interventions are pursued in disciplines such as human geographies (Kitchin, Perkins, & Dodge, 2009), sociology of science and technology (Latour, 1996), art (Bolt, 2004; O’Sullivan, 2010) and education (Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Roy, 2003), as well as in what are described as “post-qualitative” methodologies (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 613) and theories including new and feminist materialisms and posthumanism. In particular, this thesis contributes to the deliberation of methods and ways of thinking about the world commensurate with the orientation of a posthuman turn in the discipline of humanities, a critical posthumanities (Braidotti, 2016; 2017) addressing conceptualisations of ontology, subjectivity, epistemology, and ethics.

Posthumanist theory is, in contrast with anti-humanism, concerned with
affirmative and expanded ways of understanding the human (Braidotti, 2013a). While there are a multitude of ever-diversifying posthuman genealogies, interests, and aspirations (C. A. Taylor & Hughes, 2016), what links posthumanist endeavours is an ontological, or more precisely, ontogenetic immanence in which all matter takes part in an openness and play within a world of self-creation, where nothing is fixed or pregiven but occurs in relation. The posthumanist orientation addresses issues of the normativity of anthropocentrism in creative ways in order to further issues of ethics and social justice (Braidotti, 2016; A. Taylor & Blaise, 2014). Partly, then, posthumanist work aims to address social justice for those that fall short of humanist assumptions of the ideal human form (including women, children, queer, and colonial peoples) and is thus also often feminist in orientation. Further fragmenting and opening up the nature of being, distinctions between the human and nonhuman, or living and nonliving, are collapsed, and matter, the inanimate, is not stable and inert but contributes to its own becoming or development, as well as the becoming of other bodies and things.

Posthumanism is concerned with practices that seek to dismantle “tired binaries” (C. A. Taylor, 2016, p. 7) including nature/culture, body/mind, theory/practice, and subject/object. The nature/culture divide, which contrasts the cultural as creation with the natural as given, is no longer tenable, and natural and cultural processes of production are seen to pertain to the same ontogenesis. Things only exist in and because of their relations and mutual influences (Murris, 2016), and are to be evaluated in terms of their forces and impact on other bodies (Braidotti, 2016). Posthumanist approaches bypass these binaries in order to focus on the interrelations between terms, and thus can better interrogate the boundaries between them (Braidotti, 2016).

This is a monism of a radical immanent and relational ontology focused on affirmation (Braidotti, 2016). There is an attempt for a “flattened-out and non-hierarchical thinking” (Rautio, 2013, p. 397) and a disruption of identities and categories that fix the world according to its representations, alongside a creative search for new, virtual or intensive, relations yet to be actualised (Braidotti, 2017). The ontogenetic forces which constitute and transform the human and the nonhuman are energies and intensities that are free-flowing and self-organising. Movement and change are assumed, expected and enacted in these branches of thought, while the stasis of definition and determination is constantly to be thwarted.
Thus developments in human geographies deny notions of absolute space, or of socially constructed worlds, and instead see spaces as dynamic productions that are always in motion, constituted in interactions and relations between elements, a “continuous and largely involuntary process of encounter” (Thrift, 2008, p. 8). This is not to say that fixity cannot develop from flux, but that it requires explanation (Saldanha, 2006)—Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) strata might be offered as a spatial concept here. As dynamic production, space and place are performed (Latham, 2003) through machinic geographies of bodies in immanent connections with things and places (Saldanha, 2006; Thrift, 2008). The materiality of space comes into focus; “a whole new frontier of inhuman endeavour, what might be called the construction of new matterings” (Thrift, 2008, p. 22). Of particular interest in this discipline are questions of how it is that bodies perform or enact productions of social formations, collectivities (Saldanha, 2006), and practice (Thrift, 2008), with an aim to explore the potential for ethical interventions.

Similarly, a re-evaluation of the development, impact, and functioning of innovations in science and technology (Woolgar, Salk, & Latour, 1986), and their social and political affects (Haraway, 1987), suggests that these disciplines involve not humans working on matter, but formations of diverse, human and nonhuman, elements and bodies in assemblage. Hence there is no ontological separation between human and technology, between organic and technical (Haraway, 1987); the human body does not end at the skin. Developments in sociology include actor-network theory (Latour, 1996), which explains the social as effects of a materially heterogeneous network, and thus not only accrues generative and reproductive power to the material, but highlights the materiality involved across a network—knowledge, for example, is always materialised in words, images, and skills (Law, 1992). Likewise, new materialisms and feminist materialisms, building on actor-network theory (Rautio, 2013; Malone, 2016), have served to draw attention to the performative vitality of the nonhuman, inorganic world alongside humans.

With boundaries blurred between the human and nonhuman (Haraway, 1987), the more-than-human (Chiew, 2014; Lorimer, 2013) occupies an increasingly important role in research enquiry. One posthumanist strand focused on environmentalism and ecology (see, for example, A. Taylor & Giugni, 2012; A. Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Blaise, 2012) highlights humanism’s focus on man at the centre of a universe exploiting nature...
for his own ends. It serves to reconfigure notions of the posthuman by refusing any
categorical distinction between human and animal, and instead highlighting the
interrelation between them as constitutive of each (Braidotti, 2013a). Many of these
posthumanist theorisations also connect to a “planetary, geo-centred perspective”
(Braidotti, 2013a, p. 81), critically concerning the age of the Anthropocene, a time in
which human activity is the biggest influence on the transformation of the planet.

Drawing more directly on the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987), new or
vitalist materialisms widen the posthuman plane to a chaos of virtual, as well as actual,
forces. New materialism is identified as “new” in its grappling with the challenges
accompanying the emergence of complexity theory, an ecological theory that focuses on
the complex co-evolution of phenomena (B. Davis & Sumara, 2006), and issues such as
biopolitics (Rautio, 2013). It also might be new in approach, conceiving of novelty as its
objective (Rautio, 2013), an always-seeking the new of materialist individuation and
change. It takes further the poststructuralist notions of multiplicity and fluidity in identity,
meaning, and knowledge (C. A. Taylor, 2016) with the loss of clear boundaries
engendered by a view of entangled interactions (Murris, 2016). Such ideas serve to
decentre the human individual, displacing human experience from its central position in
enquiry and knowledge formation and replacing the centrality of the human with a
posthumanist relationality (Rautio & Winston, 2015). This is a democratic move in which
nothing assumes the transcendence of a privileged position (Murris, 2016).

Building on the linguistic turn of poststructuralism, new materialism enacts a
material turn to argue that not only does discourse configure our realities, but the material
also has an agentic power to shape worlds. The material, in its myriad relations, has force,
and is no longer cast as a passive recipient of the projected meanings of the human or
culture. An awareness of human-nonhuman interrelations and of the vitality of objects in
exerting a life force and having influence can also better reflect Māori ontology² (Jones &
Hoskins, 2016). For Māori, all things are experienced as having power, presence, and
authority; objects make orders or demands to which people respond and interact with
people to shape events (Jones & Hoskins, 2016). Likewise, theorists such as Barad (2007)
and Hekman (2008) describe agentic relations between material and semiotic worlds.

² This indigenous perspective forms an important context for early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Agency is reconfigured within new materialism. No longer seen as an essentialising discourse incommensurate with notions of immanence and a posthumanist entanglement, agency is better described as a force produced in relation. Indeed, it is not the agents or actants as “isolated poles” (Rautio, 2013, p. 397) that hold the interest of new materialism, but the criss-crossing relations, and the overlaps and diffractions produced between them. Relationality (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010) and horizontality (Rautio, 2013), that is, nonlinear and nonhierarchical thinking, are key approaches to a new materialist analysis of events. Therefore a new materialist approach is characterised by a view of the relations between diverse bodies and matters as those of “intra-action” (Barad, 2003), that is, complex and always-evolving encounters in which bodies and matter are co-constituted and in which they co-emerge in relations of mutual and entangled influence. Intra-action is differentiated from interaction, in which bodies take turns affecting each other, implying an independent existence prior to their interaction (Rautio, 2014).

Differentiation is produced within relationships—there are not a range of forms in the wings awaiting actualisation, but action, or, more accurately, a placement in relation, brings about the form of things. Thus it is impossible to speak of the boundaries between a child and highchair and bottle as they do not have a preexisting form outside of their relation (Murris, 2016). Murris (2016) argues both child and object materialise in intra-action, configured by material practices.

Ontology and epistemology become inseparable in an onto-epistemology (Barad, 2003), in which they “mutually co-produce” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1477) actualised objects and events. Knowing, like being, is only produced in the intra-active production of a multiplicity of relations. The epistemic ability of a body or thing is defined in terms of relational capacity (Braidotti, 2017). There is no independent agent as the locus of thinking and knowing but a knowing with (Rautio, 2014) and thinking with the world rather than about the world, also evident in the work of Deleuze-Guattari (Holland, 2013). Here thinking is a conceptual mode of connection and relation for affecting and being affected (Braidotti, 2017).

This work makes an “ontological turn” (St. Pierre, 2016) which aims not only to pursue new theoretical ontologies but, in addition, to find ways to live (research, educate) differently. In new materialism, there is an attempt to move beyond a structuring of the
world in which, given our tendency to position language as the determinant of experience (Manning, 2013), every material thing is reduced to its representation in language and thus limited in its scope and action. Inclusion of the material is not simply a “tokenistic addition” (Gannon, 2016, p. 135) of a description of nonhuman things as a layer of analysis or conceptualisation within the human-centric activity of education (L. Bennett, 2016). While this thesis does not participate in an extreme posthumanism, as described by L. Bennett (2016), which explores the materiality of the world “independent of human perception or use” (p. 62), it is concerned with human-matter relations in which human and nonhuman are conjoined in mutual intra-action. This is a posthumanism that retains a link to “both the human and fundamental commitments to human advancement” (L. Bennett, 2016, p. 72). This thesis intends to traverse, interact with, and generate movement within education as a human activity which might be usefully expanded with a posthumanist orientation.

The ontological orientation shared in these bodies of work necessitates the rethinking of notions such as identity, subjectivity and ethics. Subjectivity becomes complex without the existence of individual unitary beings to which even a fragmentary and temporary subjectivity can be tied. The subject is a “relational entanglement” (Murris, 2016, p. 151). Within the new materialist ontologies every thing exists in assemblage of different (human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate) parts that ride intensities, harness forces, and prolong energies for new becomings. The complex and contested notion of subjectivity is a creation in flux, the product of mixtures of human and nonhuman agencies (Latham, 2003; Rossholt, 2012; Thrift, 2008). Subjectivity takes on a fragile and contingent status as something “radically materialist and dynamic” (Braidotti, 2005, para. 5), produced and existing through its capacity for a nonlinear reaching out, leading to multiple connections with a number of external forces and bodies.

Notions of stable identities, and independent knowledge—separate, accessible, and representable—must be eschewed by an ontogenesis of constant transformation through the relations, interdependences and mergers of self-organising bodies and matter. The certainty of cause and effect relations is not possible, instead there are only “bundles of virtual capacities” (Saldanha, 2006, p. 19). This has consequences for academic practice in the humanities (Braidotti, 2016), and for how research is understood and
Described collectively by St. Pierre (2011) as “post-qualitative” (p. 613), a growing body of work engages in a deconstruction of terms, practices, and assumptions in humanist qualitative research which have come to hold transcendent force, “pushing the boundaries, subverting and transgressing limits and boundaries and liberating research that traditionally has managed and marginalized the researcher” (Koro-Ljungberg, Carlson, Tesar, & Anderson, 2015, p. 613). Post-qualitative inquiry also concerns the performative aspects of research as an assemblage of bodies, a process for rethinking, for example, data (Amatucci, 2013), voice (Mazzei, 2013b), theory (MacLure, 2010), researcher (Blaise, 2013) and participant (Jackson, 2010). Such work is materialist and posthumanist in its attempts to instate data and the material of research as central to research activity, neither subordinate to the human researcher, theory, or language nor dependent on these bodies to establish meaning.
Of course, for Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari, there can be no transcendental ethical scheme for action. “A mode of existence is good or bad, noble or vulgar, complete or empty, independently of Good and Evil or any transcendent value: there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 74). Being ethical involves working in ways to enhance life, to intensify experience; seeking ways in which a capacity for affect is increased. It is the ontogenetic and creative power of forms that Deleuze regards as an ethical good (Smith, 2006); the maximisation of the capacity to affect and to be affected (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007). An understanding of this begins with Spinoza’s (1677/1981) concept of conatus as a desire or impulse to persist. This occurs through encounter and relation, “conative bodies that strive to enhance their power of activity by forming alliances with other bodies” (J. Bennett, 2010, p. x). Here bodies are not limited to physical organisms, but have a meaning more akin to assemblage; consider a body of knowledge as an assemblage of concepts (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013); claywork as a body of tools and materials and hands; curriculum as a body of theory and practice and paper; and morning tea as a body of foodstuffs, human mouths, digestive systems, chewing habits, and a regular chair. Continual invention is necessary for conatus, as each of these bodies is
subject to the affects of actions by other bodies.

As affects can only be generated within relations, ethics then involves the seeking of relations that enhance a body’s capacity. Ethical approaches require experimentation (Bogue, 2007), an openness to increasing relations and the formation of new assemblages (Buchanan, 1997) or conglomerations; a capacity to transform in response to the forces encountered (Smith, 2006). In a Deleuze-Guattarian, posthumanist ethical evaluation, elements and bodies are never considered outside of their relations. This makes ethics and the ethical act something different in every event. Ethics has to be immanent, it cannot be over or above or outside, and it must “evaluate relations as they emerge” (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007, p. 3). An ethical approach is therefore pragmatic and experimental.

Becoming-ethical involves particular relations and attitudes to encounter and difference, seeking ways to “flourish with difference” (A. Taylor & Giugni, 2012, p. 109). This thesis links productively with other work exploring difference in pursuing ethical aims, such as A. Taylor and Giugni’s (2012) exploration of more-than-human “common worlds” (p. 108) to extend understandings of inclusion to nonhuman others in early childhood education, and Roy’s (2003) experimental pedagogies to expand curricular possibilities. It connects too with attempts to create affective pedagogy (Watkins, 2006, 2007), which involve destabilising foundational structures and predetermined categories as part of becoming-sensitive to the play of affect (Albrecht-Crane, 2005). Affective pedagogy requires a recognition of, and response to, the singularity of an educational assemblage (Dahlbeck, 2014). Ethical responsibility is assumed to lie in the affective dimension of the pedagogical relationship in which can be sensed the singular quality of learning and teaching events (Sellar, 2009; Semetsky, 2013a).

Expression is often subjected to forces which striate and structure it, stabilising and neutralising what might otherwise be flexible, mobile, and open to creative variation. Then expression becomes reproductive in the transmission of facts and the inculcation of values; with the predominance of representation, facts and values are smuggled in amidst discourses of free play and emergent curriculum. How can we open up affect in such assemblages (ethics)? Might a creativity and experimentation of expression eclipse reproduction of knowledge and values, making what we are yet-to-know, and what we can invent, both educationally significant (May & Semetsky, 2008) and ethical? Might
the aim of education be not the reproduction of knowledge but “to bring something new to the world” (Murris, 2016, p. 246)? Does this require an emphasis on the “not-yet-known over the known and predetermined” (Rautio, 2014)?

Placing an ontogenetic expression in assemblage with this notion of ethics as actions and thoughts that maximise access to potential and enhance capacities, an ethics of expression develops two requirements. Firstly, given that expression has an intensive ontogenetic power for creation, an ethics of expression involves struggling against striated forces which push for the reproduction of normalised expressions and their performative affects. Secondly, an ethics of expression would support expression’s recourse to chaos-potentiality and its conative stretch in new directions for ever-emerging, singular, and apposite expressions that move difference through repetition and which have affects that support the expansion of the potential of life.

---stretch---

ChaOs . . . disorder, disorganisation: a pool of potential for unparallelled becomings-new . . .
2. This is a Cow and a Cow Says “Moo”

From the chaos of the plane of immanence consisting of unformed, unstable matter, expression refers to the relentless operations of becoming in which bodies and events are realised (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). All realms of existence, the organic and inorganic as well as the human, are capable of expression. In this posthumanist plane, humans, usually elevated by language and its accompanying capacities for discursive thought (Murris, 2016), are no more capable of expression than animal or matter; and expression does not require human initiators or human observers (St. Pierre, 2016). Tree, then, is an expression of organic elements, minerals, water, carbon dioxide, and sunlight. Tree can then be modified again by chainsaw, saw, and plane, to be expressed as wood, which might then be subject to further processing in expression as “blocks” for use in an early childhood setting, marketed and even legislated for (in an essential items list), becoming-pedagogical, sold, packaged, freighted, displayed and played with.

In the becoming of expression, actual immanent functions and matters of the plane of immanence are separated, combined, shaped. Formally, Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) distinguishes expression from content, such that in an assemblage of elements, some take the role of content, others of expression. Content is the first articulation, the production of form from unstructured matter. Expression is a second articulation of matter becoming functional, drawing on and transforming content. A spiralling process, as what is expressed becomes content for further expressions. This formal distinction is relative and reversible, depending on the angle from which it is perceived, the angle from which action occurs. So for example, the child is an expression, a production, of the genetic code, the human phylogenesis, food, oxygen, and numerous other social factors which contribute to development. Yet the child is also content, the content of an institution such as an early childhood education setting, for its expressions of early childhood subjectivities. A content from one perspective is an expression in another. The child-body: both an expression of a human phylogenesis, and raw material to be moulded, a content.
Content-Expressions of/in/with Early Childhood Education:

Sunlight, organic elements, minerals, water, carbon dioxide, (contents/matter) becoming-functional in *tree* (expression) . . .

Tree, chainsaw, processing plant, marketing, legislation, pedagogy . . . becoming-functional in *wooden block* (expression).

Crude oil and natural gases . . . ethylene, propylene, styrene, vinyl chloride . . . plasticizers like phthalates . . . bacteria, heat, light, colour, and friction (contents) . . . forces assembled functionally in *coloured boxes* (expression).

Coloured boxes (content) offering properties of containment, impermeability . . . water, blocks and props (contents) . . . an assemblage functioning as ‘*water play*’ (expression).

Plastics, heat, moulds, designs, paint, theories of imagination and role play, marketing, sales, distribution (contents) . . . forces producing *model animals* (expression).

Sunlight, water, carbon dioxide, seed, soil (contents) . . . becoming functional in *grass* (expression).

DNA sequence, genetic code, energy, water, cells (content) becoming functional in *organs* (expression) . . . assembled with blood, water, food, energy, chemicals becoming functional in the *child-body* (expression) with capacities (content) for
physical manipulation (grasping, submerging), verbal language, thought-concepts (expressions).

Grass, grasping-hands, concepts-about-animal (contents) . . . grass as “food” (expression).

Teacher-body, pedagogy, system of language, phonemes, voice (contents) . . . becoming functional in speech act “Yes, the cow; what does a cow say?” Concepts of play: how to play, where to play, what to play with; water, containers and animals; the child-body (contents) produce an expression of the early childhood institution’s concept of play (free play, open-ended, emergent interests) and subjectivities (an independent learner, a natural child).

Expression builds on expression—child-bodies, materials, and objects become a vehicle for the expression of play, of learning, and of young children’s subjectivity—a plethora of activities, concepts, and beliefs expressed as early childhood education. Each expression is a momentary, cumulative becoming, immanent with its context and co-constitutive of that context.

Here, expression as formation or articulation appears to involve the temporary settling down and determination of matter from the diversity and endless variation of the plane of immanence. A taming and ordering of chaos, which cuts through and cuts up the chaotic fog of potentiality. Can expression be brought to a halt by a determination of form linked to the representative ordering of the world: This is a cow and the cow says “moo”? Are the expressions of this example, the model animals, the grass, even the plastic boxes containing water, complete, inevitable, immutable, or incontestable?

This formal exercise dividing the aspects of an event into content and expression suggests not. Attributing processes of content and expression in an event or assemblage highlights the huge number of encounters and interactions that lead to a particular moment of a thing or body’s continual development and play. The expression of a child attributing grass as food for model animals, or a teacher’s questioning of the child’s knowledge, embed many other articulations of content and expression, a whole series of fractal relations. Each content and expression envelops so many other expressions that both past and future potentiality is revealed (Massumi, 1992). And once potential has been had, has been configured into form, which happens and is over in a flash (Manning & Massumi, 2014), expression yields to the virtual flux of potential again, and is open to
another becoming. The play of content and expression emphasises the universe as an open system, and highlights a complex ordering and reordering of chaos that never loses its perpetual link to the potentiality of that-yet-to-be-ordered.

In this conceptualisation of expression as an enfolding of ongoing processes of becoming, expression does not hold semantic meaning and cannot be confined to representatory relations but is indicative of many potential expressions and contents. Each expression—tree, child, teacher, play, plastic—is not to be seen as noun but as verb and process, an expressing related to an expressibility, also verb, which inheres in chaos.

As process, expression is an assembling, bringing parts together and into interaction, with aptitude for experimentation, novel combinations, and innovation. As such it is in touch with what Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) term the virtual—that which is contrasted with the actual while inclusive of it, a realm of potentiality that is in play without being actualised. And yet expression is also the provisional result of the expressive process, a temporary arrest of free experimentation and culmination in the production or actualisation of an expression. Once expressed, an expression can function as part of an endless cycling where expression becomes contents for new expression. What is produced moves still.

Because, although in its actualisation and individuation an expression differentiates and separates itself from the virtual (St. Pierre, 2016), it continues to serve as a “platform for relation” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 100), suggestive of its coordination in other assemblages to come. It remains in touch with the virtual, with its expressibility. But this is an entanglement difficult to bring to light. When expression passes into content, its genesis may be forgotten and its virtual potentials obscured. The power relations involved in making a selection for expression, and the subsequent shrouding of potential, form an ethical issue.

The expressions of early childhood education in curricula, environments, documentation, and teachers’ words hold performative force in all kinds of reciprocal relations between these bodies. Bodies are affected in, as, and by the expressions in which they are implicated or with which they come into contact. In the becoming-educational of the activities of early childhood settings, bodies are territorialised and transformed within an ongoing becoming that can reciprocally transform early childhood
education. If expression has a virtual potentiality which proliferates fractally, how then to evaluate the expressions that are actualised and the work that they do in the ongoing chain of expressions that mark/make a body, give it its history and influence its future becomings? In asking what an expression does, how it functions and with what affect, we can also appraise the ethics of the becoming of expression. In the actualisation of expression, what becomings are actualised and what remains as a perhaps inaccessible excess, is of ethical importance.

Let’s begin a mapping of the concept of expression, drawing out connections among its conventional meanings, its semantic history, and particularly its ethics, aiming for a complex reorientation in the expression of thesis. The method involves opening up the concept of expression for new meanings, connections, and encounters, searching out new possibilities to enhance the capacity of the concept expression, that is, a method-ethics. The process here intends to intensify the affect of expression, that is, intensify ways in which the concept can affect and be affected, in connection with bodies and events. Expression-becoming-intensity.

Mapping Relations of Content and Expression

Traditional, commonsensical conceptions of expression as a communicational activity, such as that reflected in the English language sections of Aotearoa New Zealand’s early childhood curriculum document, Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996), assume that there is a form of content which can then be represented by a form of expression, with relations of correspondence and conformity between them. Expression is pinned to content, with content assumed to hold an objective existence exterior to its form of expression. Thus expression is a mirroring form (Massumi, 2002a), which re-presents a faithful image of content at distance. This notion of expression is tied to a modernist ontology in which the world is divided by dichotomous divisions such as real-representation, as well as a world of identities distinguishing forms (child, block, early childhood setting). The separation and distance between such identities requires communicative processes in which rational, reflective, self-governing human beings translate content into expression, to refer or represent. At the heart of representation is an image of thought as correspondence, a unity between the outside world and the inside mind created by cognitive faculties (Roy, 2003). Massumi (2002a) suggests content thus holds a causal relation to communicational expression, and is its guarantor of validity.
This model of expression only enables expression to faithfully mirror the world. Without this faithful connection to content, expression is merely deceptive or erroneous. Expression is strait-jacketed (Massumi, 2002a) in its designating function.

The simple correspondence of the communicational model of expression is not without challenge. Critical ideological theories attempt to disrupt the correspondence and conformity of expression’s role mirroring content, by suggesting instead a “subject-object polarity” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xvi). The subject-object relation is influenced by the way in which power structures determine or act upon objects, with ideology being particularly concerned with the formation of subjectivities. Power structures mediate what can be expressed, and the formation of subjectivities, ideas, and things occurs through this mediated dialectic. In other words, content (power relations) acts on expression, making only particular expressions possible. Expression, then, is the instantiation of a system. Essentially, the subject embodies the system of mediation—the subject corresponds or conforms with the system that powers over the dialectic and determines what can be expressed. Ideology critique is deemed to increase awareness of the subject’s positioning as an embodiment of a particular system, so that the subject becomes empowered to explore nonconformity. This again posits a separate and distinguishable body with powers of reflection on objects that are held at a distance. For Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), conformity and correspondence reappear in the ideological model, and expression is evaluated either as conforming or nonconforming with the system that attempts to determine it.

Postmodern theories also attempt to disrupt the communicational model premised on the conformity and correspondence of expression to content. Postmodern thought dismisses the designating function of language; conditions of truth or validity are unhinged from designation and all referents to a predetermined world are refuted (Massumi, 2002a). This is an unsatisfactory position also. Massumi (2002a) argues that in making anything possible, a lack of designation potentially leads to absurdity, an absurdity only made possible given knowledge of the usual, truth-ful(l), designating order. Whether postmodern thought reveals or refutes the illusions created by language, it requires designating relations in order to break away from these relations. Conformity and correspondence are the basis of the postmodern break away from designation.
Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) unhinges expression from relations of conformity and correspondence with content with a declaration that content and expression each have their own forms, and do not share form or resemble each other. Neither is there an overarching form that subsumes them, no transcendent concept such as the premise of representation which defines their connection. Between content and expression there is only an immanence, a passing into one another, so that every form, every articulation, is a mixture of both content and expression. This is an entirely different relation—nonhierarchical, nondeterminate. Expression passes into content as content passes into expression. There is no division between expression and content, only a univocal immanence.

The distinction of content and expression is taken from Hjelmslev (1969/1970), who developed a quadripartite schema to replace Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1972/1983) binary system of signifier and signified (Holland, 2013). Hjelmslev used the terms expression and content, and distinguished each into two elements: form and substance. It is not that content is associated with substance and expression with form. Expression describes functional structures, which contain both form and substance. A form of expression refers to, for example, words (“This is a cow”) and the substance of expression refers to the substance in which the form is manifested, for example, the human voice, gesture, or writing on paper (Lechte, 2008). Content too has form and substance, the form (such as a plastic or organic cow body) in which a meaning is articulated, and the meaning—cowness—as such which is its substance (Lechte, 2008). Both expression-form and content-form are manifested (Lechte, 2008), making content and expression two distinct processes that are articulated together.

What for Hjelmslev are categories about the nature of language become concepts Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) extends to all ontogenesis in order to think about the nature of matter (Bryant, 2007). While some commentators (see, for example, Bogue, 2007, and Bazzul & Kayumova, 2016) distinguish these concepts by linking content with machinic assemblages of bodies, and expression with collective assemblages of enunciation or semiotic systems, a broader understanding is taken here in which content
can be discursive and expression can be material. Both machinic assemblages or bodies and collective assemblages of enunciation are complex intertwinnings of content and expression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

While content and expression are formal distinctions, in actuality content and expression are two inseparable planes in reciprocal presupposition (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Despite their immanence, separate forms for content and expression are useful; making the blurring of content and expression an addition to their separate forms (Massumi, 2002a). Colour, for example, is a formal quality, yet it is never separated from a shape and form (Bryant, 2007). The immanence and inseparability and constant movement between content and expression makes definitions somewhat indistinct, shifting, interchangeable.

Expression is always already becoming content. “This is a cow and a cow says ‘moo’”. Consider how a teacher’s attribution of label and action to a piece of moulded plastic (as expression) might pass (as content) into a child-subject. Every use of language is performative or order-word (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) producing an incorporeal but transformational affect on bodies. The label cow is not a neutral referent, but an order-word transforming what each body (piece of moulded plastic, child) is subsequently capable of. Language serves to put bodies into motion (Leander & Boldt, 2013).

This is a performative rather than representational relation between expression and content (Massumi, 2002a), because the bodies involved are actively changed—perhaps the brain becomes organised in accordance with a representationalist schema for animals; particular conceptions and perceptions might be established between bovine creatures and their potential actions; a presupposition that there are a set of correct identities and actions for objects in the world might be strengthened, alongside an understanding that adults appreciate children who correctly know and perform these facts. Thus expressions “intervene in contents” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 101), not merely representing content but serving to delimit content differently, to accelerate or impede, to separate or combine, to solidify or substantiate: in other words, to effect transformations of content.

The relation between content and expression forms “a sort of machine for the
production of various types of formed matters” (Bryant, 2007, para. 7), a machine with
many heads, ordering and organising matter and function to form contents and
expression, always a double articulation. Expression then, is not a corresponding
mirroring of predetermined forms, or a postmodern parodical or ironic version related to
these forms, and neither is it the instantiation of an ideological system. A process, a
machine . . . perhaps it is best to say that expression is an event.

**Immanence — expression — content — expression — content —**

**Performance — modification — action — affect — event…**

It is becoming apparent that the distinction between content and expression is
relative and reversible (Massumi, 1992; Metcalf, 2009). That is, the differing,
heterogeneous matter of the plane of immanence serves both as “incorporeal power” for
expression and as “limitless corporeality” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 127) for
content. It depends on the angle from which it is perceived, a little as if looking forward
to the next production (body or entity as content), or back (body or entity as already-
formed expression). But this linear understanding is unworkable: the already-formed
expression is also at the same time content. Thus the tree is the already-formed
expression of organic material, sunlight, carbon dioxide, water, and time, and it is content
for a new expression-to-come (early childhood blocks). There is a content to expression
(tree, plane, saw expressed as block) and an expression to content (block as expression of
tree, plane, saw). The complex relations of content and expression in their reversibility
provide impetus for ongoing cycles of becoming, and implicate chains of assemblages in
the make-up of bodies and things.

Another way to look at this is to consider the relations between content and
expression as at different levels of scale (Bryant, 2007). Content and expression are not
originary processes, but work with existing assemblages; blocks, hands, model animals
for a model farm-becoming; teacher, words, brain, for a play-becoming-learning. The
child-body is an expression in relation to DNA sequences and human phylogenesis, but at
the same time content with regard to larger social institutions such as early childhood
centres, that in themselves are also expressions. There is perhaps a cumulative layering,
expression becoming content becoming expression, a multiplying of layers of production.
Because of the reversibility of content and expression, these differences in scale cannot
be conceived as hierarchies. And the notion of the double articulation of content and expression supports an understanding of the immanence of content and expression in the genesis of form.

Relativity, reversibility, immanence. Content and expression are best thought of in a double articulation of immanent entanglement, as in “reciprocal presupposition” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 50) to mean that neither has precedence or priority over the other, and there are no causal relations. Entangled, perhaps there is no “first” or “second” articulation, no looking forward or back. Our customary language and logic make it difficult to define the relation between content and expression without separating and ordering them. Yet there are only rhizomatic relations between content and expression that have no hierarchy or beginning or end (Bangou, 2013). Massumi (1992) develops a concept of envelopment in order to place content as that which is enveloped by expression, a complex of forces that remain in play while temporarily positioned as content. His position seems to suggest a hierarchy of force, with expression (albeit temporarily) overpowering content. For Massumi, it all depends on the forces involved in the assemblage whether a given element is content or expression; content and expression are determined in the act of force.

Bryant (2007) however, is careful in his portrayal of content and expression to avoid hierarchical relations and to emphasise their reciprocal presupposition. So while the actualised child-body is on a different scale to the DNA sequence that was content for its expression, the child-body presupposes those DNA sequences. Bryant emphasises process, the “organisations, selection mechanisms, interdependences, and potentialities” (para. 11) present at all levels of scale . . .

Let’s begin again, let’s move away from attempts at definition and start somewhere else, make another entry onto this terrain . . . Let’s map the relations of content and expression through the processes of formation of a body or event.

Here we might view expression as a force that moves through subjects, institutions, and objects, with its own conatus. Expression as a living power, so that all matter is ascribed a life principle or vitality, mauri3. As a living power, expression has a

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3 Mauri is an energy or life force which animates all things in Māori ontology, including matter usually regarded as inanimate. Mauri ascribes things with mana, or presence and authority (Jones & Hoskins, 2016).
self movement, self-transporting itself across events, momentarily taking shape in matter. What is produced in expression’s passing into content is without uniformity or predictability. This insistence on production rather than a priori form means that there cannot be a common form, but only a plane of heterogeneity, a chaotic potentiality, from which articulations are made and within which consistency can be produced. Consistency is what holds assemblages together, enables things to coexist, or succeed each other. There are no predetermining structures for formation, only a consistency developed with a coming-into-assemblage.

Prior to expression, there is expressibility (Manning, 2013), something virtual but not yet actual. The virtual is a structure of potentialities, of “self-differentiating differences” (Bogue, 2007, p. 8) that hovers over any actualisation of form. The virtual both precedes actualisation and remains copresent with actualisation. The virtual is a set of processes for becoming-play or becoming-educational that remain present and active within every actualisation (Bogue, 2007) and are always individuating.

Closely in touch with the virtual plane of immanence and chaos, expression explores variation and difference (Massumi, 2002a, p. xvii). If there are conformities or correspondences between content and expression, they are produced but they are not the principle of production (Massumi, 2002a). And yet the world seems to be full of similar bodies and things that can be classified into a finite range of identities. For expression to be made reproduction of the same, there are other processes at work—processes of the strata, that work to select and synthesise heterogeneous elements for machinic and enunciatory assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) name an “abstract machine” (p. 6) as the force or impetus or “orchestrator of expression” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xx). Here the potential of content and expression is captured and contained within “life-defining nets” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxi) that create particular and reproducible functions and articulations, resulting in determinate bodies.

In contrast to this conceptualisation of strata as nets, Manning (2013) offers a description of “landing-sites” as the nodes of organisation of “force-fields tending toward relational form” (p. 12). A landing-site coalesces the formation of expression into a singularity, yet within this singularity the infinity of potential landings remains folded and poised to individuate again. Manning (2013) does not differentiate landing-sites that enforce a curtailment of forces, in the way that Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) contrast
stratification with a free experimentation of form. For Manning, even the most stratified assemblage continues to be made up of the potential that was not actualised, and thus expression can never be completely confined to habitual forms.

Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) aim is a theory of expression that can explain the regulation of reproduction in processes of formation, without restricting expression to only this position of conformity and correspondence. Their explanation describes the formation of aggregates so that a given set of contents are associated with particular forms of expression. The expression of mat-time as a form of content for education has occurred through many connections cumulatively accrued. Mat-time is the product of a self-organisation, neither under the control of any individual nor with teleological or logical determinination of its development. There is no predetermining structure but the centripetal pull of attraction of an existing assemblage.

Expression can be both a creative differing and a stratified reproduction; tending toward either and including both. Expression is caught between the plane of immanence and the strata of habit and regulation. Catchment here brims with potential—even with the influence of the strata, in the space of expression’s coming-into-formation something new might be enabled to spin off, mutate, and grow. Capture is provisional and temporary. Even as it settles into a particular articulation, expression is reaching forth in a “continual stretch” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxii) towards the new.

The Gap of Nonresemblance

“And what does a cow say?” The teacher’s speech act is inserted into, and transforms, children’s thoughts, actions, and passions; it affects the child’s capacity for action and thought in assemblage with cow and what the moulded plastic shape can become in this moment. The teacher’s words and the incorporeal affects on the cow and child are not the same thing at all; the teacher’s words create affects that are quite different to themselves. Expression (the word cow) and content (the model cow and its history of becoming) here do not resemble each other, and do not correspond but remain separate forms, mutually influencing one another. This nonresemblance of expression and content gives each its own becoming. And in this nonresemblance between expression and content arises an interval, break, or gap. The gap or interval that opens up between a form of content and a form of expression is the interval of their relation, active with the potentialities of their interaction but not limited to these (Manning, 2013). A gap is a
place of transformation: It allows content and expression to transform in a space of nondefinition in which they can influence and be influenced by each other.

— — expression — — content — — expression — — content — —

immanence — performance — action — affect — event…

Massumi (2002a) picks up on and develops this gap of nonresemblance as a crucial element for the potentiality of becoming. Imagine then, a productive space through which both contents and expression pass and emerge into form. The “intermediate states” between content and expression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 51) form a “mutational gap-state” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xx) where nothing is determinate. Massumi encourages us to imagine that forms of expression and forms of content drop elements or particles of themselves into this gap—assemblages shedding parts for dispersal and propagation as they transform. The interaction of these different particles and elements in this shared gap-space enables new mixtures and transformations . . . new becomings.

The gap becomes an inbetween of potential, of free-floating “asignifying particles” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 4). This matter only exists in being substance for a form of content or a form of expression; without existence, it is potential. In the gap between tree and block, is carbon dioxide, mineral, water, sunlight, tree branch, leaf; possibilities to become rough and planed, whole and cut, straight and curved; potential interactions with saw, hands, truck . . . Potentiality is dependent on the parts available and the relations between them, but is not fixed and is always becoming as an index of the virtual.

The materialisation of form thus involves a dynamic dance of indeterminacy. In spaces and moments of indeterminacy there exists the potential for becoming-new and becoming-different. Here indeterminacy becomes “an unending dynamism” (Barad, 2015, p. 396), as indeterminate particles, seen as lively, vibrant, and self-organising, virtually explore every possibility for their actualisation. This gap between contents and expressions might be seen in the sense of what Barad (2015) describes as a “void” in which matter playfully explores the different potentialities for its actualisation before settling into form. The void is a space of virtual possibilities, excess, and creative interplay:
The void is a lively tension, a desiring orientation toward being/becoming. The void is flush with yearning, bursting with innumerable imaginings of what might yet (have) be(en) . . . particles do not take their place in the void; rather, they are constitutively inseparable from it. And the void is not vacuous. It is a living, breathing indeterminacy of non/being. The vacuum is an extravagant inexhaustible exploration of virtuality, where virtual particles are having a field day performing experiments in being and time. (Barad, 2015, p. 396)

Barad draws on scientific studies of the electromagnetic patterns of lightning bolts and cell regeneration to suggest that there is a playful exploration of diverse potentialities before form is actualised. The electrical patterning of the face on an embryo before the cells have divided into facial parts, and the flashes of light in different directions that occur before a lightning bolt, both suggest matter creating and testing experimental trajectories as “virtual diagrams” (Barad, 2015, p. 407) before taking determinate shape. This virtual potentiality is an emergent space, in line with the self-organisation of expression.

If indeterminacy is integral to what matter is, Barad argues that matter can never hold a finished form, but always holds potential. The work of stratification can never be tied so tightly that threads of potential are not visible. Matter’s virtual potentiality before becoming-determinate suggests that it has an infinite alterity (Barad, 2015). Matter is then a condensed multitude of virtual possibilities which already contains its potential interactions with other matter, to the extent that it may be said to include other matter in its virtual makeup.

This makes the actualisation of an expression virtual, in contrast to the expression, which is actual (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007). The actual is the arrest of a moment that continues regardless—in the way that a photograph arrests a moment, and exists as actual, although what was photographed was and continues to be process. An actual is an individual expressed (arrested, determined), the virtual is individuation (an always-becoming). An actualised, expressed, body or object necessarily must be related to the process of its becoming, and if that is so, then the object is related to everything it might have become (the virtual). Even in the rearticulation of particles as forms or substances of content or expression, in a process of capture for content-expression articulation in a
particular assemblage (a tree, block, or model farm), these asignifying particles remain always linked to a virtual potentiality that subsumes everything.

The virtual is not what is not actualised, is not in opposition to the actual, but is included in the actual as “energetic throbs of the . . . material forces of creativity and generativity” (Barad, 2015, p. 410). This also means that the parts which break up in the gap between content and expression cannot be seen as individually constructed building blocks or disconnected pieces, but remain virtually and multiply connected to other actual and virtual parts, “threaded through with the entanglements of part-ing” (Barad, 2015, p. 406). Renold and Ringrose (2016) emphasise the interconnectedness and action of “parts part-icipat[ing]” (p. 2). Particles are merely loosened, so that in their looseness becomes visible and possible the virtual potentiality which is held subordinate and suspended under the relative fixity of articulated form.

Deleuze-Guattari insists that ethical expression directly accesses the virtual, in a process of ontogenesis that leads to the creation of the new. This is because such a scene of free, asignifying matter presents virtual potential for new connections that can enhance capacities to affect and be affected. This is a dynamic space of particles in transit. In this space, such particles (dropped by content and expression, their fall trajectory uncontrolled) disseminate, shed and mutate, graft and seed (Massumi, 2002a). Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) notion of affect can perhaps provide the motivation for movement and change as relating to the capacity to act and be acted upon. What is important (ethically) is that what comes to be expressed emerges from a diverse expressive potentiality, and such a process of emergence crosses a zone of indeterminacy before becoming-determinate (Massumi, 2002a).
See how we freed expression from definition, focussing on what it does rather than what it is? Here expression is an ontogenetic process, an event, a becoming, an autonomous, potential-seeking force. This is the pulsation of life, as life expresses itself through continuous new forms, expressions which form content for new expressions; a spiralling and expansive process. Expression is not tied down to any organising system, it is not contained in a subject, or a language. Expression continually moves. Content elements migrate and couple with elements of expression, new expressions pass over into content while other expressions transform. For the new to develop, there must be a deterritorialisation—established forms of content and expression have to shed functions, their fragments mutating as they are shed (Massumi, 2002a), enabling dynamic new connections and vibrations.

The mapping produced thus far contributes an ethical movement to the capacity of expression in relation to content. As neither term can take causal precedence or transcend the other, the immanence of self-organisation in an open system is maintained (Holland, 2013). There is no need for expression to realise content, which enables a potentiality for expression to do much more than simply designate or represent. There is openness and possibility, rather than regimented correspondence. Here is ethical expression, an expression open to new becomings, new encounters and connections that can increase the capacity for affect. Concepts proliferate in the expansion of the concept of expression. But if stretching expression is expanding awareness of the potential that exceeds every moment, and finding ways to tap into that potential or excess, it is, in other words, about affect.

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**A Detour in/with Affect**

Affect is not feeling or emotion, as it is not personal (Springgay & Zaliwska,
2017), although affect can register as emotion. Affect is solely and invariably force (Manning, 2013); it is sensation and intensity, tied to the movement of the body and its relations, related to Spinoza’s (1677/1981) definition of a body as “what it can do as it goes along” (Massumi, 2015, p. 4). Affect is relational, taking place “in and between and through bodies and things” (Ringrose & Renold, 2014, p. 773) and not focused on an aim or objective, but “the vividness of being and experiencing being” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 42). It is a potential expressed as difference, intensity and movement (Rotas, 2015).

Affect is not only what actualises, the movements that a body makes in a particular moment, but the bodily capacities that a body has at that moment for movement and transformation. Those capacities exist, and remain available for other moments to come. Affect is the potential of emergence (Leander & Boldt, 2013); each body movement considered from the point of view of its potential (Massumi, 2015). The more potentials a body or thing has available to it, the more affect it is capable of. Sentient bodies might feel power, capaciousness, perhaps joy, elation—this is surely the ethical act involved in expression. It is a “margin of manoeuvrability” (Massumi, 2015, p. 3) which ethically increases the potential of expression, what it might do and where it might go in each moment.

Affect is the excess of potential, the remainder of potentials accompanying everything that a body says or does: a reserve, a pool of potential. This excess might be perceived as intensity, the static of a “temporary and narrative noise . . . a state of suspense, potentially of disruption” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 26). It is a state of motion produced through resonation, not directly translatable into activity, but always and only a resonating excess of any narrative or function (Massumi, 2002b). To be ethical is to tap into excess, to attempt to access this pool of potential that accompanies every body movement, every actual production of action or language. It is to live life more intensely (Massumi, 2015). Here is the opportunity to break free of habitual, stratified, or otherwise constrained body movements.

Intensity in affect, according to Massumi (2015), occurs with awareness of unactualised potential. There is a doubling or multiplying, felt as intensity, of the body in this movement, combined with the potential movements it might have made instead. A multiplication of potentiality felt as capability, power. Here a becoming-ethical is about
increasing the availability of virtual potentials. Massumi argues “having more potentials available intensifies our life” (p. 6). Becoming-ethical is becoming-intensity; living more intensely . . . living intensity. To live intensely is to live with the greatest possible area of potentiality within grasp. It is to feel a sense of freedom to choose, select, act, that is life-enhancing and joyful; to live in a “more playful way, overcoming or at least bypassing some of the cringes that have been sewn into the fibre of our being as we have learnt how to be embodied” (Thrift, 2008, p. 4).

**Expression-Becoming-Intensity**

Now we pause

to connect these proliferating concepts, actualising expression from its virtual expressibility. When affect connects with expression and ethics it highlights living intensely for multiple and diverse becomings-new that enhance one’s capacities. A new concept emerges, the concept of *affectensity*, a concept I invent to describe the becoming-intensity of affect as an ethical act of an increase in capacity. A becoming-intensity in expression is an intensity of affect, an affectensity of awareness of potential or excess. Affectensity adheres in the spaces, the pregnant pauses between becomings, in which parts mingle and interact and transform one another, virtually exploring their potential for becoming-new, before actualising as matter. Affectensity pulses and throbs and vibrates with capacity, produced in the emergence of the unexpected that is possible when we subvert habitual associations and connections between things. Affectensity is a force harnessed for becoming more capacious; it is the burst of power that accompanies transformation in an enhanced form. Becoming-sensitive to the play of affectensity amplifies the possibilities for ethical individuation.

expression — content — expression — content —
drop drop drop drop ... settle drift ... pick-up capture transit
dissemination—migration—grafting—coupling

**immanence — performance — action — affect — event...**
So how to live affectensity?

Your child-body feels stretchy—you need to move. You crawl forward, enjoying the movement. What’s that? A flash calls your attention. Something silver lying there. A curve, your fingers encircle the band, and you lift the object up. It’s heavy and solid. You shake it. What can it do? What is its affectensity?

—shake, turn around, turn upside down;
—push your finger inside (all your fingers), peer inside (dark);
—bite, lick, taste;
—push . . . roll; sit on it (hmm, not so comfy);
—pull it apart (no it won’t open); throw it!! go get it!
—who is that reflected in the shiny surface—look;
—spin, press—will it squash? can you break it?
—put this inside, now get it out!
—bang—on the ground, on the table leg, on your tummy, on your head!

See how all the bodies involved change in every moment. Affectensity is building as the range of potentials are explored. We can do this, or this, or that, or this. The affectensity is a product of assemblage with object. Each movement that either body makes involves a transition in the assemblage, a change in capacity for the next moment. . . the action “press” leads to other actions to attempt to break the object. The assemblages that are made between the eyes and the inside chamber, between the fingers and the band, between the scraps of tissue and dust dropped inside invite a new greater sense of affect—a greater range of potentials, affectensity. Here we can see affectensity as an experimentation which responds to “the movement found in energy, relationality and reactions” (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016, p. 8). The noise from banging inspires more banging, perhaps harder, perhaps softer. It draws eyes from around the room, perhaps even surveillance. What might an adult say? How might the adult perceive this object and its affectensity?

Oh you found the teapot . . . and here’s the cup. Would you like to pour me a cup of tea? That’s it. Lovely. Mmm. Thank you.

The adult has not engaged affectensity, but recognition, association, and representation,
and with these, has introduced a human centred focus (Somerville, 2015) which reduces the object to a familiar, predictable potential. A teapot, for role play, for pouring tea. Potential and excess closed down, closed off through representational identity.

What can a concept of affectensity do in such an event? What does it add to the mapping of expression? Perhaps it might work to propel an ethics for increased capacities and power in the intensity of affect, an ever-expanding network of potential lying in reach of expression. It might engender a willingness to be affected, and allow affect to propel our becoming-new (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017). Seeking affectensity as children and teachers in early childhood has affect on environments and materials (What do we provide? How much should be available? Can less lead to more potential? What can be combined, connected, or taken apart? Are blocks more ethical in their open-endedness than representational model cows and teapots?). The concept of affectensity invites consideration of the impact on bodily capacity of systems of routines and rules (Do they limit potential? Or provide boundaries in which potential necessarily becomes more creative?), as well as of interactions and events (How can we connect, be open to connection and to being affected? How much do we rely on the order-word, and how might we escape ordering, or even recognition and representation?). Perhaps there is a mode of resistance (against closure, unity, fixity) as well as of the affirmative mode (all is accepted as affect) in the becoming-intensity of expression. Both work toward ways “to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity” (Massumi, 2015, p. x).

Seeking affectensity as a method-ethics for early childhood education. Expression AND content AND gaps AND potential AND movement AND affect AND intensity AND ethics. Expression-becoming-intensity?
Intensifying Being-Research . . .

Methodological problem: How to (should I?) untangle an immanent research assemblage

To even begin an account of method involves the creation of an assemblage supplementary to research activity, overlaying each part of the research event with a label and role or function—researcher, data, code. This is in keeping with a representationalism that, in ascribing identities through representation, prescribes what is known and what can be, in order to organise the world for human use and command (Bolt, 2004). It has the effect of freezing in thought what is dynamic and ever-changing.

Representation relies on what Deleuze (1968/1994) calls a “sedentary” (p. 36) distribution of bodies and events. Here, the world is divided through applying opposing pairs of predicates to identities and subjects—research and nonresearch, data and nondata, researcher and researched. There is a layering of identities in fact, as a photograph (one identity) becomes data, something researched (another identity), and then coded (for a further form of identity).

Representation separates bodies, ascribed with identities, from what they can do, which then makes it necessary to assign bodies with properties and actions: the researcher who researches, the data that provides information. Language and perception (itself conditioned by language) distinguishes bodies (with nouns), properties or attributes (with adjectives) and actions (with verbs). Language becomes “substantialising”, producing identities as “substance with essence” (Murris, 2016, p. 164). This means that things are always in a state of not-doing, in a state of arrest (Massumi, 2002b) rather than movement; they are fixed beings which either carry out or submit to actions, or are holders of particular qualities. Both actions and qualities replace movement with static forms: action by assuming a provisional place which it is directed

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4 Here a body is understood as employed in physics, as “any kind of body; a human body, an organ, an artefact or any kind of matter” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 529) including a research (or method or data) assemblage.
towards or which it secures; property as a state that persists until another replaces it (Deleuze, 1983/1986). Movement then passes between bodies, with bodies remaining independent of the movement, and retaining a self-sameness with their form prior to the movement (Springgay, 2015). Action or quality can be assigned to the thing without affecting its identity.

However for Deleuze (1983/1986), all matter is constituted in movement, so that everything “is indistinguishable from its actions and reactions” (p. 60); that is, there is no separation between actor and action. There is no stasis in a body; each body is a set of atoms and molecules which are constantly reinstated or renewed (Deleuze, 1983/1986). As bodies are constantly doing, their “nature concerns modification not essence” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 7). Movement should not be ascribed to a body, as in the subject-verb construction of language, but instead, following Manning (2013), movement should be understood as bodying. Movement creates bodies, and all that is is movement moving, a movement that never stops, but only switches between velocities, varying in speed and slowness. Matter materialises in different events or temporalities (Murriss, 2016) as ever-changing moments. It is the movement of research that creates the assemblages we call method or data or researcher; a movement we seek to substantiate, identify, and therefore, bring under our control.

Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) argues the actions of a body cannot be separated from that body, because it is these actions or expressions that make the body what it is. Actions and bodies form a continuous flow which cannot be divided into blocks for easy labelling. Without separate concepts of acts and actors; bodies are their potential and actual actions and expressions. The researcher is a researcher by virtue of his or her researching.

Dividing bodies and things from their actions also sets in place what can only be an illusion of agency. It is only in separating the body from its actions that a concept of agency is required to tie action to actors. Instead, the eagle is every action that its body can make (fly, swoop, catch,
peck, sleep, moult and so on). These potentials or capacity makes this body an eagle-becoming rather than an eagle as agent which chooses to express itself through mouse-catching, or moulting feathers. For Deleuze (1968/1994), agency is an illusion created in the divide between act and actor.

All bodies are their capacity to make actions at their particular limit; bodies simply express to the limit of their capacity. Limit here is an “activation contour onto which a certain tenor of movement moves” (Manning, 2013, p. 210). Research follows its activation contour—it becomes a research body in its research movements. Its strength as research (or clarity or any other quality) is immanent to it, and is expressed as and with research, and not as the object of a subject-led process. The idea of a subject (research or researcher) creating strength or clarity in research is dismissed.

Agency, then, is merely a product of a language and grammar that forces us to assign subjects to actions. The logic of the language with which we speak shapes our thinking (Jones & Hoskins, 2016), constraining us to talk and think about the world in the manner of a sedentary distribution of subjects making discrete actions and objects holding properties. Our language upholds what can be considered “an ontological and epistemological gap between subjects and objects” (Myers, 2015, p. 1). Thus it is difficult to write about a body of research as constituted in and immanent to its movement, using the language that constantly reinstates the divisions of sedentary distribution.

Movement is restricted in a sedentary distribution, seen only to occur between fixed points. Research involves a researcher in moving between and acting on data, analysis, and report. If things are not separated from what they can do, all we have is movement itself—collecting, analysing, writing, reporting. We can never be outside of movement (Manning, 2013), but always and already in-movement.
Such movement is conceptualised by Deleuze (1968/1994) as a nomadic distribution which is not based on division and negation. Instead, difference is intensive within a univocal life force, a differing of degrees of intensity within one form rather than a multitude of different forms. Matter, then, does not consist of finite forms; with univocity, everything exists as “a moment of an infinite concept which encompasses everything” (Somers-Hall, 2013, p. 44). In other words, matter is one-everything, a “differing within a common matter” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 384). Being (which, since it is never static, is better termed becoming) is conceptualised to differ only because it is experienced and expressed at different intensities. Just as white light includes a range of colours (as intensities), bodies (eagles and mice) are different intensities of the same life force. Thus we have differences of degree rather than differences in kind (Deleuze, 1968/1994).

In the sedentary distribution, being “relegates to nonbeing or the bottomless abyss every predicate or property which expresses nothing real, and delegates to its creatures, that is, finite individualities, the task of receiving derived predicates which express only limited realities” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 106). In a nomadic distribution, being is neither understood in terms of its actualisation in a range of individual bodies, nor referenced against a perceiving-I or a system of representation. It is instead a varying degree of intensity open to the virtual potential of univocity. This distribution works to “destroy categorical gridding altogether, to push the apparatus of identity beyond the threshold of sameness” (Massumi, 1992, p. 88).

Here is an immanent and univocal ontology of expression in which all is connected, a continuum of form. There is not a core life force that is the source of all beings, from which life forms begin to differ and distinguish themselves. Being/becoming is more of an all-encompassing spirit in which parts (never really apart) come together to be expressed in assemblages which, in being one with the univocal life force, are inclusive of all that is outside
of their assemblage. In a sense, what is actualised is merely part of this life force brought to the fore, momentarily prioritised and visible, but immediately collapsible into the immanence of all form. Imagine the plane of immanence as light which can be diffused and propagated without loss (Deleuze, 1983/1986); a light that can be directed but not subtracted. Things only appear, that is, become visible to an eye, when light is reflected or stopped. Research is an assemblage or event of a univocity lit up in a particular way.

If every being is constituted of the entire potential of the whole world, there really are no differences of kind, but only the dynamic temporal-spatial differences of the particular moment of a being’s becoming. In this Deleuze (1968/1994) draws from the metaphysics of Spinoza (1677/1981), in which all that exists is defined as either substance or a mode of a substance. Substance does not require anything else for its existence, and is infinite, whereas a mode is anything that requires something else for its existence or conceptualisation. What we normally think of as finite forms or substances, such as sand, spade, or bucket, are not substances according to this view, but are modes dependent on something else (substance) for their existence. They are modes of substance. According to Deleuze (1968/1994), “substance . . . behaves like an ontologically unique sense in relation to the modes which express it, and inhabit it like individuating factors or intrinsic and intense degrees” (p. 40).

Substance exists as perceived modalities within immanence (Reinertsen & Otterstad, in press). All bodies are expressions of a certain degree of substance, a certain framing of substance, while differing in mode. This is nonhierarchical as Deleuze (1968/1994) considers substance or being to be “equally expressed by all the modes in accordance with their degree of power” (p. 40). Limits of power indicate the maximum potential of an entity within the one source of univocal being. “This enveloping measure is the same for all things, the same also for
substance, quality, quantity, and so on, since it forms a single maximum at which the
developed diversity of all degrees touches the equality which envelops them” (p. 37).

Deleuze (2004/2006a) also employs the concept of “a life” (p. 386) to express a univocal force
of life “that exceeds *this* life yet cannot be experienced without it” (Manning, 2013, p. 17).

Deleuze (2004/2006a) remarks “the immanence that is in nothing else is itself a life” (p. 385-6).

*A life* is preindividual, an impersonal flow that co-composes bodies or each particular life
(Manning, 2013). A life is a plane of virtuals, a plane of immanence, felt as something virtual,
registered as affect.

If researcher, data, method, code, analysis, as well as knowledge, are equal in a single life
substance which constitutes them, each operationalising this life force within the parameters of
their potential becoming., how to enact such univocity in research? Can I expose the limits of
the notion of data, for example, or of researcher, to open these bodies in a greater stretch
towards their being immanent—to researcher, data, method, and code being indistinguishable,
part of a generative creativity without the barriers of identity? This is not to eschew the
formation of a research product; instead deterritorialisation entails a necessary
reterritorialisation, especially for something useful and interesting to be created in research. But
in order to be truly generative and creative, the research event must not be constricted by
processes of representation, subjectification, and signification which may reduce its sphere of
potential.

“Movement, for its part, implies a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle
of points of view, a coexistence of moments which essentially distort representation” (Deleuze,
1968/1994, p. 56). Might research create an immanent plane in which many things and bodies
are implicated, swirling, merging, coming in and out of focus, without the containment and
determination of any kind of signification or subjectification? This is an entirely new way, not
of doing research, but of being research (Springgay, 2015); perhaps not even being research, but becoming research, becoming thesis.

In nomadic univocity a becoming-research would be always moving between matter, bodies and events, twisting and turning, never still enough to settle down into the ethical violence of a single transcendent centre of meaning. Within the play of movement in an immanent plane, the generativity, rather than factuality, of relation would come into focus (Massumi, 2002b). Research would become a production seeking new relations for lines of becoming that are counterposed to segmentary and dividing lines; “lines of flight” to “topple over” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007, p. 132) notions of subjectivity, identity and fixity of form.

Undistinguished from other aspects of the assemblage, and immanent, method is researcher-data-theory-problem-ethics. The idea of methodology (over, above, and beyond research) is resisted (St. Pierre, 2016). All that is required is constant movement to ensure there is never a becoming-stable of the research assemblage. This is not the application of a “method” of movement to a research-body, which already in nominal form suggests the reification of representation, but the entire research assemblage moving, transforming, shifting spaces and terrains. There can neither be a beginning nor a conclusion, although there can be several of each, serving as launching pads for new movements.
Methodological problem: What place for ethics in ontologies of self-organisation?

Research methodology resounds with “order-words” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 91) that impose certain assumptions about what to do and think as research and which thereby order research activity. Ethics is a particularly powerful order-word for the stratification of research, strongly policed by ethical approval systems, but indeed all aspects of research are pushed towards the norms of strata by the desire for credibility. Strata are “preferential nodes of forces” (Verderber, 2016, p. xix) which lock elements into particular formations and prevent a more vital and creative becoming. Ethics as order-word directs researchers to “pre-tailored” (Higgins, Madden, Berard, Lenz Kothe, & Nordstrom, 2017, p. 17) procedures, processes, and activities.

Bound with the universalising moral conceptions of a human-centred foundation (C. A. Taylor, 2016), ethics is carefully delimited in research with sub-categories such as participant consent, protection, benefit, risk, plagiarism. Tied to such a schema, ethics becomes procedural. Yet there is a more-encompassing ethics existing beyond the anatomisation of procedural schema. The decision to initiate research and the selection of a research problem, a problem worthy of the construction of an entire research assemblage and which will be influenced by the engagement of research, is also ethics. In this selection and initiation lies a far greater responsibility than the narrow list of buzzwords presupposed by ethics-as-methodology-order-word: confidentiality (tick); benefits (tick); protection from harm (tick) . . . Koro-Ljungberg (2016) calls for a “deeply ethical” (p. 118) sense of responsibility, which goes beyond the procedural checklists mandated by institutional standards for ethical practice in research.
This notion of responsibility is important, perhaps especially so in work framed by ontologies of self-organisation. Such ontologies do not suggest anything goes, or that values are merely relative. Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) ontology and posthumanist orientation do not negate the responsibility of human action to be ethical. An immanent materialism which places all potential in play only underlines the fact that in the actualisation of particular forms, a range of possibilities are at that moment excluded. This highlights the political nature of all becoming.

Yet an immanent materialist ontology invites a reconceptualisation of responsibility. Manning (2013) argues against the notion of taking responsibility for something. For Manning (2013), this kind of responsibility for suggests a benevolent act toward a victim. It reinstates humanist values, centering one as responsible in relation to the other. Manning (2013) instead advocates a “responsibility before” (p. 72), which is an engagement with the virtual, the throbbing plane of chaotic potentiality. Responsibility before means that we have not already positioned ourselves (Manning, 2013) but are open to creativity and experimentation, open to the potentialities of a life rather than this life.

Deleuze-Guattari’s ontology suggests humans are an affect in and of the universe’s self-organisation, and this capability for affect means humans play an (albeit nonprioritised) part in the ongoing creation of the world. Alongside the ways in which we construct and are constructed by the differences that arise between our human selves and the multiplicity of material agents in the world, we are accountable for the way in which we approach these differences: “our attitudes, orientations and capacities in attending to the world” (Rautio, 2013, pp. 400-1). Here is an ethics, an ethics of the encounter with difference.

For Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) the ethical act is defined simply, in terms of affect. Research is always already an action with affect; whether research is ethical or not concerns the quantitative and qualitative change in affect for the bodies involved. It is ethically good for
elements or bodies to link together or self-organise in a way that increases their power or affect. Separating a body or element from other parts or from its affects, leading to a diminution of power, is unethical (Evans, 2016). This conceptualisation of ethics links to the Spinozian (1677/1981) notion of conatus, which refers to a desire to persist, or “an ontological desire for self-expression” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 384), by which bodies constantly seek enhanced capacities. Ethics is an inherent quality of self-organisation, immanent to creation.

Ethics can never be predetermined; there is no set formula but only an “affective ethical logics” (A. Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2017, p. 143) that is always transforming and being transformed. Ethics must be emergent in the continuous and ever-changing capacity of affect and action, and always played out in the productions of bodies, things and practice (C. A. Taylor, 2016). Each encounter, then, recreates the matter of ethics anew (C. A. Taylor, 2016), as ethics is played out at a micro-political level, focused on relations and their forces of affect (Braidotti, 2013a).

Ethics thus requires an “affective attunement” (Manning, 2013, p. 8). Rautio (2013) argues that to tune into affect is to develop an “availability and openness” (p. 402) to the material world and its potential, whereas Bogue (2007) emphasises the intensive exploration of potential within a body. Both are perhaps required in order for an experimentation with the world that enhances capacity for affect. Rather than a disinterested representation or explanation of phenomena, research might focus on its capacity for action, with taking action and measuring affect, that is, ethology (Buchanan, 1997). An ethic for research might be that of attentive responsiveness (Bogue, 2007). Ethics becomes immanent and intensive; it comes to mean seeking research and research methods that work to increase affect, as the potential available for becoming, in bodies and events.
It is Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) reconceptualisation of the relation between sign and force that enables us to move “from a morality of interpretation (signification) to an ethology of power (affect)” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 50). Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) unhinges the sign from a realm of signification, making it an asignifying force, capable of affects as yet unknown and varying with the assemblages into which it enters. It is not that the sign compels a meaning that can be interpreted, but that the sign and the body that senses the sign come together and provoke affects in each other, a productive intra-action.

An experimentation with signs seen as forces rather than signifiers moves research away from reified sign regimes “congealed in thought through habit” (Roy, 2003, p. 15) and towards new potentials in affect. This requires the suspension of “categorisation and comprehension of the other” (Bogue, 2007, p. 13), and instead an openness to virtual potential through experimenting with the affective signs of the other. On an immanent plane, the researcher-body is always implicated in the signs that it connects (Roy, 2003); thus affect involves an intensive development as well as an extensive one.

Productive encounter arises from relations of disturbance and dislocation with the sign that enables it to be regarded as “the expression of a possible world” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 261), something pointing towards many potentials and therefore generative of the new. The sign requires an undoing of the body’s current assemblage which then becomes only “points of emergence within an unfolding ensemble of speeds and affects” (Bogue, 2007, p. 13). A sign works as a plane of prepersonal affects and intensities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) for experimentation and then reterritorialisation in new signs, new bodies, diverse in sense and affect.

Pursuing research as an all-encompassing materialist and vital event, research is immanent to a research problem (Springgay, 2015), and indeed, always to ethics. Research, its ethics, and even
its problem (usually thought to structure research from the beginning), emerges in the midst of a research movement (Springgay, 2015). Immanent, ethics pervades the research problem of this becoming-thesis, indeed it selects and constructs a research problem (ethics becomes problem). This becoming-thesis elicits a problem for exploration concerning the creativity and capacity of expression within early childhood education.

Others have considered the importance of children’s creativity and the ways that it might be diminished by formal curriculums and authoritative discourses (Sellers, 2013; White, 2016). Deleuze-Guattari’s concepts work together with these issues to produce new problems in which the creativity and novelty of affect becomes ethical in its opposition to stratified and habitual assemblages of form.

Ethics is rethought with the development of an ontology of expression and in its relationship with the chaotic plane of preorganisation and the organising strata. In so being, ethics becomes a space to increase expressions that draw on potentiality for becomings-new in early childhood education. This is not to valorise the new (becoming-new may not always be comfortable, nor a positive change for a body) but to disrupt the habitual becomings whose automation does not attune with what might be possible for bodies within early childhood education. This is not to assume that the new itself is always full of affect, but that the processes through which the new is obtained require access to a fuller range of potential than striated productions allow.

Deleuze-Guattari’s ontological assumptions prioritise creation and particularly, creation of the different and new, that is, of novelty, creation, and difference as opposed to habit, striation, and determination. There is no need to debate the relativity of the new, as it matters not whether this is new for this moment, for this child, for this institution, or for humanity. Deleuze-Guattari (1991/1994) wants us to “create concepts that are always new” (p. 5), intending an openness of conceptual thought that is not locked into existing concepts, meanings, and
associations. This is a sense of new that resists closure and celebrates an ever-diversifying complexity (Rautio, 2013). It is a new that is nonhierarchical and nonlinear, concerned only with the creation of an ever-intensifying engagement with an event in the present.

The new becomes a case of seeking to increase the capacity to affect, and as such is a becoming-ethical. It will require heterogeneity, interconnections, and creative interplay (Evans, 2016). It will require the linking of singularities in a way that increases the power or capacity for affect of all (for some linkages, as Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) emphasises, can lead to lines of fascism or self-destruction). For Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), the diversity of potential that precedes formation is crucial for ethical acts of becoming or expression. The fullness of potentiality within the chaotic preorganisation of the plane of immanence offers opportunities for “the multiplication of powers of existence, to ever-divergent regimes of action and expression” (Massumi, 2002a, p. 34).

Alongside an affirmative stance to the world (in which every thing and every possibility is valued for its singularity and as potential for interconnections), there is also required resistance. This is the resistance of the plane of organisation and structures such as the “organism, signification, and interpretation, subjectification and subjection . . . [which] are what separates us from the plane of consistency” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 155). To shake off subjectivity and signification in a movement towards becoming-ethical in research is no easy task. The account thus far suggests selection of an ethical problem by a subject, by the researching-I. This is a researching-I to which is attached particular properties and presuppositions, including the responsibility to be ethical and its concomitant notion of agency. In the immanence which decentres the human researcher and entangles the material parts of research, notions of responsibility and agency must be construed differently. Ethics becomes
capacity-enhancing force created in the interaction and interconnection of heterogeneous parts
which include, but do not centre upon, those parts ascribed identity as researcher.

Ethics moves from tick list procedure, to researcher responsibility, immediately veering away
from such a humancentric notion. The subject undone, ethics is produced then in the
heterogeneity, interconnections, and creative interplay of prepersonal singularities and
asignifying signs which constantly seek a differing. Responsibility for the ethical act of
enhancing capacity becomes a function of assemblages. This is not quite as agential as it
sounds, but rather a natural inclination of matter. Rather than responsibility, expression simply
enacts a natural inclination for a becoming-more-capacious through the movement and
transformation of connection-making. It is only the blockades and impediments of the main
stratifying forces—the organism, signifiance, subjectification—that impede this endeavour for
enhanced capacity and power.
EVENT: THE MONSTROSITY OF AN EARTHQUAKE MEETS DOING-CURRICULUM

An early childhood event, originally transcribed in my Masters’ research (Hargraves, 2012), is regenerated here as a becoming-thesis event. Ever-individuating, this event belongs not only to the past (which is continually present as a virtual past) but also to the present of becoming-thesis. It is expanded here in a mapping which attempts to examine the workings of affect and “to provoke attention to the forces that come into view as habit or shock, resonance or impact” (Stewart, 2007, p. 1), in order to enable becomings-new of thought and action.

Children and Teachers “Talking and Thinking About Earthquakes?” Mapping Expression in an Event of Early Childhood Education

The teacher prepares for the event with a mixed semiotic of ordered form and chaotic potential. She draws on the expressions of early childhood education (the blocks, paper, pens, tables, and work spaces) and the expressions of the children (an interest in earthquakes) as contents for a curricula programme.

I [Vicki] suggest to two children ‘would you like to come and do some talking and thinking about earthquakes?’ They respond ‘no’. To another child I ask ‘would you like to come and do some talking and thinking about earthquakes with me? Would you like to build little houses and then make an earthquake come?’ We move to a table inside the centre. It has room for about six children to work comfortably. Behind us are the art shelves with paper, pencils, paint, sellotape, boxes and collage items. I have also moved the block trolley over and stacked some large blocks on it, as well as the baskets of bears, people, road tiles, and bottle lids that it usually contains. (Hargraves, 2014a, p. 32)

This scenario is full of vibrant matter, that is, matter bursting with potential for assemblage and always individuating or becoming-new. Thus, matter is both ordered into form and a chaotic potential. A wooden block, for example, epitomises organisation. While wood itself represents the organised form of a chemical and physical ontogenesis of photosynthesis and cell differentiation, the block itself is a smoothed and squared version of wood, bearing little resemblance to the sticks falling beneath the boughs of a tree. Wood-as-block bears traces of its production line journey, from felling, to
transporting, to processing. It holds the traces of its past, traces of the cultural processes which led to its conception (as a useful childhood play item) and production (institutional processes dictating the correct equipment for childcare); the workshop in which it was planed and shaped; the tree from which it was taken; and even the evolution of the tree’s species over time. It also points forward to possibilities: for holding, for building, for pushing, and so on.

Every object is a sign, an indicator of its past and of its future potential. Thus in its expression as wooden block, the potential of this matter is not yet arrested into a final form. The neatness of its quadrate form enables its connection with other blocks for building upwards, against, away, and towards. It can be turned over and reversed and rotated for different configurations. The wooden block holds potential for qualities of hardness and loudness; this potential for loud sound will be exploited by the children and connected with the concept of earthquake. In this way objects have agentic force and contribute to human thinking processes (MacRae, 2012), being suggestive or constructive of what it is possible to think. The expression “block” affords potential that other, rawer pieces of wood simply do not. Its future exists in its “qualities to be exploited” (Massumi, 1992, p. 10). Everything here that the teacher provides, “paper, pencils, paint, sellotape, boxes and collage items”, is a structured, determinate form yet is capable of entering into new relations that will transform its meaning, perhaps its shape, and contribute to hybrid forms of entirely new expressions. Expression-becoming-content.

The size of the table “for about six children to work comfortably” further organises potential interaction—indeed a jostling for space and resources will become apparent. Furniture (the block trolley) is moved, hinting at a necessary, albeit changeable organisation of positions within the early childhood environment. The deterritorialisation of the block trolley, its reterritorialisation in a new location. The large blocks are placed on here from elsewhere, another deterritorialisation—perhaps marking these blocks, making them more visible, more attractive for inclusion in new assemblages. Items are grouped in baskets, the similarity and difference within each basket suggestive of connection, subtraction, addition; of piling, stirring, spilling. An organisation that might overflow—imagine one item out of place, its presence suggestive of an encroaching disorder behind surface order. Paradoxically, as we will see, this is an organisation of separation that enables their mixture: large blocks with small blocks, bears with roads—
this the idea behind the organised spaces teachers work hard to initiate and maintain.

Before we even begin to add the complexity of human bodies, brains and voices, we have a cacophony of form, a hubbub of potential. Matter bursts at its seams to express itself in new forms and associations, the paradox of separation-suggesting-connection. Matter in its expressions as paper, blocks, and tables speaks and invites, it urges the movement and manipulation that human bodies afford, fuelled by a desire that matter itself institutes.

The teacher wants to engage the potential of the early childhood setting’s materials for a specific function; “talking and thinking about earthquakes”. In making such an expression, the teacher is “doing curriculum”. What are the contents that come together in this doing-curriculum expression assemblage? Here ideas about learning and teaching are developed as contents approved and circulated by the institution of early childhood education operating as and through a multiplicity of actors. Books, professors, courses, managers, and theory, converge and diverge on determinations of doing-curriculum but nevertheless give the teacher a ground on which to build her practice. The teacher embodies a range of the educational ideas of institutions (Murris, 2016). Like the wooden block, the teacher of this moment is produced through the meeting of forces, and a complex array of forces behind forces (Massumi, 1992). Such a multiplicity is difficult to untangle, but attribution of cause is not necessary in this becoming-thesis event. Let it merely be acknowledged that the teacher represents an important force of this doing-curriculum.

The teacher’s institutional identity makes it possible for her to actively determine and even police doing-curriculum. Yet the teacher’s doing-curriculum expression is continually interdependent on the children’s responses—an active negotiation goes on between the children’s doing-curriculum and the teacher’s knowledge and beliefs about doing-curriculum. For example, some of the children refuse the teacher’s invitation of doing-curriculum as “some talking and thinking about earthquakes?” So the teacher modifies her approach, adding “Would you like to build little houses and then make an earthquake come?” Perhaps this invitation connects better with the children’s desires for doing-curriculum, perhaps it is the language the teacher employs that makes better connection with the children’s desires. Enter the multiplicities of forces that are the moment-to-moment expressions of child-bodies:
The session recording begins with me reading the documentation to the group of seven children, one of whom has already started building. I ask this child if he can make an earthquake happen to his building. He places his hands on top of his buildings and shakes the blocks from side to side. The building breaks, and another child comments ‘Let’s do it again’. I invite all the children to start making buildings so we can make more earthquakes. The children begin building with intense concentration. Sabrina, Benson, Sefa and Izzy are soon pushing their buildings over (as earthquakes). Eloise, Tilly and Damien create more elaborate buildings, with Damien creating space for his plastic bear’s (bottle-lid) car, and Tilly suggesting that bottle lids could make a chimney. (Hargraves, 2014a, p. 32)

The teacher-body reads documentation. Documentation here is an expression of the contents of photographs of child-bodies in previous events, the teacher’s reification of these events, and the teachers’ institutionally constituted theories and beliefs about doing-curriculum. These contents influence the choice of (order-)words which presuppose and order beliefs about the documented events. Documented events are quite heavily stratified by language, yet there is always room for readers to interpret documentation in ways that authors did not intend. The teacher expects the children to repeat the documented experience. All children are invited to “start making buildings so we can make more earthquakes”, another use of language to direct and condition the children’s responses. And yet not all bodies take the direction implied.

There are whispers of dissent in the elaborate buildings and the focus on vehicles. Here matter assembles with the desires of the children and makes its own suggestions of form. The play territory, the surrounding environment, and the matter which makes it up, are already becoming with each other and in and across a multiplicity of lines (Osgood & Giugni, 2015). Competing forces: the teacher/institution’s desiring-force, the children’s desiring-force, matter’s desiring force. The forces behind these forces, all the complexities of contents which make up the expressions of the moment, enable potential to become expansive. Thus the teacher’s stratifications are not to be considered a negative force, reducing potential, diminishing affect. Conversely, the teacher-desire is additive, it adds potential to the event. We have the potential of the multiplicity of forces within the teacher’s doing-curriculum as well as the multiplicity of potential that the children bring.
The teacher’s desire has instigated the earthquake. A prior expression, a previous event, made contents for this doing-curriculum expression. Earthquake becomes order-word, the teacher stratifying the doing-curriculum event using this word to represent the entire event as cumulative and connected learning, and to keep the group together through their shared attention on this concept. (Note notions of doing-curriculum as focused, occurring in groups, and maintained over different spaces and times as forces behind forces). Concepts, such as earthquake, are forces too, and have a materiality that not only is dynamic in its becoming but is provocative of material becomings for other bodies (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013). Deleuze-Guattari (1991/1994) describes concepts as combinations of components, components which themselves are made up of further components. Always forces behind forces behind forces. Components are linked in that the same component may be present in other concepts or problems, suggesting a network of interconnections. Enter the monster as a concept connectable to earthquake through the component of fear . . .

Vicki: *How are you going to make the earthquake happen on yours?* [to Eloise]
Sabrina: *Need to* [pause] ... *The other kids do it like this* [she knocks her building over with hands [sic], pushing blocks back and forth].
Vicki: *Oh yeah a bit of a shake* [pausing 2 sec].
Damien: *I was shaking it, but it fell.*
Vicki: *What about if the shaking came from somewhere else?*
Sabrina: *A monster shaking in the house.*
Vicki: *What about if a monster was inside the house shaking it?*
Sabrina: *No it lifted up the house and shaked it.*
Sefa: *Man like this hey* [pausing 1 sec] *you’re breaking my house.*
Vicki: *Is that what the monster said?*
Sefa: *That’s what the people said.*
Damien: *[brings his hands down fast and hard onto the building, the bottle-lid chimney falls over. Tilly picks up the lids, raises an eyebrow, then smiles at Damien. Damien looks around with his hand on the broken building, looks at the collapsed structure and laughs]* [...]
Eloise: *Can I have some blocks Damien?*
Vicki: *Did you hear what Sabrina said about there being a monster? Maybe he picked up the house* [pause] *or maybe ...*
Sefa: *[hands on table edge, leaning up on table]* *No he like this, wait a minute*
monster, that not your house. Like this wait a minute that’s only my house.
Vicki: That’s only my ... yeah he didn’t want ...
Sefa: Man say that ...
Vicki: Then what did he do Sefa?
Sefa: Breaking the house.
Vicki: Oh he was breaking the house.
Sefa: Like this kick it. They’re like kicking the [...] [kicks with legs] [...] 
Tilly: [takes lids over to art shelves]
Vicki: Sefa just said that the monster was kicking the house, kicking inside the
house and that was what made the earthquake happen.
Sefa: Not like that [kicking actions].
Vicki: How Sefa?
Sefa: Do it like this, do a jump.
Vicki: Oh the monster did a jump?
Sefa: Did a backflip[?]
Izzy: Jump jump jump like that [looks at Sefa and smiles, rests forearms on table
and sucks thumb].
Tilly: [returns to table, wrapping sellotape around the lids]
Sabrina: Did a jump on the house and pulled off the chimney.
Sefa: Do a jump high, like this [jumps up, lands with legs spread wide]. Go like
this [turns to left, jumps feet together]. Hoo ha [...].
Tilly: Chimney goes like that.
Vicki: [giggles] Look at Sefa and Izzy, they’re showing us how the monster jumps
[pause 2 secs]. And what happened to the buildings when the monster jumps?
Izzy: [puts hand on one of the blocks, lifts it up high, pauses 2 secs, makes eye
contact, brings block down hard on table, and then holding the block, makes it fly
up and fall off the edge of the table].
Sefa: [stops, lifts leg up] dumn [brings leg down, stamping action] dumn.
Vicki: Ooo that was a big bang wasn’t it? That made the building fall down when
there was a big bang.
Izzy: What happened again an earthquake go bang ah ah all the chickens ran out
ah ah ah [runs cockerel across table, across Sabrina’s building].
Sefa: [rebuilding his blocks] Doosh. The house broken [uses hands to break up
building].
Izzy: [screams] Someone made that noise the chicken needs help!
Sefa: That’s me [twisting and turning hands among his blocks].
Izzy: [puts chicken inside building, takes off two blocks and crashes them down on the table].
Eloise: I need that one. Whoever is making a chicken home they have to give me one.
Damien: Now my bear is going to drive away now my bear’s going to drive away because he hears an earthquake coming brrrrmmm [drives bear through air over to art shelves]. (Hargraves, 2014a, p. 32-33)

Earthquake (shaking, pushing, falling, crashing) leads to Monster (shaking, jumping, breaking, kicking); an emotive physicality grows, in its growing assemblage connecting more action, and heightening intensity. Child-bodies initiate an “embodied engagement with material other than self” (Rautio, 2014, p. 470), or was it the material’s initiation? Earthquake connects with Blocks in a reciprocal entanglement in which Earthquake draws out the qualities of hardness and loudness so that Blocks bring banging and noise and recoiling to earthquake. Loudness and breaking and physicality suggest Monster, a costume that begins to clothe the child-bodies. The “symbolic and material . . . intra-act and unfold into endless possibilities” (Renold & Ringrose, 2016, p. 10).

This is not to be viewed as the matter of child-bodies using material objects for their own ends, but as a mutuality of child-matter relations (Rautio, 2013) in which both child and matter are complicit. Somerville’s (2015) concept of “throwntogetherness” (p. 108) describes the mutual negotiation of bodies in a contingent coming-together-in-assemblage, which negates the idea that children choose their resources, and suggests instead that materials simply collide with children. Such a throwntogetherness feels here to be a magnetic propulsion, or cyclonic attraction, drawing things on the outside in toward it, in a multitude of centripetal forces in which the centre is constantly moving.

Adding Monster to the Earthquake-Blocks assemblage releases more potential, brings about an intensity of affect. Narrative grows as an affect of, and affects in turn, the community of diverse matter involved in the growing assemblage—synapses and neurons, phonemes and morphemes, lips and arms and wood and plastic . . . The materiality of the noise and vision of tumbling blocks, their dislodgement and disturbance, suggest potential for destruction but also for survival. Adding Earthquake’s
victims (Man, Chicken, Bear) enlargens Earthquake’s territory to encompass roads. Enter the Bear with (as) vehicle for a new line of flight: “now my bear’s going to drive away because he hears an earthquake coming brrrrmmm”. Affectensity occurs in this increase in options for the next movement, a spiralling of explorations into the sounds, physicality, landscape, and mitigation of Earthquake-Blocks-Monster.

Is it that Earthquake has shaken doing-curriculum, or has Earthquake become doing-curriculum? Connections and relations in movement—each body learning, making new connections (Murris, 2016) so that each body comes to relate to the concept of monster and of doing-curriculum, and to the material and human bodies involved, in new and constantly differentiating ways. This is learning that subsists in the complex “material-semiotic entanglements” in which “bodies, things, affect, desire, matter, imagination and pedagogy collide to form new assemblages and possibilities” (Gannon, 2016, p. 128). A network throbbing and pulsating with ever-proliferating rhizomes. There seems to be an ethical plurality of expression increasing and increasing; there is emotion, movement, thought, all at a heightened intensity as potentiality explodes. Striating forces such as the teacher’s comments that attempt to regulate children’s group work, or that push their thinking in particular directions, only provide something for potentiality to push against, malleable lines that can be stretched, strained, and experimented with. Here the children’s capacity for expression is enlarged in assembling with the myriad contents and forces of the material and human bodies they encounter. All bodies are affective, moulding an Earthquake-Blocks-Monster expression that shifts and transforms in every movement made.
Mapping for Affectensity? Notes on an Image

A posthumanist account of this learning and teaching event is enabled in a mapping of multiplicities that opens up potential and provokes a reconsideration of what else might occur (Renold & Ringrose, 2016). Images, and material practices of drawing, cutting, gluing, and labelling, add further affordances to this becoming-thesis event which structure its becomings along particular trajectories. At the same time, the addition of more material and semiotic resources, and the gaps created between them, increases the complexity of virtual potential available to becoming-thesis.

*Figure 8. Elements in “now my bear’s going to drive away . . .”* 

In the mapping of this event “now my bear’s going to drive away because he hears an earthquake coming brrrrmmmm” as an image (Figure 8), the objects (bear, bottle lid, block, table), human-bodies, and concepts (earthquake) are layered for a sense of their continually changing spatiotemporal states in their interactions with the other elements of this event. The plastic bear, while it may not physically change, has an altered sense from moment to moment as particular parts of its physical and conceptual
assemblage interact, combine, and repel other ideas and other objects. The layering of slightly differentiated shapes for bear indicate its constant individuation. In these changing shapes is an embodiment of intensity. Damien’s body shape grows in intensity in this moment in which he becomes with his affectensive idea; his body, or sense of power and affect, increases.

*Figure 9. Connections in “now my bear’s going to drive away . . .”*

Rautio and Winston (2015) suggest the event’s layeredness is a result of the intra-actions of many kinds of actors, intentions, experiences, concepts, knowledges, materials, sounds, textures . . . It is not enough to list the components of this milieu, instead what is needed is an analysis of the function and affect of their relations (Jackson, 2016). An awareness of the connection with other objects is facilitated by mapping each object, person, or idea’s constituent components, abstracted on the map as distinct internal parts, adding another layer to the map (Figure 9). Components are both distinct and inseparable, and rather than added together, are merged, so that boundaries are indiscernible. This quality of coexistence is what creates consistency in assemblages.

The creation of levels and heights is not to suggest a hierarchy of form (smaller
parts leading to bigger parts), or a linear order of constituent, cumulative relations. While immanence would be better expressed through a flat and smooth surface, setting the constitutive elements on top of compositions that are objects, bodies, or concepts is to reflect their abstraction. Raising these constitutive elements which subsist in a virtual realm while remaining trapped and concealed in actualised assemblages, exposes them and reveals their interactions and connections.

The notion of assemblage as interrelated components provides a way to bring together aspects produced in previous events, so that child-bodies consist not only of their organic parts and biological functioning, but also their family history, their experiences in socio-cultural contexts, and existing skills and dispositions. Damien’s passion for roads and transport infrastructure, his extensive knowledge of earthquakes from family discussions and television viewing, his skills of articulation and imagination, and his disposition of powerfulness, form an assemblage of biological and sociocultural influences becoming in, with, and as event. Not only children’s prior experiences, skills, and knowledge, but also teachers’ experience, skills and knowledge, are important contributions to curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996). Assemblage theory can form the entanglements of curriculum as institutionally conceived with “what children bring” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 42) to curriculum so that both of these aspects can be woven together (Ministry of Education, 1996). Assemblage theory also widens the potential available for curricular becomings in its focus on what is possible in the relations between these diverse parts.

Deleuze-Guattari (1991/1994) uses the cartographic imagery of “bridges” (p. 20) and “neighbourhoods” (p. 90) to describe connections between concepts. This map forms bridges with the nonpermanence of paper ribbons and blu-tack, which enables the map to be continually evolving and changing, an excess of detours, reroutes, and new itineraries. Maps are always modifiable and adaptable (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). In order to achieve such flexibility, mapping does not differentiate between actual and virtual or potential lines of connection, of forces played out and those latent.

The mapping demonstrates how there are many active forces that produce the event, “complex entanglements of congregational sociomaterial” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 22) activity. People, their interpersonal interactions, matter and its interactions, even matter-become-conceptual, for example as knowledge of the technology of transport
infrastructure, are all involved. The sense of a sign, its qualities and potentials, are produced in the interaction between objects, persons, and concepts, not determined by the human but the result of their entanglement or intra-action, the result of “serendipitous material contributions” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 21) as well as of the child’s perceptions and conceptions. The bear is attributed with thoughts, feelings and actions through its quality of animation (suggested by its being marked with a face and paws) in interaction with Damien’s knowledge and Damien’s desire to further a transportation theme. The bottle lid turned concave, holds the quality of containment and thus matter itself suggests its potential performativity. Bottle-lid connected with Bear enables Bear to be seen as sitting in a vehicle. The narrative evolves with “the help of unplanned and unexpected contributions from other entities” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 22) that can be seen to be in play with child-bodies.

But this retrospective comprehension of already articulated assemblages is not what mapping aspires too. Mapping is not about a representation of existing connections and associations but the setting of these into “a patchwork with other tendencies, traits, thoughts, and intensities” (Roy, 2003, p. 174). The heightened visibility of abstracted components in their mapping means that these components can be manipulated in new ways, networked with other components to lead to new possibilities (Corner, 1999). Abstraction is about singling out a component in order to connect it with others (Buchanan, 1997), to deterritorialise a component, release it from composites and aggregates in order to work with it anew, and regenerate it with new connections (Roy, 2003).
Continuously present in the map are links to all sorts of other forces outside of the immediate assemblage (Figure 10). This reflects Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) insistence that there is no simple correspondence between signifier and signified; there are many potential lines of connection within a multiplicity of asignifying signs. The signs and qualities of an object, a human, or a concept are numerous, the forces that create them a fractal network (Massumi, 1992) as each line of force is the complex creation of other forces. Sense is the outcome of their selection and their interplay. Sense includes even “the paths not taken … the forces that could have seized the thing but did not” (Massumi, 1992, p. 11). It would be impossible to exhaustively list these forces, yet Massumi (1992) argues that an exhaustive list is unnecessary. We can instead focus on the level of analysis that is useful for our particular problem, and connect that level to others only if such an emphasis is required.

The map becomes an experimentation with framings and with their constituent elements, seeking potential interrelationships (Arndt, in press). The importance is in the
relations between parts. Relations can be stretched, teased, bent, redirected; all of which are suggestive of ways to expand the potential of the moment. The outside is a resource that needs to be linked to the event to build an affectensity. The map stretches outside of the boundaries of its page. What is mappable here becomes infinite: The map selects, sifts through, and gathers from the chaos of the plane of immanence, without attempting to diagram the whole plane. There may be potential connections that go unmapped, but nevertheless the map aims for a power of production; its ethical aim to be productive and generative. The selected aspects of the event need to be connected, and lines of connection need to be stretched: each element needs to be stretched into a line, or, rather, a multiplicity of lines, a rhizome, not a point or set of points.

The map is a contraction of multiplicities into a new substance. But its affect is not constrained by its being rearticulated in a new expression: “It envelops in that substance the same affect” (Massumi, 1992, p. 16). Transcribing the interaction of objects, humans, and concepts in a mapping is a translation of the dynamism contained in the event, but not a translation intended to reify or conclude the event in explanation. Instead, translating this event into a mapping is a way that the event increases its potentiality, the way that it fractures and proliferates in new directions, the way it multiplies itself. Translating the event into written words and marks allows the event to extend its life in a new capacity. This, according to Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), and Massumi (1992), is a positive move.

Translation makes the event repeatable, and thus multiplies it, but there is always the potential for domestication, for normalisation and regulation. This is something always at risk in early childhood education, in the reification of learning events in documentation, displays, learning stories and other early childhood assessments. Translation can become reproductive, rather than productive, with reduced possibility for change and invention.

Mapping proliferates, circulates, never ends. This image of a mapping provokes another, a mapping of the connections that generated such a map . . . another assemblage, a research assemblage, that has connected this event and this map to this becoming-thesis, to my researching-I, keyboard, paper, concepts, reading, readers, screen and page . . . Mapping event, mapping mapping, mapping the map’s ongoing circuits of production. A chapter called “Notes on an Image”. Now in the abstractions and connections of these
multiple mappings, what might be revealed, propelled even, is more of a virtual realm of connections as-yet-unmade, becoming-thesis . . .
EVENT: PIAGET’S 2017 LECTURE IN WHICH DELEUZE AND GUATTARI SIT IN AUDIENCE

It is March 3rd, 2017, and Jean Piaget gives a lecture which draws on his most recent scholarship in the field of genetic psychology: “Structuralism” (1968/1971), “Language and learning: The debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky” (1981a, 1981b, 1981c), and “Possibility and necessity” (1981/1987). Deleuze and Guattari sit in the audience. In 2017, this is neither the physical Piaget, nor the corporeal or cognitive presence of Deleuze or Guattari, but Piaget, Deleuze and Guattari as machinic flows of desire, a connectivity that produces (in this case) a thought and writing machine, a “dynamic, sociomaterial-semiotic assemblage” (Renold & Ringrose, 2016, p. 2) that is not oriented towards an imaginary or fantasy world, but the production of new ways of thinking. The thought and language of a potential Piaget-assemblage of my creating, operates by initiating a flow of thought, immediately halted in particular formations in setting down the truth as the Piaget-assemblage sees it. There are never flows without breaks effectuated by points; flows always implying breaks; points always causing materials to flow or to leak (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983). Another machine, Deleuze and Guattari’s whisperings of sceptic commentary, provides interruptions that aim to undo these formations, block, siphon and redirect these flows in order to reterritorialise Piaget on their own preferred ontological and philosophical orientations. Deleuze and Guattari’s mutterings provide a space, an interval or gap in which we might see Piaget’s thoughts, and the infinitude of assemblages of Piagetian theory and practice that permeate early childhood education, anew.

A Constructionist Structuralism for Genetic Psychology

PIAGET: Knowledge and cognition are developed through processes of structuring, a structuralism as I have defined it; “knowledge does not result from a mere recording of observations without a structuring activity on the part of the subject . . . [Man] creates structures only through an organisation of successive actions performed on objects” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 23). These structuring operations compose “a constructionism, with a continual elaboration of new operations and structures” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 23). Science “will permit [man] to understand and find his way . . . science, which is one of the most beautiful
adaptations of the human spirit and a victory of the mind over the material world” (Piaget, 1948/1973, p. 135).

G to D: Already he is privileging man, and his cognitive sphere. He omits reciprocity and presupposition. It is only man organising the world inside his own head. Not man-in-assemblage, affecting and being-affected, as in “the man-horse assemblage, which caused a lengthening of the dagger and pike” into “the lance and the sword” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 465). How does he explain the reverse? For example, how “the stirrup, in turn, occasioned a new figure of the man-horse assemblage”? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 465). We need a constructionism that is not contained and reduced in the cognitive activity of man!

PIAGET: “Now, how has it succeeded? Not by accumulating knowledge or experience . . . It is in constructing an intellectual tool of coordination, thanks to which the mind has been able to put facts in relation to each other” (Piaget, 1948/1973, p. 135). In this lecture I will consider how we might “understand how such operations come about, and why, even though they result from nonpredetermined constructions, they eventually become logically necessary” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 23).

D to G: As if man is unaffected by the viscosity of strata and “the emergence of Machines that are fully a part of that stratum but at the same time rear up and stretch their pincers out in all directions at all the other strata” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 73). And isn’t there a predetermination, a presupposition, in his “nonpredetermined constructions”, attributed to their being “logically necessary”? Ha, ha now we see this “abstract machine begins to unfold, to stand to full height, producing an illusion exceeding all strata” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 73), the illusion that man is in control! Man thinks he puts facts into relation? “This illusion derives from the overcoding immanent to language itself” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 73).

PIAGET: “Observation always and from the beginning requires the utilization of logico-mathematical frameworks such as the setting up of a relation or correspondence, proximities or separations, positive or negative quantifications leading to the concept of measure” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 24). Structures have their origin in schemes of action, “no knowledge is based on perceptions alone, for
these are always directed and accompanied by schemes of action” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 23-4). Thus there is a process of “‘assimilation’ of objects to the schemes of that subject [with] a necessary ‘adaptation’ to the particularities of these objects” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 24).

G to D: Then objects are assimilated into a hierarchy of human representation. A simple pass from content to expression. Objects become represented to be incorporated into these structures. What about the potential of becoming that stands between the observation and its assimilation into the framework?

D to G: If we see these structures as assemblages, then “in an assemblage there are, as it were, two faces, or at least two heads. There are states of things, states of bodies (bodies interpenetrate, mix together, transmit affects to one another); but also utterances, regimes of utterances: signs are organised in a new way, new formulations appear, a new style for new gestures” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 70-1). These schemes or regimes of representation are not in fact “content to describe corresponding states of things: these are rather, as it were, two non-parallel formalisations, the formalisation of expression and the formalisation of content . . . The only unity derives from the fact that one and the same function, one and the same ‘functive’ is the expressed of the utterance and the attribute of the state of body” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 71.) The structure is nonparallel to the event, not a representation or organisation of it. But he’s moving on . . .

PIAGET: “The problem is therefore to choose between two hypotheses: authentic constructions with stepwise disclosures to new possibilities, or successive actualization of a set of possibilities existing from the beginning..[this latter corresponds to] a universe of Platonic ideas” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 25).

G to D: I like this word “disclosure”, it has potential I think, it might just disrupt his argument. There is no simple content-expression correspondence of representationalism in disclosure, but the bringing to bear of a theory, perspective or concept by which reality is in some way grasped or disclosed, a presupposition that reality can be portrayed in differing ways. But does Piaget here assume logical disclosures of indisputable truths?
D to G: In the construction there is always and already a perspective. “Concepts cut up and combine the things corresponding to them in various and always new ways. They cannot be distinguished from a way of perceiving things: a concept forces us to see things differently . . . And concepts are also inseparable from affects” (Deleuze, 2004/2006c, p. 325). But wait . . . is he about to introduce virtuality?

PIAGET: “The origin of logico-mathematical structures in their infinity cannot be localized either in objects or in the subject” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 26). “If mathematics were preformed, this would mean that a baby at birth would already possess virtually everything . . . And since the child is himself a consequence, one would have to go back as far as protozoa and viruses to locate ‘the set of all possibilities’” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 26).

G to D: Perhaps, but he’s sceptical. He needs to untie the possibilities from a containment metaphor. Virtuality becomes a quantity too large to be managed and contained, he will forego it!

D to G: He is tied to his own schema of man constructing representations for manipulating the world, so he must give the virtual an identity and a place. But the virtual must be immanent, a “stream of immanent consciousness” (Deleuze, 2004/2006a, p. 388), which indeed leads to life! “The plane of immanence itself is actualized in an Object and a Subject” (Deleuze, 2004/2006a, p. 388) in this child and his logico-mathematical structures. But he seeks to give virtual potential an embodied quality, in which he will fail. “There is no transcendence of the [child’s constructions] as some higher actuality, but it’s immanence as a virtuality always within a milieu” (Deleuze, 2004/2006a, p. 388). Why can’t he see the transcendence he seeks begins in the virtual? “Transcendence is always a product of immanence” (Deleuze, 2004/2006a, p. 388).

PIAGET: Thus there is a virtual possibility or potential that is different to the actual. But it is not located in essences or in the physical world either. Instead I assign it a place in organic life (Piaget, 1968/1971), in the actions and activities of living things. I propose “psychogenetic structuralism” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 50) in that psychological structures are formed through “fortuitous modifications due to environment . . . assimilated to structures; [which] need not be innate,
nor ... immutable” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 51). The subject is “the centre of activity” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 70).

D to G: His virtuality is affect, created in the actions and activities of living things superseded by a psychological structure—transcendence rears again. Instead why not consider “the state of free differences ... no longer subject to the form imposed upon them by an I or an ego, when they assume a shape which excludes my own coherence no less than that of any identity whatsoever” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 113). This is the virtual, “these individuations that no longer constitute persons or “egos”” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 95).

G to D: And his subject operates in a vacuum noncognisant of the “technological machines of information and communication [that] operate at the heart of human subjectivity, not only within its memory and intelligence, but within its sensibility, affects and unconscious fantasms” (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 4).

PIAGET: [ahem] “The subject is “the centre of activity” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 70) of an “uninterrupted process of coordinating and setting in reciprocal relations ... [which is] the true ‘generator’ of structures” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 139). “Reflective abstraction ... proceeds from the subjects’ actions and operations ... two interdependent but distinct processes: that of a projection onto a higher plane of what is taken from the lower level, hence a ‘reflecting,’ and that of a ‘reflection’ as a reorganization on the new plane ... aiming eventually ... at co-ordinating them into a new totality” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 26-7).

G to D: Subject acts on object, producing a new totality of transcendence. Thought sets up relations of signification, what it reflects upon – the signifier – is linked with meaning. Such representationalist operations. But couldn’t we argue thought has no object? “As an assemblage, [thought] only has itself, in connection with other assemblages and in relation to other bodies without organs. [Then] we will never ask what [thought] means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it
makes it own converge” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 2). These are the proper questions of epistemology.

PIAGET: Rather than “a formal system of abstract structure . . . [there is] the construction of a never completed whole, the limits of formalization constituting the grounds for incompleteness, or . . . incompleteness being a necessary consequence of the fact that there is no ‘terminal’ or ‘absolute’ form because any content is form relative to some inferior content and any form the content for some higher form” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 140). “Neither forms nor contents exist per se: in nature as in mathematics every form is content for ‘higher’ forms and every content form is what it ‘contains’” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 112).

D to G: Ah, he refers to the reciprocity and reversibility of content and expression.

PIAGET: “The internal evolution of a person (according to the aptitudes of each one) only provides merely a certain amount of rough outlines that are capable of being developed, destroyed, or left in an untouched state” (Piaget, 1948/1973, p. 55).

G to D: But it’s not an argument he takes far enough, he’s dropped all notions of reversibility here. The person unfolds from within; a starting point and an evolution instead of the immanence required for reversibility.

PIAGET: “But these are only rough outlines, and only social and educational interactions will transform them into efficient behavioural patterns or destroy them totally” (Piaget, 1948/1973, p. 55).

D to G: Mmm, with the generative power that destruction sets free? “In dismantling the organism there are times one courts death, in slipping away from signifance and subjection one courts falsehood, illusion and hallucination and psychic death” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 186). Can Piaget’s subject negotiate such a path?

G to D: But he begins to recognise “the existence of machines of subjectivation which don’t simply work within … inter-personal relations or intra-familial complexes. Subjectivity does not only produce itself through the psychogenetic stages of psychoanalysis or the ‘mathemes’ of the
Unconscious, but also in the large-scale social machines of language and the mass media (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 4).

PIAGET: “The progressive coherence, sought and finally attained by the subject, first comes from a mere causal regulation of actions of which the results are revealed, after the fact, to be compatible or contradictory; this progressive coherence then achieves a comprehension of linkings or implications that have become deductible and thereby necessary” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 32). Assimilation is “the process or activity common to all forms of life, is the source of that continual relating, setting up of correspondences, establishing of functional connections” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 71). This is to set up a structure, which I define as “a system of transformations” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 5). “The idea of structure as a system of transformations becomes continuous with that of construction as continual formation” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 34). “Inasmuch as it is a system and not a mere collection of elements and their properties, these transformations involve laws: the structure is preserved or enriched by the interplay of its transformation laws, which never yield results external to the system nor employ elements that are external to it. In short, the notion of structure is comprised of three key ideas: the idea of wholeness, the idea of transformation, and the idea of self-regulation” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 5). “The transformations inherent in a structure never lead beyond the system but always engender elements that belong to it and preserve its laws” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 14).

D [muttering]: The construction of structure does not require nor venture into an outside! He imposes relative limits, this is only a regulated and relative deterritorialisation!

PIAGET: While not innate or preformed, these structures are also not originating in a “contingent emergence” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 60) as in “a structuralism without structures” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 134). The “idea of contingent emergence is pretty nearly incompatible with the idea of structure” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 61). To say that “structures appear and disappear by fortuitous mutations and as a result of momentary upsurges”, as in the work of some of my
contemporaries, makes these structures “in the end mere diagrams, not transformational systems” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 135).

G to D: We say Diagrams over Structure! “An Unconscious of Flux and of abstract machines” (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 12)!

PIAGET: And thus “there cannot be a coherent structuralism apart from constructivism” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 135). “Cognitive structures have fundamental notions of functionality and identity” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 65). “Genesis is never anything except . . . the transition from one structure to another . . . the transition itself can only be understood in transformational terms if both of its termini are known” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 127-8).

G to D: Oh we have lost our way! The virtual is eclipsed by a teleological vision. Transformation is restricted to known results, not open to the intensities of a self-organising universe!

PIAGET: [with a deep breath] Let’s revisit the “logical necessity” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 32) engendered by equilibration. When the child hits a hanging object and it swings, he will then hit other hanging objects when he comes across them. “Here is an act of generalisation that obviously shows a beginning of logical generalisation or intelligence” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 164). “These schemes of assimilation are somewhat like concepts, but of a practical kind” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 165). The child has comprehension but not extension; “the child recognizes a hanging object, this is comprehension, but he does not have the means of representing to himself the totality of hanging objects” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 165). This latter relies on representation and symbolic or semiotic function.

D to G: Is he proposing representation moves us out of habit?

PIAGET: There are correspondences between schemes even before extension, that are the combination of schemes, the ordering of actions, and the creation of interdependencies: “In short, one finds a structure that announces the structure of logic” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 165).
**PIAGET:** “Sensorimotor assimilation consists only of assimilating objects to schemes of action, whereas representative assimilation assimilates objects to each other, hence the construction of conceptual schemes. Now, this new form of assimilation already was virtual in sensorimotor form since it bore on multiple but successive objects; it was then sufficient to complete these successive assimilations by a simultaneous act of setting into transversal correspondence before passing to the next level. But such an action implies the evocation of objects not presently perceived, and this evocation requires the formation of a specific instrument, which is the semiotic function” (Piaget, 1981b, p. 28).

**G to D:** His structuralism depends on a foundational representationalism. See how he moves from the virtual of non-represented actions? Transversality need not depend on representation. Oh, for a line of flight, a “destratifying transversality, [moving] through elements, orders, forms and substances ... freeing a matter and tapping forces” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 390)!

**PIAGET:** This “new form of assimilation that is going to develop and allow conceptual logic is an assimilation between objects, and no longer between objects and a scheme of action, in other words, the objects will be directly assimilated to each other, which will permit extension” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 166). “Conceptual logic is, for me, the logic that combines representation and thought, thus concepts defined in extension and not only in comprehension” (Piaget, 1981c, p. 165).

**D to G:** What kind of extension does this lead to? The logical extension of concepts as a repetition in which difference is subsumed and contained; difference limited in “how far [it] can and must extend – how large? how small? – in order to remain within the limits of the concept” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p.29). And what is the point of such a concept? “Every logical limitation of the comprehension of a concept endows it with an extension greater than 1, in principle infinite, and thus of a generality such that no existing individual can correspond to it” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 12)!
PIAGET: But there is a need for another factor to enhance our theory, to discredit any notions that this process is hereditary or a product of learning. So “we decided to approach the problem of the generation of new knowledge from a different angle, focusing on the development of possibilities . . . a creative process very different from the simple reading of reality invoked by empiricism . . . Obviously, any idea or action that gets realized must have existed previously as a possibility, and a possibility, once conceived, will generally breed other possibilities. The problem of the opening up of new possibilities, we believe, is thus of some interest to epistemology” (Piaget, 1981/1987, p. 3).

D to G: Aha!

PIAGET: A person has two complementary cognitive systems then; the presentative which are stable schemes and structures for understanding the world, and the procedural, by which a person satisfies needs by inventing or transferring procedures (Piaget, 1981/1987). The latter is in constant flux. “Once a possibility gets actualized through the application of procedural schemas, a new presentative scheme is created, thence the complementarity of the two systems” (Piaget, 1981/1987, p. 5). “The notion of the possible derives from having overcome certain resistances of reality to explanation and from filling the gaps that are perceived as a result of having envisioned one variation, which leads immediately to the realization that others are also possible . . . this dual process involves equilibration in its most general form” (Piaget, 1981/1987, p. 6). “In essence [this is] part of the way accommodation functions . . . the potentialities we talked about are in fact the expressions, varying from one level to the next, of the capacity for accommodation: the possible results thus from the accommodative activity seeking actualization” (Piaget, 1981/1987, p. 6).

G to D: No no no no!! Potentiality is enabled by the transformations that occur when different parts come into assemblage. There is not an accommodative activity of the subject but only the whir of abstract machines that “emit and combine particles . . . [whether] enveloped in a certain specific stratum whose program or unity of composition they define . . . and whose movements of relative deterritorialisation they regulate . . . [or] develop[ed] alone and in its own right on the plane of consistency.
whose diagram it constitutes... piloting flows of absolute
deterritorialisation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 56). Piaget’s
account binds us to the strata of “the organism, significance and
interpretation, and subjectification and subjection [which] separates us
from the... abstract machine, where there is no longer any regime of
signs, where the line of flight effectuates its own potential positivity”
(Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 155).

PIAGET: “The generation of possibilities remains throughout subordinated to the
laws of equilibration, since it is equilibration that brings about reequilibration and
leads to new differentiations and their equilibration, which then become

G to D: Oh, oh, oh. Subordinated to equilibration! “Destratify, open up to a
new function, a diagrammatic function” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987,
p. 155)!

D to G: Yes, “make consciousness an experimentation in life” (Deleuze &
Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 155)! We need to “create a distribution of affects...
that constitutes a map of intensity... an active constellation... a
becoming” (Deleuze, 1993/1997c, p. 64)

PIAGET: “Behavior [is] conceived not... as a product of external
‘circumstances,’ but as the expression of a constant need for overtaking
(extension of the environment and increase of the organism’s powers) [that]
would constitute in fact the principal moving force of evolution” (Piaget, 1981a,
p. 280).

D to G: Not a product, no, but the endless generativity of the assemblage,
connecting asignifying signs and making them content and expression for a
myriad of functions. “That which triggers off an affect, that which
effectuates a power to be affected... a signal: the web stirs, the scalp
creses, a little skin is bared... Spider-becoming, flea-becoming, tick-
becoming, an unknown, resilient, obscure, stubborn life” (Deleuze & Parnet,

PIAGET: And there are not only human operators but “a correspondence of
human operations with those of object-operators, a harmony, then, between this
particular operator—the human being as body and mind—and the innumerable
operators in nature—physical objects at their several levels” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 41).

G to D: The complexity of his account is increasing, a multiplicity here you think?

PIAGET: We’re dealing here with fields of forces: “a field of force, such as an electromagnetic field, is an organized whole in that the net force exerted upon anything in that field depends on the direction and intensity of all the forces; but the compounding of forces is a practically instantaneous affair” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 54).

D to G: Can he carry this off to its “logical” conclusion? Ha ha! He’ll be too quick to reterritorialise.

PIAGET: The “notion of structure as a self-regulating system should be carried beyond the individual organism, beyond even the population, to encompass the complex of milieu, phenotype, and genetic pool” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 50). This would assign evolution “a dialectical character” without which evolution is only a “predestined plan” (Piaget, 1968/1971, p. 50).

G to D: He will not imbue evolution with virtual multiplicities, but with dialectics. “Binary logic and biunivocal relationships still dominate [his] structuralism . . . this system of thought has never reached an understanding of multiplicity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 4).

PIAGET: Overall I have presented a theory that can be, and is, verified by science. I hear my dissenters in the audience, who prefer to espouse a “metaphysical thought [that] reduces itself to a wisdom or to a rational faith” (Piaget, 1968/1972, p. xv). This is their choice, to depend on “conviction and not [on] verification or [on] logic” (Piaget, 1968/1972, p. 64).

3. Capturing Contingency in the Subject

The constitution of the subject and processes of subjectification have long been areas for philosophical exploration and debate. With the emergence of a postmodernism characterised by its scepticism towards, and deconstruction of, objective truths or grand narratives (Heartfield, 2002), the subject has been dismantled. With this, processes of subjectivity, that is, the actions and discourses that produce the subject, have been examined. Deleuze (1969/1990) considers a unified sense of the subject as necessary only in and for language so that:

one and the same self perceives, imagines, remembers, knows, etc.; one and the same self breathes, sleeps, walks and eats . . . Language does not seem possible without this subject which expresses and manifests itself in it, and which says what it does. (p. 78)

For Deleuze then, the subject is a product of language and systems of representation. Language necessarily ascribes identity to an I, and to objects outside of the I, for the functions of rationality and reason. Life appears to centre around a subject, which relates to and comprehends the world around it through language.

But where Deleuze departs from a postmodern deconstruction of the subject is in his insistence to start with prepersonal, nonsubjectified forces. This is an ontology that begins at the plane of immanence of unconstructed parts, rather than begin with an abstract concept and use that to explain the world, for example by citing the subject and then looking for the ways it is embodied in the world (Deleuze, 1977/1987). And rather than focus exclusively on the forces that constitute and stratify the subject, first Deleuze seeks to establish an ontological mode that enables both subjectivity to be recognised as produced and productive, and to be opened to new, more self-determining constructions. Here subject and object are undifferentiated, immanently connected multiplicities of potential, entangled with all other things and their virtual potential for form, past-present-future. This entanglement decentres the subject, reducing it to a temporary assemblage constituted of and traversed by multiple, nonhuman, inorganic and social-technological forces (Renold & Ringrose, 2016).

Both subject and object are thus materially embedded constructions-in-process, lodged “within webs of relation with forces, entities and encounters” (Braidotti, 2016, p.
383). Or, better, the subject is this web of relation—a multiplicity of a set of lines or forces irreducible to each other (Deleuze, 1977/1987); “a knot of forces and intensities” (Mazzei, 2013b, p.733) which might engender a range of becomings. The subject is always an event; an expression of the moment, the current conglomeration of tendencies and forces which remain poised to transform or renew in the next moment. Manning (2013) describes the body as “the cohesive point at which a multiplicity of potentialities resolves as this or that event of experience” (p. 16). There is never one subject-becoming, but the ongoing individuation of an overlapping of becomings-in-process (Manning, 2013).

Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) plane of immanence is prepersonal, presubject, and so subjectivity becomes something machinic (Sauvagnargues, 2016). As a set of connections into which various bodies are inserted, a machine functions by coding. It codes flows and forces in a capture, connection, and organisation of disparate elements in a functional assemblage (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). A subjectivity-machine assembles parts in accordance with its functions of identity, rationality, and reason. And yet coding always involves decoding, detaching, extracting code, leading to a surplus value that is generative. The machine generates something new and may indeed transform coded forms with new codes, inventing and following its own trajectories of self-organisation. Guattari (1992/1995) describes subjectivation as auto-poietic, the self-organisation or “self-styling” (Braidotti, 2013a, p. 94) of the movements of becoming of any machinic assemblage.

The subject is the result of the “focuses of unification, centres of totalisation, [and] points of subjectification” (Deleuze, 1977/1987, p. xiii) created in the intersection of political, social, material, and discursive forces. Such unification is problematic because it serves to separate what are entanglements of bodies and things, and contribute to a divisive codification of forms. This is a codification enacted by the human in a transcendent position as “the synthesising, unifying agent of judgment” (St. Pierre, 2016, p. 30). Here identity, and its associated operations of analogy, resemblance and opposition, serves to set in place what Deleuze (1968/1994) calls a “sedentary” (p. 36) distribution of bodies and events. The identification, differentiation and separation of an individual only serve to screen out the virtual connections which are the source of its becoming and its individuation.
Univocity, on the other hand, presents a nomadic distribution of a singular force of being in all forms which then vary only in the intensity of their expression of this force, and constantly individuate and become new by means of it. Being/becoming takes place within an all-encompassing mass in which parts (never really apart) come together in assemblages, at the same time subsuming all that is outside of their assemblage within them. The subject, like the object, is a capture or coding, an extraction from a univocal and immanent plane of preorganisation; just one of a myriad of potential material assemblages of actual and virtual parts within the infinite concept of univocity. Every thing contains the univocity of the single life source and is inclusive of life’s every potential. Thus there is always the possibility of movement and transformation, never a static being or identity, but always a dynamic becoming of an event connected to all of its potentials and all that is other or outside of it.

**From Univocity to Subjectification**

The point is not to dismiss the concept of subject, but to understand it within an ontology that sees subjectification as a production of particular forces. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) offers two contrasting depictions of human bodies related to the contrast between the plane of organisation and the plane of immanence (Evans, 2016). The plane of organisation is that realm of finite production where the potential of the plane of immanence is captured and contained. These “life-defining nets” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxi) create particular and reproducible functions and articulations, resulting in determinate bodies. Sand, bucket, child, teacher, lesson—subjects and objects. This is where I becomes “coextensive with representation” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 106), marking the boundaries of what is not-I.

On the plane of organisation the subject is an organism, an ego, a structured, rigid body responding to the organising strata. On the plane of immanence, there are only bodies-without-organs, without organisation, that is, we consist “exclusively of inhumanities” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 223) that are non-totalised, free and dynamic parts in motion; “non-stratified, unformed, intense matter” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 178). The important move here is in recognising the precedence of a plane of immanence into which all is collapsible and which provides an abundance or excess of potentiality for transformations of form. The humanist I cannot exist on such a plane (St. Pierre, 2016). Instead I becomes an intensity, a “convergence of forces” (C. A. Taylor,
2016, p. 10) always individuating or becoming-new, and always plugged into heterogeneous assemblages or machines through which the I gains a sense of consistency. No structure or identity is to be understood as inherent or given; there is no stabilising centre that organises and centres the subject, instead the subject is temporarily stratified as one particular form, while remaining open to transformation.

Stratified, the subject serves merely as an organising construct or machinic assemblage with which we attempt to pose order on the world. The subject is a concept which has affect, does work. Deleuze (1991) and Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983, 1980/1987) merely question what affect, what work, while seemingly holding more important the “pre-individual singularities and non-personal individuations” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 95) which obtain to the plane of immanence before the structuring of organisms and subjects. These are singularities that are unconscious and univocally distributed. Singularities are neither already constituted in individuals nor floating in an undifferentiated chaos, but exist as a virtual potential which omits a self or I (Deleuze, 1969/1990). Singularity is, for Deleuze (1969/1990), the conceptual and ontological unit that can undo our reliance on identity and subjecthood for understanding the world; “only a theory of singular points is capable of transcending the synthesis of the person and the analysis of the individual as these are (or are made) in consciousness” (p. 103).

A consciousness is created in the synthesis or unification of these preindividual and prepersonal singularities (Deleuze, 1969/1990). The self, the I, becomes produced in the actualisations of this virtual plane without resembling it (Deleuze, 1969/1990). The subject might then be seen as an enveloping form which allows these prepersonal inhumanities to communicate (Smith, 2006). This suggests that there is an enfolding of the virtual within the subject as a “score of cosmic vibrations” (Braidotti, 2013a, pp. 55-6).

Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari present an analysis of human becoming in which human bodies are both recognised as structured, rigid organisms, giving rise to subjectivity and consciousness, and also linked to a prepersonal realm which supplies the capacity for momentary deterritorialisation and escape from such striations. Human bodies are both determinations, the product of external forces, and a shifting collection of anonymous and unconscious forces capable of new interconnections, new assemblages with new affects and power.
These notions come together in Braidotti’s nomadic (2005) or posthuman (2013a) subject, which is an “embodied and embedded” (2013a, p. 49) form both “immanent and dynamic” (Murris, 2016, p. 89) and grounded, located and locatable, and accountable. This notion of subject draws on a virtual sense of capacious potentiality in an ethics of difference and becoming (Braidotti, 2013a), whilst at the same time producing contingent and ever-emerging forms that hold shape long enough to be evaluated, critiqued, and put to work. Braidotti (2013a) argues that to efface the subject with nihilism or relativism is not helpful; “at least some subject position” (p. 102) is needed for the possibility of activism.

In Deleuze (1991) and Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), however, we have two rather unsatisfactory, almost polarised, possible positionings of the subject: a yet-to-form, univocal contingency of immanence, and a captured, regulated structure of the strata. With the reduction of subject and object to immanent connections of matter within a lawless chaos of pure and limitless potentiality, the subject might become indistinguishable. And yet the structured and organised subject-body of the strata might be too rigid, eclipsing any sense of the virtual potential that exists prior to and alongside subjectification, obscuring other lines of subject-becoming or, indeed, other-becoming. What is required are ways to conceive of the subject in all its univocity without resorting to a chaotic swirl of nondistinction, and without cementing potentiality in the regime of identity and representation. What is required is a conception of the subject that enables an ethical expression of subjecthood, open to potentiality without being lost in it.

[Capture]

In Difference and Repetition (1968/1994), Deleuze conceives of formation as a contraction or drawing from the univocity of form. This contraction he calls contemplation. With all matter viewed to be continuous with one another, rather than discrete, all individuation of form is a contraction, or infolding of this univocal fabric of life (de Freitas, 2016a). Forms exist through contraction of a more-encompassing sense of being, so that wheat, for example, is a contraction of the earth and humidity (Deleuze, 1968/1994). There is no agency implied here, but a self-organisation created in the connections of conative assemblages. A world is created which “envelops an infinite system of singularities selected through convergence” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 109), creating a “circle of convergence” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 110) or contraction of form.
The human subject exists in contemplating, in “contracting that from which we come” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 74) but is not the agent of that contemplation. Rather, it is perception of the world of univocity contracted into form that creates a zone of perceiving experienced as subjectivity.

Everything in our thinking emerges with our habit of saying ‘I’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), and with the perception of not-I, with a cut which demarcates and divides. It is in contemplating something else—water, sand, ‘mama’—that the contemplator can be filled with an image of self. The subject then is “produced as a residuum” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983, p. 20) of the processes of contraction, on the periphery rather than at the centre.

Perception, then, is a mode of capture or coding, an extraction as an act of contraction or expansion of the flows across a field of sensation (de Freitas, 2016b), and as such is selective, subtracting what it requires and ignoring anything not of interest to its action (Deleuze, 1983/1986). Perception thus territorialises a particular space as a position from which the subject emanates.

The self emerges with territorialisation, it does not preexist but is a set of affects that emerge with the ways bodies inhabit a milieu and mould it into a
territory; with an “ensemble of conditions which render possible the emergence of individual and/or collective instances as self-referential existential Territories” (Guattari, 1992/1995, p. 9). Self becomes the product of a specific semiotic, like the body or the ego, merely “the consequence of markings” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 135) which create a particular composition of self and space.

In Deleuze’s (1983/1986) later work on cinema, the subject, and indeed object, becomes an affect of perception as capture (Sauvagnargues, 2016) or what Barad (2003) terms an “agential cut” (p. 815). The cut singles out an articulation from the indeterminacy that is inherent to matter (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013), while also it is with a cut that connection is made (Springgay, 2015). It is with a cut that trees are differentiated from ground, sky from foliage, that each separate leaf, rather than the mass that is the plant, becomes visible, so that both separating out and merging are the result of perceptual cuts. Cutting is a material practice of interconnections, that is, an assembling, that connects and separates.

Perception becomes the cut that divides fields of forces into individual forms or images, that subtracts or foregrounds from the chaos of potential (Manning, 2013). De Freitas (2016b) reminds us that perception, rather than the integration and interpretation of sensory information by a cognitive organising faculty, is a “highly provisional material encountering between bodies” (p. 188). Perception is an action.

Deleuze’s (1983/1986) concept of image is radically opposed to the common meaning of image which suggests a reflective or representative form, separated from its movement in space, and time. Deleuze (1983/1986) rejects the usual division between representations that are held still in consciousness, and movement as carried out in space, and ascribed to those representations. For Deleuze (1983/1986), movement cannot be prevented from being “at least a virtual image” (p. 58) and the image cannot be prevented from having the possibility of movement. The image is not a static reflection of matter but is movement (Deleuze, 1983/1986); there is no body distinct from the performance of movement, and every image is its actions and reactions (Deleuze, 1983/1986). The image is not static then, but “directly temporal fabric, energetic matter, and blocks of space-time” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 114) in movement.
On the plane of immanence, the pace of this movement is fast; images connect in such an animated and instantaneous manner that bodies or unities cannot be distinguished, individuations are not to be found (Sauvagnargues, 2016). Action merges into reaction. These are imperceptible movements, and they pass through a body which is indifferent to them (Deleuze, 1983/1986). Other images are selected out or isolated from all those that compete for attention (Deleuze, 1983/1986), and this time of organisation and selection creates an interval between movements, a gap between a movement received and a movement in response. Perception occurs only when there is sufficient gap or interval between a received movement and an executed movement (Deleuze, 1983/1986), a gap which prevents them from vanishing instantly, one into the other. The gap slows down the action so that it can be reflected in a movement experienced and resonate in a perception. Perception is “nothing more than the slackening between action and reaction” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 115). The brain too becomes but an interval between action and reaction (Deleuze, 1983/1986); the subject is formed in this interval.

As perception emerges between the actions and reactions of matter, so subjectivity is formed: “The interval between two movements sketches out an empty place which prefigures the human subject in so far as he appropriates perception to himself” (Deleuze, 1983/1986, p. 84). The subject is produced by perceptions and actions, in the gap of their disjunction, and not as their starting point. To perceive is “to act or trace a fluctuating, murky zone of possible action within the totality of matter” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 115); a zone of possible action ascribed identity in the subject. Subjectivity is thus a secondary image produced through the framing of other images, and also a sensory surface which can be affected by other image-movements (Sauvagnargues, 2016).

The perception that emerges as the interval is at the same time a centre with its operative potentiality curved around it. It is an incurvation of the world around its possibilities for action (Deleuze, 1983/1986). And here one passes imperceptibly from perception to action (Deleuze, 1983/1986), to the capacity for affecting and being affected. What is perceived influences affect as potential for movement-in-response. Affection “occupies the interval” (Deleuze, 1983/1986, p. 67), swells up in the centre created by the interval, that is, in the subject. And thus a movement received is not just
translated into a movement executed, but becomes a movement of affect expressed in the body of a subject (Deleuze, 1983/1986).

...Contingency…

It is the interval that forms between the structured body and the body-without-organs consisting solely of inhuman singularities, that moment at which perception selects and organises, that explains how subjectivity is not only capture but also contingency. Perception occurs in the gap between action and reaction, yet this gap is a “centre of indetermination” (Deleuze, 1983/1986, p. 64) and a launching point for action. Subjectivity thus becomes a provisional centre and a zone of indetermination of the interval or gap between a movement perceived and a movement executed. Assembled between perceptions, actions, and affections, this is a contingent centre (Deleuze, 1983/1986), flexible and shifting, making subjectivity too a contingent potentiality.

A zone of indetermination offers potential for action and perception to be creative. The interval provides a temporal and spatial space of indetermination, to oppose reaction for a more creative intervention, the nonreactionary flow of becoming of individuation . . . which follows perception at a lapse. Rather than action merging into reaction, an interval opens up potentiality for proliferating fractal networks of differentials.

As perception cuts out certain objects and surfaces for subjective action, it concurrently produces the subject’s capacity or affect to take hold of the world. Affect is produced between a perceived movement and a response, and in this gap occurs a moment of differentiation in which a force momentarily becomes virtual and experiences the intensity of its potentiality. There is both actualisation, in which forces take a determinate form, and virtual differentiation, in which forces experience the power of the immanent potentiality of chaos, a differentiation that occurs in all directions simultaneously (Bogue, 2007). Affect becomes the power of subjectivation, actualising individuation and marking a shift between acentred, immanent matter and the subjective differentiation (Sauvagnargues, 2016) of perception and action.

An Ethics of the Subject

The constitution of the subject is always “a perpetual and violent combat between the plane of consistency, which frees the BwO [body-without-organs], cutting across and dismantling all of the strata, and the surfaces of stratification that block it or make it
recoil” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 185). An ethics of the subject might then explore the relations between capture and contingency in the subjectification of a human body, and specifically the combination and balance of capture and contingency in this subjectification. Expression, including the expression of the subject, benefits from a gap-space in which to explore the virtual potentials of the plane of immanence, and then select those formations that are most ethical, most expansive of affect, for a body. Such a subject is transversal (Braidotti, 2016, 2017), immanent to, entangled, and constituted across the potential of its network of relations with myriad elements, bodies and forces. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) argues that subjectification is what blocks access to the plane of immanence, and yet subjectification as capture is the beginning of territorialisations on this plane, territorialisations open to the virtual potentiality inherent in any actualisation. Thus in these beginnings of territorialisation lie contingencies, all sorts of potential subjects that cannot be predicted and that thus remain in play.

For the subject to experience enhanced capacities or an intensification of potential affect, conceptualisations of the subject need not be without capture. The subject is never a body-without-organs, without any kind of organisation, indeed, it is impossible to achieve such a state but only to be constantly moving towards it as a limit (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Subjectification enables a body to act as a subject, giving it a continuity and coherence that can build into a powerful sense of affect, the capaciousness of a multitude of ways of affecting and being affected in the world. This is not a capture that is determined by the strata, overlaid with order-words which force the subject into particular expressions of self, and which judge the self according to moralities (a good boy, a good girl, a good teacher). This is not to place the inhumanities of the body-without-organs into processes of “accumulation, coagulation and sedimentation” that impose “forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 184). Instead, an ethical, transversal subject is a becoming-affective of these inhumanities in a capture dependent only on the self-organising power of conatus.

If capture is required for a provisional centre to emerge as subject, seeing this as a territorialisation suggests the potential for creativity in capture. Nevertheless this territorialisation is not to instate personal identifications, but to emphasise the subject as “an infinity of causal lines on countless levels” (Massumi, 1992, p. 26). It might be
important to return to the destratified body-without-organs in order to trace new centres, new zones of indeterminacy which can be territorialised anew. The aim should not be to become organ-less, lacking organisation, but to disrupt and dismantle the structuring of a body in order to “make something circulate on it or pass across it” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 176), that is, to experiment. The subject becomes a multiplicity of many elements, in which what counts is the interval, the inbetween across which exists a set of relations, passing between points of subjectification, bifurcating, diverging (Deleuze, 1977/1987), becoming-fractal. The subject is a mode of passage, it enables passage, it becomes “a set of valves, locks, floodgates, bowls or communicating vessels” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 177). Each capture must provoke another movement, the subject as a series of capturings of contingency generating a multiplicity of relations and potentials.
**Intensifying Data . . .**

Methodological problem: How to conceive of data, or what content to research expression

The vitalist materialism (Braidotti, 2005), or vital materiality (J. Bennett, 2010) of Deleuze-Guattari’s ontology, combined with the flat topology of immanence in which this is embedded, produces an immanent materialism (Cole, 2012) which expands notions of data. It compels us to regard every thing, and its virtual potential, to become-new as data. The entanglement of univocal data is presented as an alternative to the striations of methodology typologies and procedures, in order to open lines of potentiality in research. Instead of subject-object, there is only data, and data, and data, and . . .

I have worked in the conventional way of data gathering (Hargraves, 2012), aiming to keep expression objectively to the truthful representation of content. I translated data into language, coded that language, cut up and categorised: the knowledge I produced was more words (St. Pierre, 1997). I was aware of a “chaotic richness” (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013, p. 312) that I wasn’t accessing with this method, “something uncontrollable, indescribable, in excess” (Hofsess & Sonenberg, 2013, p. 357). This sense of incompleteness led to more manipulation, the further representation of representations in activities which “strip the words from context, manipulate them, order them in binaries and hierarchies and categories, label some words with other words (code data), and even count words” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 225). Such coding and recoding turns “the world into nouns” (Denzin, 2013, p. 355), in an attempt to fix things that are essentially in movement, dynamic, and thus ungraspable.

What if I had paid attention to the data that “speak up, get rowdy, act up, resist” (Denzin, 2013, p. 354)? These might be the forces of a free, ontogenetic expression and desire working
through data. In such a connection with chaos, research might enable the ethics of becomings-
new rather than represent and cement being-same.

Methodology order-words, language, and conventional structures for research attempt to
stratify, separating data from theory, researcher from researched, and so on, hindering the
immanence of their connection, tightening the boundaries so that there is less potential to
make new associations and connections. It is only within a sedentary distribution that data can
be distinguished from nondata, obtained through methods (observation, interview) which
generate data as a different qualitative object. Data are separated out in a manner which
Benozzo and Koro-Ljungberg (in press) describe as a violence of division and sanitisation. In a
world understood through the division of identity, naturally data are to be apportioned,
regulated, labelled for manipulation. Within the nomadic, univocal distribution in which
everything subsists within one source, everything is data (Amatucci, 2013; Bridges-Rhoads &
and evolve[s] and transform[s] as it intra-acts with other data and research assemblages”

And everything becomes data. In becoming-thesis, everything that passes through and across
my researcher-body is data— theory, books and texts, experiences and sensations remembered,
and new experiences and sensations. Thought surges with language, with computer and screen,
notebook and pen, highlighter and post-its, a cup of caffeine, baby stirring in sleep. Everything
is included; “the entire assemblage that is a life thinking and, and, and . . .” (St. Pierre, 2011, p.
622), yet data are not focused on, or by, the human subject (Arndt, in press). Data are more
than material objects, they include “images, movements, politics, molecules, affect, noise,
haecceity and pollution” (Holmes & Jones, 2016, p. 122). Data might include the almost
nonperceptible (Duhn, in press), as well as the firmly representable and manipulable. Data might even be virtual, potential as well as actual.

Everything becomes data, and does not preexist as data, and this lack of stasis leads Springgay (2015) to argue that there is no such thing as data. Data are constituted only in their data-ing.

Data are process, data are action, or action-oriented (Myers, in press), assembling forces of expression and desire and affect. This is why Ringrose (2015) considers data to be not objects, but events. Data are events; events of difference (Reinertsen & Otterstad, in press), that is, of differentiating and of becoming. Data constitute themselves as they constitute me as they constitute research and thesis and knowing . . . all co-mingling. Data, data, data. Data make me while I make data (Myers, in press).

Data are active; they are irritants (Duhn, in press) and provocateurs (Ulmer, in press). Data shift, deviate, transform, interrogate (Benozzo, Bell, & Koro-Ljungberg, 2013), always in motion (Ulmer, in press), always ambiguous and capable of the new; “a repetition that finds ways to endlessly redistribute and reinvest itself in new and different forms of the data’s flows and vibrations” (Holmes & Jones, 2013, p. 357). Here is “a data chaos – frightening, entangled, enduring” (Arndt, in press, p. 141).

With these conceptions of immanent, active data indivisible from life, research becomes not about uncovering something preexisting, but producing difference and becoming different through data (Myers, in press). The univocity of matter, the human and nonhuman, and linguistic and cultural systems within content and expression entail a reconceptualisation of data which is inclusive of, and draws attention towards, a diversity of contents and expressions.

In an immanent materialism, every sign is read through a kaleidoscopic assemblage of others—quotes, texts, drawings, and sensations. This is a method enacting and producing immanent
connections, drawing on the contingent opportunities in chaos for the active engagement and transformation of all kinds of matter and bodies in their encounters with each other. Holmes and Jones (2016) suggest viewing data as shadows, which then begs consideration of what and who is shadowed, and suggests data are an index of potential and past becomings. My authorial voice is populated with the words of others and words produced in empirical, material experiences; traces of the intensities of other bodies’ presence, words, and actions leak and transform in my produced words. Can I cite every word I say, always something I have heard before? As I write and read my writing, I’m not sure if the words that swirl in their particular patterns are mine or whether they echo something I’ve read or heard or written before. Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari’s phraseology now flows in my thought, is now embedded in sentences pouring onto my page, is this now my phrase or am I becoming-Deleuze as I talk and think in his language?

The content for an expression-becoming-thesis is now not limited by conceptions of data as events codable into words or numbers; data are not passive objects, to be collected, coded, and given shape and significance through the work of research (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013). In a posthumanist decentering of the human subject, language must be displaced from its position “as the main hub of knowledge production” (Murris, 2016, p. 46). Indeed, data must be free of the order-word which will only direct data to reproduce the obvious, the been-before, the same. For this reason, the use of nonlinguistic data, or indefinite language, agrammatical, parodical, non-sense, might be important. The data that do not fit into categories (Rautio, 2013), the data that interrupt habitual sense-making.

Perhaps this is to enable the pass-word hidden beneath the order-word. The pass-word is a word that passes, that constitutes passage, in contrast to order-words that blockade, that make stoppages by delineating positions within a stratified, organised configuration (Deleuze &
Guattari, 1980/1987). A piece of data contains both potentials, a two-fold nature making the methodological process one of extracting the pass-word from the order-word, “to transform the compositions of order into components of passage” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 128).

Data move from order-word to pass-word through an experimental placing-in-variation, an opening up of data as signs, or collection of asignifying particles or forces. This is to experiment with any piece of data and see what it is capable of; seek out its reactionary connections; set its components into new networks; create juxtapositions, alliances, and collusions; make it unfaithful to its position in the scheme of representation. This is to see in any piece of data the differing of expression: “the differential as the sign that arises in an encounter rather than universals of representation” (Roy, 2003, p. 30). Data become multiplicitious and require mutinous lines of thought taking them towards novel configurations brimming with potential affect.

Atypical data might be required for something new to emerge in research, something playful, something that moves beyond the stratified conclusions of research. Inserting something unusual into what is normally conceived as research might provoke new becomings of data, research, method, researcher. As researchers are widening their definition of data to include spectral data (Nordstrom, 2013), emotional data, dream data, physical sensations (St Pierre, 1997), and short stories and music videos (MacLure, 2010), Deleuze-Guattari’s metaphysics of univocity takes us further, to indivisible data. Data no longer form the bridge between the bounded self and its exterior world (Duhn, in press). A perspective of univocity recognises that these data are never really separate from an all-inclusive spirit which connects all matter. There is a conductivity without boundaries or direction, which confuses and unsettles notions of data (Arndt, in press). Data are but a framing of a univocal and all-encompassing substance, and
remain connected to all that is other in the actual and virtual universe. Data are both intensive and expansive.

What data come together, assemble as research, do so with forces of desire that seek to produce affect. Rather than control data, I let data play me as I explore data (Rautio & Vladimirova, in press). As data make themselves intelligible (MacLure, 2013b), I see what data find me, and then I experiment (MacLure, 2013c), create and invent, without overruling other unactualised potentials. I seek affect in data through data’s differential forces; not creating stillness but always and already producing movement to expand the concepts and practices of ethical expression. Data differentiating events for differentiating me-you-thesis.
EVENT: CLAY SITS ON TABLE

A cuboid of Clay sits on Table, freshly cut from its block by Wire, this, its immediate history, demonstrated by the smoothness of its faces interrupted by jagged lines of resistance during the cut. Clay sits on Table, but there are no absolute boundaries, clay and table are overlapping forces (Murris, 2016).

On each edge of Table sits another cuboid of Clay, differentiated by slight variations in shape and size. Damp, heavy, odorous: “an earthy material that is plastic when moist but hard when fired, that is composed mainly of fine particles of hydrous aluminium silicates and other minerals, and that is used for brick, tile and pottery” (“Clay”, n.d.). Clay is not a thing, but a becoming that emerges in its intra-actions (Murris, 2016), its connections and its movements, meaning that Clay co-implicates, refers to, and extends a wide range of other bodies.

Clay is “a living memory of water, industry (paid and unpaid labour), title deeds, colonisation, organisms, grit, weather, heat, pressure and footprints; the machinery that dug it up, processed it and bagged it” (Giugni, 2011, p. 25). Clay has arrived in the centre through an economic exchange in which it is attributed a status of pedagogical tool and learning material. Clay becomes an artefact proving an early childhood centre’s commitment to learning through messy play, or, conversely, to viewing children as artists (see a similar example in Rotas, 2015). Elsewhere, clay enters into assemblages in which it becomes sculpture, brick, building, teapot. And it hinders agriculture and horticulture in interfering with the drainage of soil. As such Clay is a “political material entit[y]” (Rautio, 2013, p. 405).

In the early childhood centre, this piece of Clay is connected to a history of becomings which differs according to each of the subjects and objects that perceive or interact with it. Clay is a familiar material that resonates with pastness (Manning, 2013). Clay has been Horse, has been Tile, has been Sausage and Pot. Clay has been Handprint, has been marked, has been Canvas or Sponge. Clay has been wet, has been dried, has been hammered and shattered and then reconstituted in Water and Pot. Clay has been Friendship-when-Mara-and-I-laughed-together-about-Toads-last-Tuesday-when-we-squished-Clay-in-our-Hands. Clay, or the concept of clay in the Minds of the people who come here, connects with other concepts and in the Words that spill over and sometimes
enable and sometimes cover up potential. Clay is not purely matter, material, but exists as a discursive object too—it is “\textit{materialdiscursive}” (Murris, 2016, p. 7), the material and the discursive being produced simultaneously.

Clay is embodied in Mud and Grit and Water and Pressure, but it is not reducible to these elements. Clay has affects (not qualities) that do not belong to it: its slipperiness is immediately co-composed and composing (Springgay, 2015) with other affects (wetness, coldness, reflectiveness, joy, laughter, friendship, and more). Clay and Hands and Pot and Wire and Friendship “do not exist independently of the relations into which they enter and through which they reciprocally determine each other” (Deleuze, 2002/2003, p. 176). An expansive relational network provides a structure of potential positions which Clay or Hand or Pot or Wire or Friendship can come to hold, only after a dance of indeterminacy in which many other positions are generated, traced, played with, disrupted . . .

Clay plays with other bodies; it subsumes Table, it envelops Hands, it invites prodding, smearing, squashing. It calls for (more) Water to be poured. And if Water’s collaboration with Clay is favourable, if Water seeps into Clay rather than running off it, Clay becomes malleable. Clay sags where it is not supported, requiring a Clay Horse to develop a fifth leg under its body. In its relations with Kiln, Clay becomes fixed, hard but fragile, or it explodes into a trajectory of flying pieces due to the presence of a subversive Bubble.

Influenced by its physical and conceptual context, Clay generates Artist, and Mess, and Learning Experience. Clay enables thinking bodies to “think certain thoughts and become certain kind of bodies and individuals” (Rautio, 2013, p. 405) in relation to it. Clay conditions Muscles in Hands and Arms, requiring more or less pressure. Small pieces of Clay are enclosable in Hands, pressed into Table’s cracks, while a clay Slurry encloses bodies. Clay enables bodies to experience a different mode of being, it gives a different viewpoint to bodies and allows them to experience their bodily existence in a different way.

Clay tightens as it dries on Skin, absorbing moisture from bodies through and because of Skin. Skin no longer a barrier or boundary but a surface that fields relations (Manning, 2013); “a porous, permeable sensorium of connectivity” (C. A. Taylor, 2016,
p. 15). Clay spreads itself over Skin as Skin fits itself to Clay—an intertwining of modes (Manning & Massumi, 2014).

Table isn’t just Table. It is Carpentry Table, with Vices hanging off two of its sides, a Tool Caddy centred upon it, renegade Nails, traces of Sawdust. It is marked with its own (early childhood centre) history, its institutional history, its manufacture, its history as concept for the minds of those who pass it now (initial forays into Table’s potential in infant climbing expeditions, the repetition of Table across mealtimes and doing puzzles and drawing and clay). That Clay is placed on Carpentry Table puts Clay into another network of positions, into relations with the pock-marked surface, a physical surface which also recruits into this network Table’s history of activity, as well as Carpentry Table’s interlocutors, intercessors and accomplices, Drill and Saw and Hammer and Screwdriver and Level.

To join this new assemblage, both Clay and Table are deterritorialised, the parts that combine to give them consistency, and with it a separate and distinct form, are momentarily asundered. But not into disconnected pieces or building blocks, threads of entanglement remain. Instead what emerges are gaps between the parts, a space is stretched in which parts vibrate, resonate differently, and perhaps reach to other parts; perhaps other lines of connection intensify. What is produced in such a stretch is a space of virtual possibilities, excess, and creative interplay.

Clay and Table are expressions-already-formed and expressions-in-the-making, always and already re-made, re-produced, always with difference at play as the creative motor of each new expression. In its sense as something of the future, expression works with all of its previous expressions as content. Expression is not tied down to any organising system; it is a potential-seeking, a connection-making. Because Clay is soft Drill can make holes easily in it. When Child uses Drill to make holes in clay, these three holes that are set so apart remind the Child of that Book-with-the-Monsters-on-it-that-have-three-eyes. Slowly Clay begins to express Monster, a physical transformation effecting an incorporeal one, attributed by the words “This is a monster”. Clay-becoming-Monster. “Now I need to draw the mouth”. Drill to express Pencil now, sliding across Clay to make marks that are long and thin and stretch underneath the eyes from one side to the other.
The assemblage Clay-becoming-Monster subsists within a virtuality that includes an inexhaustible number of elements (Figure 11). To label each potential contributor to the assemblage is to employ a representationalist ontology, when what is more appropriate to the becoming of Clay-Monster, more generative, more creative and more ethical, would be an assemblage of these parts as formless differences. Formless, it is impossible to think or write these differences. A written list necessarily employs representational identities (and Capital Letters) to describe what are singular expressions rather than generalised concepts. Yet the representational identity is in fact camouflage for an operation of subterfuge in which each element momentarily opens up to its complexities as a singularity and to possibilities engendered in the interconnections that exceed the boundaries of identity. Each element is considered as a launching of a multiplicity of lines of histories and developments and connections.

The ceaseless listing of identities that might be active in this becoming replaces a rational logic not with an associative logic, but with an affirmative logic in which literally all matter is implicated as potential, and in which forces combine and collaborate through affirmation of each other (Bogue, 2007). The inclusivity of univocity. Each identity is itself an assemblage which consists of rich connection-making potential in their histories and associations as well as their physical components. The spaces between the words (Figure 11) are pregnant with an intensity of potential, an affectensity engendered by proximity and diversity and chance. What (else) can a clay-assemblage do?

Here Clay is a condensed and virtual multiplicity that already encompasses its potential connections with other matter and the potential actualisations such interactions...
might give rise to. Not that Clay contains Monster and Hole and Drill but it subsists in a virtual swirl with all these pieces which are asignifying, potential substances for content and expression, potentials yet to exist. Asignifying, indeterminate particles, seen as lively, vibrant, and self-organising, virtually explore every potential for actualisation (Barad, 2015).

**Clay sits on Table**

In this “multi-stranded storying” (L. Bennett, 2016, p. 71) of clay, imagined encounters with clay are mediated by human bodies or at least human interest (L. Bennett, 2016). The human is decentred perhaps, but not eliminated (L. Bennett, 2016). And yet Clay-Monster is a line of becoming, in movement, in play, an experimentation of matter in its capacity for infinite actualisations that do not rely on the human. It becomes possible to question whether a teaching/learning human body can co-habit this space of potential in its vibrant indeterminacy?

In their multiplicities of their history of connections and possibilities of future connections, the assemblage of the combined parts of Clay and Table and Drill and Monster-concept create a limitless space of potential. The Clay-Monster becomes anew and anew and anew in processes of transformation; it is a Clay-Monster like this, or like this, and like this, and like this (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). Clay-becoming-Monster is an organisation of “a combinatory system of places in a pure spatium infinitely deeper than the real extension of the [Clay-drilled-with-holes-and-marked-with-lines] and the imaginary extension of [the Clay-as-Monster] piece” (Deleuze, 2002/2003, p. 175). It is from this virtual potentiality that a sense for the problem of the pedagogical space intended by the Teacher and perhaps taken up by the Children is created: What can these materials do to/with each other and with what affect?
4. Repetition, Refrain

In its contact with the plane of immanence and chaos, expression’s “immediate affect is a differing” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xvii), a dynamic transformation of form through an activation of difference, emerging rather than being predetermined or imposed. Yet the indeterminacy created in expression’s differing is veiled by the seemingly determinate forms perceived by the human brain, a recognition made possible, perhaps even unavoidable, by language and conceptual representation. Perception functions to coagulate flows of forces into something known, apprehending and arresting what is, in its continual becoming, a zone of indeterminacy. But despite this chunking and categorising of experience, the human brain remains capable of fielding the continuum of variation that is difference (Massumi, 2013); in other words, to a greater or lesser extent, of tuning into indeterminacy and variation. This chapter seeks an ethics of expression in the affirmation of difference, riding indeterminacy for becoming-variation.

Perception is the folding of sensation into forms (de Freitas, 2016b), the assembling cut; it is what brings form to the univocity of matter. All bodies are in-the-making, coming into being through acts of perception and not preexisting (Manning & Massumi, 2014). With the mediation of language, objects and events are produced as something particular and as such, language limits what can be seen and the kind of encounter possible (Krejsler, 2016). Language accrues objects of perception with stasis and omits relationality and flexibility in the make-up of form (de Freitas, 2016b). When human infants are taught concepts by looking and labelling (animal names and noises, vehicles, colours, shapes), they are taught to perceive in general rather than singular
terms, to ignore, not-comprehend or not-conceive the inherent indeterminacy that produces all kinds of variations within these categories. De Freitas (2016b) describes this as learning to close off or block the virtual potential always present in matter, an inattention that then becomes habitual. What is perceived is a repetition that makes the world categorisable, while, outside of perception, subjects and objects consist of flows and intensities, energies and movements that can be connected and disjoined in an infinite number of ways (Somerville, in press).

Some sense of continuation of form is essential for learning to occur; children, and communities, as a sociocultural perspective (see, for example, Rogoff, 2003) makes clear, build on existing forms and past experiences to create new learning. Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) interchanging of the term “plane of immanence” (p. 298) with the “plane of consistency” (p. 8) indicates that consistency is not opposed to the immanence of indeterminacy. Yet to unhinge determinacy from expression leaves us in need of a concept which can account for the consistency of form in expression, without assigning it to the banal repetition of the same in representation. This will be the refrain.

The Consistency of Difference in Repetition

Without viewing the products of expression as necessarily determinate, we can still acknowledge the seeming immutability of particular expressions as a density. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) offers the useful concept of consistency. Consistency is the property of consolidated aggregates of elements and forms. While expression involves the selection and connection of disparate parts or components into assemblage, consistency is the concept Deleuze-Guattari uses to describe the bonds that hold assemblages together. Consistency becomes a force that marshals coexistence for heterogeneous elements within the forces of assembling expression. It is then due to the consistency of elements that a phenomenon can be established as a particular assemblage: a car, Tom Jones, an earthquake.

Consistency is a result of repetition, a “periodic repetition” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 365) of elements: for example, of wheels and axles in car, shaking in an earthquake. Cars and earthquakes are events that come in populations, in a series of iterations, and therefore there is both a generic (and repetitive) component to each car or earthquake, as well as an irreducible singularity or uniqueness (Massumi, 2013). These are series of events over, through, and across which runs difference, as a “continuum of
variation” (Massumi, 2013, p. xvii); a streak of infinitesimal, often imperceptible, differences within the repetition of a series, variations which are a source of its becoming-new.

Rather than consider a basic reproduction of form as the mechanism which enables identification of individual events or bodies as part of a class or group (each individual car copying a certain blueprint enabling its inclusion in the group car), Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) turns this notion on its head. Rather than identity propelling formation, there is difference. This is to say there is no form that is prior to force and no image or representation that determines shape (Manning, 2013). It is not that form emerges in the reproduction of an identity that is prior but that difference is fundamental, in that the differing of things-in-assemblage produces form.

The regularity of a phenomenon is not produced through predetermined reproductions but developed as consistency in the processes of becoming-assemblage (Leander & Boldt, 2013). Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) rejects an arborescent, linear, and hierarchised, model of how assemblages gain consistency and seeks a rhizomatic conception. Life goes “not from a center to an exteriority but from an exterior to an interior, or rather from a discrete or fuzzy aggregate to its consolidation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 382). Thus there is no form or structure imposed from above but a conception of molecules self-organising their relations through their interactions as “oscillators” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 382).

Repetition for Deleuze holds a special power and a unique conceptualisation. This is not a reproductive repetition, a “bare” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 21) repetition without change, but a transformative and creative force centred in difference. Each expression of form is a singular actualisation, with difference crucial to its intensive process of actualisation. Difference, or differential relations, creates—for example, it is the difference of energy between tectonic plates that gives rise to the earthquake. It is this difference that repeats, so that repetition differentiates: different intensities of shaking, at different depths, with different trajectories, all of which are subsumed in the concept of earthquake. It is the concept that gives a false sense of the repetition of the phenomena by uniting each unique earthquake with a single conceptual identity. Two identical pencils lying side by side on the table are not a repetition one of the other. There is immediate difference in their spatial locations, and the virtual potential of each pencil, what might be
done with each pencil, leads each repetition into new realms of action. These pencils, like a series of earthquakes, share the same virtual structure, a differential virtual structure elaborating potential variation, that repeats. Repetition here is the return of the ontogenetic and differential conditions of the virtual each time there is an individuation of each concrete expression, each earthquake, each car, each pencil.

To harness the power of a differential repetition, in what follows I map the vibratory components of difference to make several cuts, several lines that carry Deleuze’s (1968/1994) ontogenesis away into productive arenas for theorising processes involved in expression. This starting point of the concept of difference repeats—like the differential energies of the earthquake—engaging a difference of difference with each repetition in order that ontogenesis develops anew.

**Differing:**

In the monism of a univocity of form difference becomes not a function assigning identity in a dialectical scheme, but a complex force based on the relations between parts (Braidotti, 2013a). We might, then, approach difference through the metaphysics presented in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze, 1968/1994) which explains the genesis of form through the interdependence of three registers: the virtual, intensive, and actual. The actual is the expression articulated, a product of a process involving the intensive and virtual registers. In other words, virtual and intense differential relations make up the multiplicity from which actualisation can take place. The virtual register is the potentials for the becoming of a body, which function as different multiplicities structuring the processes of actualisation. Thus the actualisation of the virtual occurs through intensive, nondivisible processes (Smith & Protevi, 2015); virtual potentials are intensive to actualisation, not separate.

Thus the virtual register is an intensive one, a conceptualisation which expresses an immanent and univocal plane in which being is continuous—the univocal sense of being displaying variations of intensity rather than the divisions of separated forms. Contrasted with a bare or material repetition of successive independent elements, a differential repetition is “a repetition of the Whole on diverse co-existing levels” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 84), a repetition of univocity. Here then, Deleuze elaborates the nature of univocity as intensive difference. Difference comes to constitute the
intensive virtual of the actual, and thus univocity, as the singular source of all being, comprises a chaotic, potential-filled, swarm of differences. Univocity is “a properly differential and original space and time” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 50), which can account for every variation of form. Univocity is thus comprehensive of all differences; the constant variation of differences characterises univocity rather than distinguishes or enacts change within it. Univocity, the substance giving rise to every (differing) articulation of form, must be pure differing; and univocity pertains to every thing despite (because) of its differing, “each being no more than a difference between differences” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 56). Difference then becomes the only attribute shared across all things in the universe—difference becomes univocity or all-encompassing substance.

**Differing:**

Here difference is assigned to all which falls outside the concept; difference emerges as the unconceived and the incomprehended. A concept of *car* is reached only because we artificially block the concept at a certain level of specificity. Differences between two individual toy cars (such as colour, size, speed) are subsumed in the concept car. Because “the concept is the Same - indefinitely the same - for objects which are distinct” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 13), the concept car enables
repetition, as all particular cars are cars in exactly the same way.

Deleuze (1968/1994) dismisses this usual conception of repetition as negative. This is a repetition which emerges only from the perspective of consciousness, from perception mediated by representation. The bare repetition of the same occurs only because of the finite comprehension which concepts possess, so in fact that which repeats does so only because of an action of not comprehending or perceiving differences (repetition due to noncomprehension, nonperception). This is a repetition by default, resulting from the inadequacy of concepts to fully describe each singularity. Difference becomes a means of differentiation. Uniqueness can only be articulated in relations of
others or relations of difference (Murris, 2016) as difference is always the unit of meaning (Stables, 2010). Instead of difference as identifier, for Deleuze, difference subsists in the richness of each formation in-itself, only to be obscured by the mediation of language, reason, and categorisation (St. Pierre, 2016).

Repetition is grounded in the differences between individual cars which are not included in, or concealed by, the concept car. “Difference inhabits repetition” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 76), even if this is difference that falls outside the concept. The variations between repeated cars testify to the presence of “differential mechanisms which belong to the essence and origin of that which is repeated” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 17). In other words, every repetition is birthed within a zone of variation,
much of which falls into indifference (Deleuze, 1968/1994) within the repetition of the same, but it is difference that is creative of all the specimens of repetition. This is a difference which is without identity, “without substance and subject” (Murris, 2016, p. 110). That is to say that difference is not without or outside, but is internal, an intensive force within each being or becoming, that enables repetition through a differential structure for form repeating. Difference is virtual potential, manifested in the individuating process of becoming in which the virtual passes into the actual, and exists in itself within the actual (Bogue, 2007). This is to focus difference on the excess in the repetition of the concept; this is to make difference ontologically prior and affirmative rather than negative and
Differing:

The sense of consistency which holds together differences is what enables us to conceive of a body or event. Every body or event has its milieu, its boundaries, created in the periodic repetition of its components. In Deleuze-Guattari’s native French, milieu means both “middle” and “surroundings”; thus “a middle that wraps around . . . self-surround[s]” (Massumi, 2013, p. xii). There are milieus within milieus and interactions between milieus. A milieu is always surrounded by a larger milieu (Jackson, 2016). A living thing has a milieu of materials exterior to it, and internally a milieu of composing and composed elements; there are milieus of membranes and milieus of actions and perceptions. The living thing passes between these different milieus as the milieus pass into each other (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), in order to breathe, to move, to grow, and to interact. Milieus then, are provisional and mobile in their attachment to other milieus (Jackson, 2016), creating a “crisscross field of many streams . . . of nested abundance” (Manning & Massumi, 2014).

The repetition of the periodic components of the milieu produces a difference by which a milieu passes into another milieu (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Difference must be engendered in the repetition of each milieu component, as it is difference that can provide the passage to enable milieus to pass into one another. The different modes of life assemble always in disjunction (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Without difference, there would be no development of form or action. The repetition of difference is a passage to transformation.

Repetition for Deleuze is always a differentiating or differential repetition; the repetition is a repetition of differences. “What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition…?” asks Deleuze (1968/1994, p. 75): in other words, of contractions of univocity that we label water, nitrogen, carbon, and so on, that are constantly repeated in differential relations. Difference emerges in encounter and in relation, so that form can be considered “a simplification of the field occurring between registers, flashing up from their difference to each other” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 36). It is the differences that are productive, the friction between elements that creates a passage to becoming, each thing or body
generated by means of a difference that thus becomes positive (Rautio, 2013). Thus the genetic code constantly repeats in the production of an organism, but what is repeated is difference—differences between the gene and the organism, between the gene and the proteins it codes (Colwell, 1997). These differences allow genes to pass into cells, provoke proteins, and to pass into DNA sequences. A “differential coming together” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 33) creating spaces of passage to becoming-new.

**Differing again:**

Deleuze (1968/1994) creates a concept of difference which is not a difference “already mediated by representation” but a difference with “its own Idea, its own singularity at the level of Ideas” (p. 27). This is an ontological difference that asserts itself as an independent flow of creative force. What Deleuze’s theorising on repetition does is offer us a way to view all expressions as differing, as difference being the main instigator of form. In representation, difference emerges only in relation to the identical, the repetition of the same, whereas in Deleuze’s differential sense of repetition, repetition is purely formless differences, pure variation. It is with the latter sense of repetition that the representation of the same, of fixed repetitive identity, can be undone, “when the identity of things dissolves, being escapes to attain univocity, and begins to revolve around the different” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 67).

The differential elaborates potential variation; it creates a virtual plane of potentiality. A placing-into-variation that makes difference a tool for creation, a verb (differing) rather than a noun. Creativity both produces and is produced by difference (Manning, 2013). To create is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it. Difference is potential for creation, but difference must be sought. “Each term of a series, being already a difference, must be put into a variable relation with other terms . . . Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 56). Difference releases a creative energy.

Univocity-becoming-difference.

Difference-becoming-ontological.

Difference-becoming-passage and movement.
Difference-becoming-creative energy.

Difference Shakes up Ontogenesis Again and Again

...a Refrain Develops

Another repetition is building, a consistency that leads us to expect another shake. This is another way in which repetition functions, not as a conductor of difference but in marshalling and organising chaotic forces through the calming and subduing repetition of a refrain, an undulating rhythm (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). The refrain is a “rhythmic regularity” (Bogue, 2007, p. 29) that creates fixed patterns or motifs. Motifs act like attractors to capture components from chaos and create a functional space (Guattari, 1992/1995). The motif functions like a dance, a tribal chant that consolidates a theme. In this chapter thus far, the refrain of the repeated shaking up of relations with and for difference as a creative power in itself, becomes a motif. This is one way in which consistency can be produced.

Here, the generative power of differing in repetition has become a centre or ground in an assemblage orchestrated by a refrain. From chaos the refrain moves us to the threshold or boundary of a territorial assemblage, an assemblage that can make or mark a home or centre (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). This does not mean that the forces with which the refrain engages have been tamed—sometimes this home or sense of consistency and order is a brief resting place and a spot from which to launch a new trajectory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). To either consolidate, or to launch forth, requires the refrain (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987).

The refrain

The refrain is territorialising, a constructive entity engaging in bricolage bringing together a range of disparate elements into an organised synthesis and totality (Grosz, 2008); the refrain is ontological (Jackson, 2016). The refrain composes arrangements of matter, organs, language, bodies, actions, events; the refrain is expression.

The refrain proceeds through coding and territorialisation, taking differences that are “small, unconnected and free-floating” and making them “appreciable, connected and fixed” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 248). In the territory created by a refrain, expressive qualities such as colour, shape, sound, come to function as signs or markers. Yet the
refrain does not function through signification, but through attraction, through the
detachment of a motif which then attracts different components, capturing components
and coupling them to the territory of a self, object, or event. The refrain is constructive
rather than referential. Its acts of coding link and arrange expressions and content “on the
pragmatic plane of territory” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 222).

The refrain territorialises chaos into coded patterns, in a way that resonates with,
and intensifies, the body (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017). Blocks become refrained in a
tower; fear refrained in a monster. The child-body is refrained in a self that repeats in
different moments and spaces. A manner of walking is a refrain (Deleuze, 1993/1997b),
as are the bodily activities of breathing, eating, and drinking.

The refrain is portable, and carried to different places, used in different events
(Jackson, 2016); thus refrain, as expression, becomes content. These are territorialising
refrains creating consistency through periodic repetition, but in each repetition lie
productive differences so that the refrain becomes an improvisation. The refrain is always
an unstable and temporary set of connections (Jackson, 2016). As a child repeats the
actions involved in climbing the steps to the top of the slide and sliding down it, they
begin to experiment with subtle changes in actions that are inventive of new movements.
Thus the refrain is the staking out of a territory in order to improvise with and within it
and create movement (Jackson, 2016).

The refrain creates consistency, at first fuzzy but then increasingly consolidated.
In developing consistency, the refrain employs an expressiveness Deleuze-Guattari
(1980/1987) calls “auto-objective” (p. 369); these markers of territory in becoming-
expressive “find an objectivity in the territory they draw” (Deleuze & Guattari,
1980/1987, p. 369). Thus refrains create their own consistency, truth, or sense.
Objectivity is not predetermined but emergent, a property of the assemblage as it
becomes-expressive. It is the consequence of a detachment, something opposed to “the
immediate affects of an impulse triggering an action” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p.
369). This is an objectivity that puts things into relation within territorial motifs, that is, a
kind of set of linked markers of territory with “territorial counterpoints” (Deleuze &
Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 369) in events external to the territory. These territorial motifs
and counterpoints do not necessarily regulate action but also function to “explore
potentialities” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 370). Consistency is not produced
through framing, moulding, or causalities, but through the auto-objectivity, the putting-into-relation, of the refrain.

Consistency is a density that sets up an operational style, a way of approaching the world, leading to further solidification or thickening. In the becoming of the assemblage, the consolidation of consistency occurs as a settling of form, in the sense that a mixture settles (Sauvagnargues, 2016). Singularities begin to swirl together in “a strong circle of convergence” (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p. 49). This conception of consolidation negates any possibility of it being viewed as a linear process; a mixture implies different levels, the overlapping and merging of forms. Nor can a territory ever be seen as complete (Nordstrom, in press) but always in a process of being renewed or transformed.

Instead of an abstract notion to provide consistency in the assemblage and to predetermine structures and relations, the refrain adopts what can only be a provisional assumption of consistency without the specification which would serve as a mould for its development. Consolidation must be emergent, as there are “densifications, intensifications, reinforcements, injections, showerings, like so many intercalary events” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 382). The refrain is always enmeshed in and with bodies, habits, and places, entwined in a reciprocity of working-with-the-world, of “elaborating an increasingly rich and consistent material” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 383).

Because of this, the refrain is not immune to influence, in fact, the refrain functions as the assemblage’s “cutting edge of deterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 391); it is what carries the assemblage away towards new transformations. Consolidation is creative as it is often the most deterritorialised component in the assemblage that holds the assemblage together (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), bringing play to what it composes. Consolidation enables connections with new possibilities that open the territorial assemblage to both new assemblages and interassemblage.

In the refrain, the intervals count as much as filled-in spaces (Sauvagnargues, 2016). These intervals, gaps and inequalities open up potential connections for consolidation; “sometimes it is necessary to make a hole in order to consolidate” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 382). The gaps provide a contrast, mark a boundary,
of what is and what is not included in the territory. In this way, what is not included remains present and available for the refrain’s deterritorialising function. The refrain is a territory always en route to deterritorialisation and then, at the intensive threshold of deterritorialisation, are produced “complementary, sedentary reterritorialisations” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 54). Thus the refrain is created through a constituting cut (Sauvagnargues, 2016) which marks out and combines certain elements of the milieu, and which enables the refrain to link up with other possibilities in the milieu, to deterritorialise and reterritorialise, and unleash new refrains.

**To refrain . . .**

There is a balance here to be found between the consolidation required for the refrain to function as a mode of consistency for assemblages, and the function of the refrain as a place of passage. This makes the refrain both deterritorialised and somewhat determinate (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). The territorial matters of expression, especially as they take on consistency, become semiotic systems, and the refrain can become “hackneyed repetition” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 133) if it moves too far towards consolidation. And yet, there are always elements that move from their place internal to the territorial assemblage to become “components of passage and relay” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 378) at the threshold. The ear, for example, is “a refrain that is continually deterritorialised by the voice” (Grosz, 2008, p. 40). Deterritorialisation always involves an extraction of a component for inclusion in a new assemblage. These deterritorialised components “may set about budding, producing” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 379), to establish new territories, reterritorialising anew.

Refraiming is an important mode within processes of expression, introducing a dynamic vector of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation to be coextensive with the interplay of content and expression which leads to the centering of a coding. Here the relation between differential repetitions and deterritorialising refrains becomes important, with deterritorialising seen as engagement with the differential which makes for a more affect-ive mode of expression. Refrain becomes the solution to, or sense made of, the problem of a stability or consistency in expression, without resorting to stratification as a means of the stability of form and experience crucial in learning. The refrain is an assemblage which develops consistency in a periodic repetition outside of stratification, and instead of foreclosing opportunities for development within stratifying lines, the
conceptualisation of periodic repetition instigates difference for individuation, for always-becoming-new, even as two identical pencils lie side by side . . .
EVENT: ORDER–IN(G) THE CHILD’S WORLD OF BEES

A dead bee was discovered in the grass. Four-year-old Phoebe (P) and a PR [Practitioner-Researcher] (PR3) had been discussing the bee and Phoebe’s ideas about how honey is made by a honey machine inside the hive . . .

PR3 ‘Would you like to explain how your machine works Phoebe?’
P ‘The machine makes the pollen then it makes it into honey. The holes are the honey. I want to do another drawing.’
(Phoebe drew more)
P ‘This [her drawing] is what the outside of the honey house looks like.’
PR3 ‘How do the bees get into it?’
(P began to draw a door)
P ‘It goes through the door.’ (Peters & K. Davis, 2011, p. 12-13)

In education, the order-word is in full flow, a force determining what might be said and how. The order-word compels belief, it is a use of language which commands: “let people say” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 88). Let us say this is a bee; let us say the bee lives in a honey house, let us say he has a machine that makes honey . . . The order-word connects the word with a context, presupposition, or an obligation (Roy, 2008), and in so doing, provides order. It both gives an order and establishes order; it determines relations between things in the world, and it presupposes a network of beliefs about the world.

Language is constituted of “a host of categories, classifications, binary oppositions, associations, codes, concepts, logical relations and so on, whereby the world is given a certain coherence and organisation” (Bogue, 2007, p. 20). With the ubiquitous order-word all kinds of implicit obligations and preset directions are enacted. The child introduces the notion of a house for the bee in her drawing: now (order-word) house obligates passage. House presupposes doors, entrances and exits, so, the practitioner asks, how will the bee get in? If there is a machine (order-word) for making honey, there is presupposed a process; the practitioner asks, what will happen next? The order-word begins and sustains chains of signifiers that are presupposed and somewhat predetermined.

That this conversation occurs within an educational setting constructs further parameters which serve to mould the form of the interaction, that serve to delimitate the potential relations between child and bee as well as the significance of these relations. Here education is order-word. Rautio (2014) notes that in education, child-matter
relations are often interpreted by adults as instrumental activities related to child development or socialisation, “the significance of which is predetermined and known or knowable by adults” (p. 471). Teachers are the knowing ones who can help children to learn about the world (A. Taylor & Blaise, 2014).

PR3 ‘So when the bee gets into the machine can you tell us how the honey gets made?’

P ‘Honey drops the honey [sic] into the pollen … then use its tongue to turn the machine on then it turns the pollen into honey.’

PR3 ‘That’s really interesting. So once the bee drops the stuff into the machine, what happens to it next?’

P ‘It drops the honey into the machine. It drips it from its tongue. He carries it in his legs then he puts it on his tongue.’

(P showed the PR on the drawing the part of the machine it goes into)

PR3 ‘Can you tell me how it gets turned into honey?’

P ‘The honey turns it and makes it moosh and turns it into honey. Like I stir my ice cream into ah ah ice cream moosh. When I stir it I moosh it up.’

…

(J, another adult, joined them)

J ‘Yes! How many bees live in the hive?’

P ‘Ah, maybe two.’

J ‘Two bees?’

P ‘Yeah [emphatically]. One is the Dad, one is the Mum.’

J ‘How many babies do they have.’

(P was thoughtful for a while then slowly raised three fingers)

PR3 ‘So there are five bees in there if you count the babies.’

P ‘One, two, three’ [she raises one finger at a time].

(Peters & K. Davis, 2011, p.13)

With the descriptor of education (order-word) assigned as the primary purpose of the setting in which this conversation occurs, all bodies become educational. Matter too is consigned to an educating role, as the child and adults use matter as a subject with which to (re)construct knowledge. Located in an early childhood education setting, the practitioners are obligated to “be educational”; this presupposes question-asking on the part of the adult and answering on the part of the child. At first a gentle drawing out of thinking, with the first practitioner following the order-words in the child’s language to “educationally” extend thought, then, with the second practitioner, a more direct, educationally instructional approach: how many bees? (or do you know how to count?)

The order-word maintains positions and attitudes, and compels or obliges the succession of certain actions and thoughts, keeping all bodies and events “on track” so that “thoughts, minds and bodies . . . unify purpose and behaviour” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1476) in line with the stratified expressions assumed of early childhood education.
In this way language has a materiality that affects the body (Murris, 2016). “When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe . . . and not even believe, but pretend like [you] believe” (Deleuze, 2004/2006b, p. 320). This pretending involves following the order-word’s presupposed and predetermined direction, falling into line, into order. This is a house so let us pretend it has a door . . . My role is to educate you, so let us practise counting. Let me see how you do. Next is addition.

Order-words are speech acts, they function to do something. Phoebe’s, and the practitioner’s, order-word statements about the marks on her paper transform those marks into a honey machine. Phoebe declares “the holes are the honey”, transforming the indentation and inscription of the pencil marks on the paper into honey. Further marks represent—a particular configuration of lines “looks like” the honey house. Here the order-word serves to transform content, that is, the lines on paper are transformed as a function of language. Marks are expressed as honey houses. Incorporeal transformations are also performed, not to describe or represent, but to intervene in the bodily assemblages being created. Language has a moulding function (de Freitas, 2013). “How many bees?” turns human-bodies into teachers and students, and bees into objects to be managed, counted, accounted for.

Language is never merely communication of information. The order-word is always present within the word, there is always a reported statement within a reporting statement (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Information is never neutral; instead the transmission of information functions to emit orders and commands (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). What is presupposed in the use of order-word, and thus what the order-word functions to command, is a viewing of the world through representationalism.

The order-word operates through recognition and representation, and as such, is intimately tied to an ordering of the world enacted by a representationalist world view. Recognition is a product of human perception and conceptualisation. Perception intervenes in the flow of matter, making divisions, marking boundaries around parts of these flows and assigning them identity: bees, houses, machines. Recognition relies on representations made in thought, and on relations of analogy, resemblance, and correspondence in objects that can serve as a basis for determining their identity. Imagine listening to a speaker of a foreign language, hearing only a stream of sound and noise, and then recognising an English word, something perceptible that emerges amidst the
flow only because of structures and representations held. To think with analogy, resemblance, and correspondence is to ignore, not-comprehend, or not-conceive the inherent indeterminacy that produces all kinds of variations within categories. Such operations serve to simplify the world to make it more accessible and workable for the human subject.

Because, fundamentally, representationalism is a way of thinking that fixes the world as object, as a resource for human activity (Bolt, 2004). Note that this also positions the human as exceptional (Malone, 2016; Braidotti, 2017), in being separate to and outside of the world in order to know and understand it. Representationalism is the way in which the human lays hold of the world and secures it for his or her own use, and representation and recognition are vehicles through which representationalism can effect its mastery. The world undergoes a “humanistic colonizing domination” (Malone, 2016, p. 393). Representation involves not only a re-presentation of the world, but also a sense of speaking for what is represented (Spivak, 1988), representing a world that cannot present itself.

Recognition and representation are operations which place the human at the centre, and position nonhuman matter at his or her disposal. Rautio (2014) interrogates the common conception of children in early childhood learning through their explorations of matter, and the conception of matter as inert and passive to be consumed or used for a teleological purpose related to development. Objects are ubiquitous in early childhood, and many, many different kinds of objects are considered desirable for children’s learning experiences. Playing with a particular object is seen to be related to particular aspects of development and to the construction of age-appropriate knowledge (A. Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015), making objects integral to the “rhetoric of progress” (Jones et al., 2012, p. 51). Here the bee might be viewed as an opportunity to develop scientific knowledge about bees—the insect used as subject matter, a “human-centric relation of use, where the nonhuman animal becomes the object of study for human benefit” (A. Taylor, Blaise & Giugni, 2013).

In such conceptualisations of child-matter interactions, the contribution that the bee makes to the developing assemblage is obscured or ignored. The human is assumed to be the only relevant subject in the interaction (Rautio, 2014), or at least, the human transcends matter in acts of labelling, manipulating, and controlling matter. The
representations of bees that serve as knowledge are possible of a subject that transcends the world, creating knowledge which also achieves this transcendent status (Murris, 2016). The development of knowledge then becomes teleological, tying the development of the individual subject to linear notions of progress in terms of an increased repository of factual information, as assumed and valued by humanism (Braidotti, 2013b).

And thus “the world appears as if it consists only of active human subjects who confront passive objects and their law-governed mechanisms” (J. Bennett, 2010, p. xiv). What is learnt also becomes an object, “most often being a well-defined language construct representing matters in a preexisting world” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 45). This is a construct that is taken for granted, presented as something fixed and immovable, inert and immaterial, to which learners move towards (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013). But even admitting the potential for objects to disrupt (Jones et al., 2012), these are conceptualisations in which everything is predefined and separable from the interaction, “taking turns in affecting each other” (Rautio, 2014, p. 462), rather than a complex entanglement within which are constantly emerging the object, the human, and their relation. The event of the dead bee is “cut away from time” (Leander & Boldt, 2013, p. 40), space, and its relations; that is, abstracted from this singular moment within its wider becoming, in order to be made available for inspection and explanation. Representation instates static grids of facts, rather than an appreciation and heightened awareness of the dead bee’s becoming, and particularly its becoming-with (bodies, grass, paper and pen).

When the adult (J) hijacks the creative conversation about bee houses, honey, and ice cream so to reduce it to a reproduction of traditional relations between teacher and pupil, the bee becomes tool for a child’s emerging symbolism in the representation of a labelled drawing; for the representation of numbers and facts. The potential for creative thought is hindered by the reproduction of representations of what is already known (Olsson, 2009), and the wealth of potential in the furry, colourful yet inanimate body of the bee creature is curtailed. The practitioner asks “a range of question [sic] such as ‘What happens to the honey after they’ve made the honey?’ , ‘How do they put them into the jars?’ ‘Why do they [bee keepers] wear a hat?’” (Peters & K. Davis, 2011, p.13).

Here are presented logical connections for representation-ridden people with “a tree growing in their heads” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 16). A tree with its logic of tracing and reproduction, representations linked to representations in a cyclical
redundancy in the repetition of information. Thinking most of the time involves “going in circles where we rarely see anything new”, where “thought functions in a steady pattern of recognition and representation” (Olsson, 2009, p. 82). For Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), the ordering of the order-word is redundancy, the mere recycling of orders which revolve and revolve without transformation, without creativity, and as such it cannot be an ethical act.

Redundancy understood as unnecessary repetition suggests a banal lack of creativity. And yet this is to assume a bare repetition. Redundancy can also describe an excess, overspill, profusion, abundance. Excess is sited in a redundancy of too much (Pilippo & Vesikko, 2015) so that excess comes to form “an extremely mobile empty space” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 41). This is a virtual realm of potentiality, an excess of what is possible, making selection necessary. And even as contents and expressions come together in a reproduction—even of the order-word—they always pass through a gap of indeterminacy in which they can access their virtual potentialities for diverse actualisations, before settling into form, before becoming fixed in representation.

Representations are not immutable, despite their often uncontested nature. Representations are constantly renegotiated, adapted and transformed, as intra-acting practices (Renold & Ringrose, 2016) which emerge in performance, rather than preformed, stabilised entities that interact. A stable representation does not indicate a stable thinghood for an object, but is rather “a way to punctuate the flux, to bracket and ignore differences, to declare them as pointing to an identity-for-a-particular-purpose” (Knorr Cetina, 2001, p. 184). Representation cannot be pitted against becoming, as it is not immune to the powers of becoming. Representations are also bodies subject to an ongoing becoming, which makes them variable or flexible. Representations remain part of a process in which they are constantly deterritorialised and reterritorialised. There is always a space for movement, always a gap between representations in that the representations of one person don’t quite match those of the other. Representation might even be necessary as a starting point for processes of deterritorialisation.

Ethics requires a world in which connections are fluid and open rather than preset, in which a fertile potentiality can be developed because each and every thing is in touch with every thing else. Ethics is produced from an ontology of univocity as opposed to recognition and representationalism. Within univocity the human is neither detached nor
holds a privileged, controlling position. It is not only the absence of hierarchy in the positioning of the human and nonhuman that is helpful for a posthumanist enactment of ethics, but also the potential for increasing the capacity for affect which becomes possible for all bodies within the conceptualisation of a univocal matter. Without the ordering of relations into predetermined sequences and connections, there is an endless potentiality at play. Not the unnecessary repetition of redundancy, but the creativity of excess. Not the human-centric “let’s say . . .”, but continual production in which matter is performative in all kinds of nonlinguistic ways. Not representation, but the intervention of continuous modifications (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) born through diverse interactions.

Movements Out of Order

In education, how might we perceive univocity rather than engage in representation and recognition? Under the grip of representational thinking, our preconception of things conceals their extensive relations and potentiality for transformation. Each thing takes its plotted point, stopped in the operations of signification and coding (Massumi, 2002b) that representation employs. Yet posthumanism reconfigures knowing to be a product of relation, always entangled with being and becoming (Murris, 2016; Rautio, 2013). Nonhuman others enter into the production of knowledge in various ways (Pedersen, 2015), as an object, body, or event provokes recognition or creativity, challenges boundaries or requires the invention of a new concept or identity. How is honey made? With mooshing. Knowledge then becomes “a machinic network for knowing” (C. A. Taylor, 2016, p. 11), replacing a progressive lineage of knowledge with rhizomatic processes of multiplicity, rupture, and connectivity, concerned more with what works in the moment of this event (connections to ice-cream) rather than transcendent notions of what one should know. Instead of the nonhuman as something to be known, or a resource for human use, the nonhuman becomes instead a condition of the possibility of our presence in the world (Snaza & Weaver, 2015), and a condition of our potential to come to know.

Rather than foreclosing matter in recognisable and representable identities, all expressions of matter might be affirmed as signs indicating a virtual potential. To do so, the distinction between symbol or sign and the signified real must be undone and replaced with an understanding of every fragment of matter as sign, an index to a differential potentiality that co-constitutes both matter and sign in every moment. Child
and matter co-emerge as a result of an exploration of potential, in a range of what Rautio (2014) terms “open-ended and de-individualized knowing and being” (p. 472). What is required are strategies for perceiving matter as signs, and methods for accessing an index of potentiality through the univocal nature and intimate connectedness of matter-signs. In this way we might operationalise the concept of becoming in “the continual reconstellation of sense data, in conjunction with other bodies, to yield new formations that do not fit any representational schema” (Roy, 2003, p. 63-4).

This requires that we think difference in itself (Deleuze, 1968/1994) without difference being subject to representation as the difference entailed in the analogy and opposition of concepts. The generativity that fuels ethical, capacity-enhancing expression draws on creative difference for endless transformation and becoming-new. Perhaps difference is something that children have an affinity for, or is something they seek out, in their playful engagements with the world. Rautio (2014) notes that in their intra-action with the material world “children can challenge norms, engage in nonsense (which is not necessarily non-sense), become things, relate to things as beings, become beings that are animated by things” (p. 472). Mooshing again. Phoebe’s bee and honey house drawing become refrains developing not a fixed order but a consistency engaging with a differential repetition.

To resist representation and recognition and instead engage difference is not an easy feat. One strategy is to disrupt habitual functioning, loosen the organisation and systematisation of form, through a “violence suffered by thought” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007, p. 24) and enable a spin-off, an off-shoot, to develop (Grosz, 2001). Thinking, for Deleuze, only occurs in encounter with the outside, and externally to the concept systems that we already hold and the reality we already know (Grosz, 2001); that is, from outside systems of recognition, and within the production of the new.

Perhaps too we need a “practice of estrangement” (Lenz Taguchi, 2016, p. 45) to move beyond habitual order-word? There might be great power in nonsense words, words already freed from habitual organisations, which can be more easily linked to diverse becomings. Mooshing it up. A jolt, in terms of the experience of something unexpected, shifts us out of “habitual inattention” (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017, p. 278) and forces thought to focus on the singular moment rather than rely on presupposed assumptions. Honey mooshes like ice cream? How might honey and ice cream and bee be related? Can
bees make ice cream too? What kinds?

Another useful strategy might be the kind of mapping that allows the abstraction and development of constituent elements. This is abstraction in the sense of entanglement, undoing the knots of form so that constituent parts can be freed for migrations into new and creative linkings. Bees have wings, and so do fairies. Bees buzz, and so does a helicopter. Could bee become transportation? Who would bee transport?

Mapping serves to reveal and release complex, latent forces present in the event and to engender new connections between disparate parts (Corner, 1999).

Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) indicates that sometimes the order-word functions as pass-word, a word enabling a creative passage to a new becoming. The order-word becomes pass-word through its “placing-in-variation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 110) of its linguistic and nonlinguistic features, for example, using prosodic, stylistic, or pragmatic features, such as tone or accent. These “asignifying particles” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 4) are atypical and stammering, and as such enable a deterritorialisation of language, not stopped at one determination of form but following “a necessarily virtual continuous line between two of its states” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 115) in an endless becoming. The key is to move fast: Creativity involves a line of flight which is so fast and intense that it does not have time to coagulate in representation (Bolt, 2004).

Bee - mee - set - tee...

Bee - bumble... Bee - bungle...

Be(e) magic, be dead, be alive, be dead-alive, be secret...

How might we map bee, mapping difference and potentiality and not the habitual relations with flowers, pollen, and hives? What relations for bee with ice cream, fairies and helicopters? What is the key in the bee dialogue that might offer access to an ethics of expression? That would enable child-body, teacher-body, drawing-body, and bee-body, all intimately connected, to become something other than the order-word directs? Can bee become pass-word, an index of transformative becomings in the immanent entanglement of chaos? What and who else might bee be, other than an order-word directing us to factual knowledge?

To free processes of continuous variation is to make a move from the striated organisation of form and meaning, and to apprehend, intensify, and proliferate, through...
experimentation, the immanent and virtual lines of continuous variation present in all actualisation (Bogue, 2007). Lines of continuous variation activate a “dissolution of forms . . . a flight from contours in favor of fluid forces, flows, air, light and matter, such that a body or a word does not end at a precise point” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 127) but is continually changing and becoming. Bee morphing, becoming-other.
**Enacting an Interval: Order-Word / Bee**

Instead of the fixity of representationalism and recognition that curtail the potentiality of bee and drawing and child and teacher, that position bee and drawing as resources for the human act of educating taking place between child and teacher, is it possible to open up an interval where all these bodies might explore their potentiality, enhancing affect? To examine the potential of thresholds, or spaces inbetween becomings (inbetween the becomings of one body or inbetween two different bodies) which place them into contact; the membranes between this assemblage and that, “which carry potentials and regenerate polarities” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 103)?

This is not to apply Deleuze to the bee event, not to trace over a different set of concepts which equally tame the bee, interpret the bee (gain a mastery not unlike that of representationalism) and blind its analysis to the potential of other. This is not to frame bee as order-word, even as pass-word. Instead this is to open an interval where the bee event, Phoebe, the parent-practitioner, the paper and pencils and other children and objects, the entire cacophony of the early childhood setting, much of which goes unrecorded in the transcript, might connect with Deleuze-Guattari’s writings for mutual affect and a reciprocal becoming. (Why not include the sounds like birds singing, water splashing as Somerville (2015) does, and all the events that occur independently of humans (Snaza & Weaver, 2015) that usually go unnoticed and unrecorded in research?)

Ringrose (2015), drawing mostly on Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983), suggests that because paranoiac and sedentary forces of striation, as well as nomadic, schizo, and polyvocal forces, are always present in any event we must map the event at “multiple levels” (p. 396). Here is produced a mapping which moves from a tracing of the paranoiac (the striations of order-words) into an exploration of the potentialities of schizophrenic desiring forces, which break through and inbetween paranoiac formations in their production of new relations, bodily sensation, and intensity (Ringrose, 2015).

Placing Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) conceptualisation of order-word next to, among and inbetween the transcript of the bee event creates lines of flight that spark, flash, wane, and taper off, or gather momentum, thicken, proliferate. It is necessary to
imagine a gap of indeterminacy in which all parts shed off their fixed forms, dissipating form to become a fine mist of actualised and virtual components, and where boundaries between parts become permeable, so that components may pass through from one form-mist to another. In the entanglement of a multitude of simultaneous transformations and becomings, there might arise “transversal flashes and disruptions” (Ringrose, 2015, p. 406) that enable the familiar to be seen anew. This is abstraction, breaking up, dissolving, deterritorialising; then merging, connecting, forming links, reterritorialising.

Bee is fur and hair, legs and pollen, sacs and wings, sting and antennae, flight and buzz. Paper is flat, smooth, inscribable. Pencil is friction, mark, trail.

Order-word is redundancy, ordering, coercive, information, presupposition, determinacy. Pass-word is passage, variation, style.

Figure 13. Bee-words wordled. Reprinted from www.wordle.net.

What if bee were to reassemble, hair on top of eyes, legs attached to wings? Could bee become monstrous? Bee order-word or bee re-ordered? Could order-words buzz rather than articulate? Could paper transform bee, pieces stuck to his body, fragments enveloping him? Could bee dress up? Could pencil trail bee, or create a path for bee,
trace a bee passage?

There might be just the tiniest sliver or flash of potential, a tiny crack through which components squeeze and then take off on new, previously-unimagined trajectories, embodying different forms along the way. We can take advantage of the fact that things always seem to exceed what we can know of them, so that it is impossible to accurately pin them down in a certain identity or understanding (A. Taylor & Blaise, 2014). Beyond the regulated discourse mandated by the order-word, we might stumble across “an indeterminate inbetween-ness of sensations, feelings, thoughts, gestures, and things that cannot be forced into any category; we find excruciatingly small gaps in which we may insert an impossible question, an aporia through which to escape to new becomings” (Roy, 2003, p. 130).

In an interval placed between Deleuze-Guattari’s writings on the order-word and the bee event, I find it is pretending that begins to flash, to intensify, to burst through the redundancies of the order-word. “When you are informed, you are told what you are supposed to believe . . . and not even believe, but pretend like [you] believe.” (Deleuze, 2004/2006b, p. 320). The practitioner believes, that is, pretends to believe, in the existence of Phoebe’s honey house, which is, after all, only lines drawn on paper: “How do the bees get into it?” (Peters & K. Davis, 2011, p. 13).

Pretence can take a line of flight that enables a transformative becoming in the conceptualisation of order-word and the transcripted event alike. Pretence is expression uncoupled from the content of reality, becoming deceptive of content; it is under a pretence, behaving falsely. Pretence offers escape from the striations of the order-word and its predetermined redundancies. Pretence
is passage; it is grabbing hold of a silly thought, a fleeting gesture, a corporeal feeling, and following it for the ride. Pretence offers a power of transformation rather than the determinacy of ordering to the order-word. For if we can pretend to believe in

Phoebe’s honey house as a viable explanation for the production of honey, what else might we pretend to believe?

And so . . . is the idea of the order-word a pretence in itself? Is it not a pretence that the world can be so ordered, that a word can compel determinations that simplify the world into recognised, demarcated distinctions, when the actuality of the world is more closely in tune with chaos? Perhaps we all know otherwise, but join the pretence of ordering, of recognising and labelling, the pretence of being able to subjugate a chaotic world to our will? If we were to posit that with every use of the order-word we are willingly submitting to a pretence then the order-word has less power over us.

Order-word as pretence also invites a sense of non-truth, order-word as a false allegation. Then the order-word presents an ontological world in which truth and possibility need not be the benchmark of potentiality. Thus the order-word that seemed to function as a regulating force, a striation, becomes instead a realm of potentiality, a mitigation that frees us from sticking to strictly one set of thoughts and actions, and opens us to creativity and imagination.

As I write I misspell pretence “presense” several times. Here an unintentional placing into variation that is generative again. As pretence becomes presense, perhaps it comes to refer to acts and forms that occur before sense structures such things into more recognisable, representable forms. For representation is all about making sense of the world, recognising, labelling, utilising, controlling. To take a space prestructure, presense, to be able to think pretence where structure and sense lose their formative power so that anything goes. Pretending and presensing have great potentiality.
EVENT: THOUGHTS OF EDUCATION

1. IF:

Our aspiration, in the early childhood settings of Aotearoa New Zealand, is for children “to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” (Ministry of Education, 1996 p. 9) . . .

PERHAPS:

Such aspiration involves the expansion of capacity and affect as a precursor of competence and confidence. Such aspiration involves children in developing new ways of acting, communicating, connecting, and thinking . . . developing new expressions. Learning is the expression or production—of healthy dispositions and actions, of a secure sense of self, of contribution to society, among other things. Children express these new attributes, skills, and qualities as they develop through the early childhood curriculum and the other contexts of their lives.

AND:

“Everything is a machine” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983, p. 2). Desire operates through the coupling and connecting of desiring-machines, through their “productive synthesis” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983, p. 5) as machines produce flows, and other machines connect, siphon off, or augment these flows, causing them to swell and surge, crest and undulate. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) conceptualises machines working on the plane of immanence that operationalise the always-humming and moving of assembling and creation. The child, the teacher, the curriculum document, the order-words of its enactment: all are
desiring-machines, connecting and interrupting each other.

AND:

Desire is production and the production of production (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983). Desire is a flow in itself, yet desire causes flows and also breaks them, interrupting and modifying flows in the name of production. Desire produces objects, organs, and bodies (the products of its producing), only by cutting flows, which means that every object and body presupposes the continuity of a flow (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983), and every product assumes the continuity of producing. Production is continuous even in the apparent fixity and permanence of an object. Desire ensures a constant fragmentation and continual becoming, even if imperceivable. Despite this, production is an abbreviation of the potentiality of desire; “the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983, p. 8).

2. IF:

“Thought is active force, positive desire, which makes a difference” (Grosz, 2001, p. 62) . . .

AND:

Learning involves a process of entangled parts in one body connecting with other entangled parts within the same body and with other bodies. It is a form of assembling involving parts of bodies in diverse and changing conglomerations, as “bodies are folded into and out of discrete assemblages of signs, affects, technologies, subjects and ideas” (Duff, 2013, p. 194). Not the child learning from sand-play, but a
case of parts of the child-body coming into contact with parts of the sand-body in the production of something new: fingers-grains-movement. Learning as an outcome of affecting and of being affected in the encounter with other bodies and in the construction of a capacity to enter into assemblage with those bodies.

AND:

Learning requires a capacity to sense and to interpret the signs (Bogue, 2004) constantly emitted by the world (Duff, 2013), and the assemblage of affect, capacity, skill, thought. Deleuze (1964/2000) highlights signs and events in an empiricism of experience (contrasted with experience based in recognition), which are sensed rather than perceived. Sensing here is a new way of perceiving and understanding the world which requires learners to overcome habitual ways of thinking and go beyond the illusions of common sense and standard beliefs to an appreciation of difference, individuation, singularity. It is to move past actualised identities to virtual potentialities; a process of discovery and experimentation in the virtual rather than mere access to something preconstituted (May & Semetsky, 2008).

AND:

Rather than the development of knowledge, a stratified and regulated product related to paradigms of truth and recognition, learning is instead “a creative process of assigning meanings and values to experience, partaking as such of self-creation and transforming one’s identity” (Semetsky, 2013b, p. 84).

THEN HOW?: Do we interpret Te Whāriki’s (Ministry of Education, 1996) insistence on knowledge . . .
“knowledge about how to keep themselves healthy” (p. 48)
“knowledge about how to keep themselves safe from harm” (p. 52)
“knowledge of features of the land which are of local significance” (p. 90).

PERHAPS:

These knowledge products are themselves bodies with which the learner might assemble parts of him or herself to form a “working theory” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 44), a temporary and provisional, functional assemblage that the learner can apply, develop and transform in the construction and modification of further assemblages? A self-creation, self-organisation of child and experience.

3. IF:

Curriculum is “to describe the sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 10).

AND:

The epistemic centre of a (posthuman) subject is constructed only in its relations (Braidotti, 2017) with other elements and bodies and events, making knowledge a “collectively distributed consciousness” (Braidotti, 2013b, p. 196).

PERHAPS:

There is required a certain “becoming sensitive” (Deleuze, 1964/2000, p. 4) to signs so that learning involves an
“apprenticeship to signs” (Deleuze, 1964/2000, p. 4), learning to sense and then work with signs, to be affected and to affect them in turn, and to emit further signs. Signs are “hieroglyphs, enigmas that point beyond themselves to something hidden” (Bogue, 2004, p. 327) through an enfolding of differences. Thus the carpenter learns by “becoming sensitive to the signs of wood”, the doctor through “becoming sensitive to the signs of disease”, the swimmer by becoming sensitive to the signs of water (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 4). Becoming sensitive to signs is to attempt to unravel the enfolded differences they contain. An organism immerses itself within another element and opens itself up to encounter its signs, which interfere with and influence the organism’s becoming and ongoing production. The early childhood setting is a chaos of prepotential, a cacophony of signs, so that a sensitivity to signs, explored in a direct empiricism, offers openings for bodies to develop new connections and relations and to experience new affects (Duff, 2013), that is, to learn.

AND:

“All of a sudden, the right assemblage of wall, concrete, solitude, space and temperament is encountered as so many signs that the handstand is feasible. Each such sign is experienced as an affective and relational force; an opportunity to join a society of bodies (human and nonhuman) resonating together, acting together, affecting one another, insinuating themselves into place, into life” (Duff, 2013, p. 204)

AND:

There is curriculum without child-subjects. That is, curriculum exists without the child-subject at its centre, curriculum occurs whether there is a child-subject to
experience it as such. Curriculum is a network of signs to be experienced directly or indirectly, without a humancentric focus in which the experience of signs is dependent on a subject. If there emerges a subject, the experiencer of the sign, this is only because signs provoke subjectification in the learning and becoming that they engender (Duff, 2013), but this subject is not prior to the sign.

AND:

The curriculum is affective, it has affect. Whakamana⁵: “the early childhood curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 14), but it is this curriculum that is empowered with such empowerment of the child. Cycles of affect, of being affected and of affecting in turn.

AND:

Reciprocity, reversibility. Curriculum as content for child as expression; child forming content for curriculum as expression. Curriculum shaping the child while the child, and the interests and skills and experience that the child brings, are at the heart of the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996).

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IF:

Te Whāriki “emphasises the critical role of socially and culturally mediated learning and of reciprocal and responsive relationships for children with people, places,

PERHAPS:

Education is “an ‘art’ of government” (Duff, 2013, p. 195) in terms of a set of coding practices which serve to regulate children’s affective capacities and the affects they may experience.

AND:

The way a child comes to think (expression) affects his or her capacity to transform the world, as the child acts on a world that thought has configured (Sauvagnargues, 2016).

AND:

“Each strand [of the curriculum] has several goals. Learning outcomes have been developed for each goal in each of the strands, so that the whāriki⁶ becomes an integrated foundation for every child’s development” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 15).

CAN . . . ?: 

Learning/affect always be productive of enhanced capacity? Might learning/affect or thinking be associated with a decreased capacity, if teaching restricts learning/affect to specific goals rather than expands learning/affect to a greater range of potentials? It is possible to learn a fear of water, or to learn to view challenging situations negatively? These effects might well be capacity-decreasing. Learning/affect is merely change in the learning-body, a constant and holistic individuation, with impact, positive or negative, for bodily capacity. Thinking and learning are

⁶Translated as ‘woven mat’ (Ministry of Education, 1996) and used as a metaphor for the curriculum woven in individual early childhood settings
in a sense two-faced, facing both the plane of immanence on one side and the strata on the other. Will the strata pull thinking and learning tightly inwards towards their organisations? How does this affect openness outwards to the plane of immanence?

4. IF:

Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) plane of immanence, the space of the chaos of all the virtual possibilities of life, forms an imaginary (Sellers, 2013) that can help us seek previously unthought connections / undone actions . . .

AND:

What is put together is never assembled but assembling, always drawing new elements from a plane of consistency which too is constantly changing form, always becoming-new. The plane of consistency might serve as a sort of sieving of the plane of immanence to gather all things immanent and virtual to a problem of sense or experience. It forms a bordering space around the actualisation of the thing, object, body, thought, idea. This provokes the process of individuation, so the individual and unique nature of each child’s emerging learning can be seen as a process of always becoming-new, an individualised or singular history and geography of changing form.

PERHAPS:

Curriculum might be imagined as a plane of immanence or consistency. Learning, thinking, or other new actions might be perceived through this notion. Then to think/learn/act is to draw a plane of consistency, a set of elements that are useful or pertinent to the problem at hand.
Thinking/learning is a solution to a problem even as it is still in the process of being posed (Deleuze, 1968/1994).

BUT:

This might be to assume that it is the agential child-subject that creates knowledge, problems, and solutions as part of learning. At issue here is the suggestion of independence between the creator of the plane of consistency or assemblage and the plane of consistency and the assemblage themselves. Instead this is an ontological process better seen as folding. The creating-body and the planes of creation/assemblage fold into one another, neither taking power of the other. This notion of folding can elevate the agency of the material alongside human and social forms. Matter becomes prominent, pushes itself into the plane of consistency and then the assemblage. Material is desiring too.

5. IF:

"The curriculum is provided by the people, places, and things in the child’s environment: the adults, the other children, the physical environment, and the resources" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 11) and “children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 14) . . .

AND:

New materialisms and posthumanisms challenge the tenets of a social constructionism that posits language and discourse,
and indeed, human meaning-making, to be the only possible starting point of the construction of a world of bodies and matter (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010). This is a material turn that does not negate the postmodern linguistic turn, but adds another turn towards the material and matter that moves beyond the discursive (Tesar & Arndt, 2016) and also beyond human-centric perspectives. Alongside discourse, the material is a constituting agent of our practices and realities.

AND:

Nonhuman forces are equally constitutive of children’s becomings (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010). “The sand and the girl, as bodies and matter of forces of different intensities and speed, fold around each other and overlap, in the event of sand falling, hand opening, body adjusting and balancing, eyes measuring height and distance and observing the falling movement of the glittering sand into the red bucket (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 530).

AND:

Things are animated, energetic entities which exceed the contexts in which humans set them, materialities with “as much force as entity” (J. Bennett, 2010, p.20). This is a vitality accrued by a “congregational” (J. Bennett, 2010, p. 20) agency; capacity or efficacy dependent on the collaboration or interference of many other bodies and forces, “a swarm of vitalities at play” (J. Bennett, 2010, p. 32). Material bodies are aggregates of forces and powers (Tesar & Arndt, 2016) indulging in constant interaction and submitting to mutual influence. Everything in perpetual entanglement.

CAN?: The curriculum be a body, an expression and an
expressing entity, in a posthumanist and materialist orientation that assigns an agency of expression to the nonhuman and refuses to privilege human expressions over their nonhuman counterparts? And thus are all the parts of the curriculum assemblage, “the people, places and things” to be endowed with such agency? A posthumanist orientation prevents a human organiser to be the orchestrator of the curriculum assemblage. Can curriculum self-organise?

AND: Is it merely the context of the early childhood setting that enables an expression of all parts as a curriculum assemblage? Is early childhood education merely a grouping of matters coded as territorial markers?

AND: Does this move us from a humancentric position in which objects are often invisible in use (Knorr Cetina, 2001)? Can the objects of children’s knowledge creation become enlarged by this focus upon them (Knorr Cetina, 2001)? Can the relations and flows between learners and objects dilate and diversify?

6. IF:

“The purpose of this document is to provide a curriculum framework that will form the basis for consistent curriculum and programmes in chartered early childhood education services” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 10) . . .

AND:

Te Whāriki sits in connection with a whole set of discourses, habits, beliefs, and striations about education, so that we cannot consider its expressions outside of the
range of expressions deemed possible and potential about education, nor outside of the contents which it is formed by and which it forms anew.

AND:

Every thing is a sign, or every thing emits signs (Deleuze, 1964/2000), signs that will be folded into the plane of immanence, the assemblages, and the perceiving- and creating-body: a complex co-folding. What resonates, pushes itself forth, is selected in becoming? An opening onto virtual potential through the sign might circumvent the striations at play that lead us only to reproductive habit, and not to real thought or real learning as a capacity-enhancing act.

PERHAPS:

"The question then becomes how to construct a ‘plane of compositions’ in which our ‘singular essences’ might be ‘composed’ with one another, while remaining singular" (Rajchman, 2000, p. 89). How much can we open such a process to the chaotic plane of all possibilities, to draw something new, something unexpected, something previously unthought, and unknown?

NOW:

Disconnect these paragraphs, rearrange them, insert other quotations, other authors, other concepts, and other questions . . . How else might this assemblage work? How else might thoughts of education think?
Methodological problem: How to move beyond language as a system of signification

Writing is a becoming (Deleuze, 1993/1997b), not just the writing of research as process, but too the written product that opens onto other becomes, becoming-reading, becoming-trash, becoming-table-leg-prop . . . The use of written language to record my becoming-thesis gives language a materiality that provokes further entanglements: in the production of an electronic file, a monologue read aloud, printed on paper, scribbled on, serving as a point of discussion for supervision meetings . . . Language is matter, and is “touched by human eyes and hands” (Giugni, 2011, p. 23), carried, fingered, stored in filing cabinets or recycling bins, perhaps becoming landfill or fire lighter (Giugni, 2011).

Language has a performativity too that goes beyond its materialities in sound or print or screen. Language is “a leaping from order-word to order-word, punctuated by action” (Roy, 2008, p. 162-3) with every statement serving to perform or provoke an act. As a system of order-words, language is not a neutral representational device, communicating about a reality that remains separate; it is not a representative realm that sits alongside the real without affect upon it. Language is imbricated in the real and affective within it. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) considers language a semiotic machine, a regime of signs, a determining agent which creates stratified formalisations, both within the language system itself (ways of reading and writing) and within the content of things (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). In language is created a “collective assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 97), a preestablished system of permitted language use that determines what can be said and what can be done with language. Within the content of things, language accomplishes a moulding function (de Freitas, 2013).
The application of language to a body or event is problematic when language is “so burdened with calculations and significations, with intentions and personal memories, with old habits that cement them together” (Deleuze, 1993/1997a, p. 173). In its habitual and conventional use, language enacts a stratification, actively shaping bodies and things. Thus to be assigned a linguistic identity is not to be signified, but to be stratified, that is, shaped into an assemblage that is recognisable and workable for the human subject. “We are never signifier or signified. We are stratified” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 77).

Stratification is but a propensity for a particular organisation of form rather than a transcendent realm of signification with its inescapable logic of correspondence and causality. Thus reframing language as stratification rather than signification provides potential for language to break free of its stratifying tendencies. For example, Evans (2016) suggests that in being constituted by the voices of the collective assemblage of enunciation, human bodies are both provided with identity and yet also thrown into the infinite variation and interplay of those voices. There is an elliptical identity with the collective assemblage of enunciation rather than a strict adherence, and there is potential for becomings engendered by difference and variation rather than the reproduction of stratified forms.

A more empowering conceptualisation of language is required, something that moves language beyond order-word, and that allows language a productive role in the research assemblage, beyond conformity and into generation. Here language would “become poetry, in such a way as to actually produce the visions and sounds that remained imperceptible behind the old language” (Deleuze, 1993/1997a, p. 173). This is to find a way to gain access to, but yet not to fix into articulation, the expressibility that attends language-in-production (Manning, 2013). This is the virtual of language “that spreads across the telling and marks the underneath of wording” (Manning, 2013, p. 185).
A process of disrupting habitual thought and engendering new connections might be most important given that thinking is achieved through language. A text such as this becoming-thesis need not function as a repository of knowledge truths, but instead enact “a process of scattering thought; scrambling terms, concepts and practices; forging linkages; becoming a form of action” (Grosz, 2001, p. 58). In this, texts can engender movement and provoke becomings; words can gallop or dawdle, tune in and tune out, emphasise or efface (Manning, 2013) in intra-action as/with events. The text might become the AND... connector; the instigator of a playful, perhaps subversive experimentation generating unheard of connections for the individuation of grammar and language that distort simple correspondences for establishing sense.

To move beyond language as a system of stratification, with fixed or totalising labels for things that serve to stop movement, requires ways of dealing with objects and phenomena “without the interference of perception or a stable category of experience” (Cole, 2012, p. 3). For this, Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) offer an alternative semiotics, asignifying, impersonal and intensive. Instead of a symbolic plane of language operating at a different level of reality, both describing and imposing description on that reality, for Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) between words and things exists a new domain of potentialities that are unconscious, “structured but not transcendent, constrained by empirical realities but not identical to them” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 13). Meaning or sense is not given through preestablished sedentary divisions, which parcel up meaning into established denotations, but actively actualised through the haphazard and contingent assembling of singularities. Without referents (extrinsic signification) or essence (intrinsic signification), it is only through relations, through their position in the system, that words and things produce sense (Manning, 2013; Sauvagnargues, 2016).
Meaning is created in the deployment of signs, as a surface or “position effect” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 70). The word chair gains meaning not through systems of denotation referring to an external reality and relations of resemblance, or in manifesting the logical essence of chair, that is, a chair-in-itself as a concept aimed at by the mind (Sauvagnargues, 2016). Instead it is a product of the play of phonemes and syntagms that are themselves asignifying and that offer possibilities for different actualisations (Sauvagnargues, 2016).

Viewed this way, language can be placed into the variation of numerous connections so that order-words become pass-words. Unlike order-words, which function within systems of denotation and serve as stoppages in the creation of “organized, stratified compositions”, pass-words are “words that are components of passage” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 128), words that enable passage and movement. Instead of discerning resemblances between things, the task is to produce “a system of differential intervals between terms that have no signification in and of themselves, and which only acquire their sense through this play of positions” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 14).

Then the task is to read between words, in the interval in which expressibility is still open to expression (Manning, 2013). Language is brought in touch with the virtual, and thus is stretched in new directions, creating atypical expressions from potential that are part, perhaps, of language’s own becoming. In this way the atypical expression hints at the futurity of language. The difficulty lies in expressing something not-yet-expressed but remaining at the level of expressibility (Manning, 2013). Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) suggests that the atypical expression is an example of the deformation or deterritorialisation of language, and this is required to enable practices of expression that consort with the virtual for an emerging-something-new. There is a violence implicated here; “it takes stretching and twisting: pain” (Massumi, 2002a, p. xxiii).
Putting language into play, (re)inventing concepts, and disrupting conventional meanings can disturb the order-word and agitate the stratification of representation. For example, the inseparability and constant movement between the concepts content and expression makes their definitions somewhat indistinct, shifting, interchangeable. Putting language into play is to consider the words used for becoming-thesis as verbs (Amatucci, 2013) rather than signifying nouns; processes, not objects but perhaps a “passage between objects” (Benozzo, Bell, & Koro-Ljungberg, 2013, p. 310).

Atypical expression, created with the placing-into-variation of the stratified forms of language, produces what Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) refer to as a style. This is not style as the signification of a personal origin or a defined genre (Sauvagnargues, 2016) but asignifying and indefinite. Style is an event which cuts across words and things, tailoring new individuations through novel syntactic usages (Sauvagnargues, 2016). Style actualises virtual potentialities, and inheres in a diagram, “an operational set of singularities” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 14), both virtual and actual, which can be mapped and which specify a formula, a signature which remains impersonal.
5. A Style of Sense

A young child approaches the world in a sensing mode, seeking to explore and experiment with the potential of every thing as sign, that is, as an indicator of potentiality. She is engaged in exploration of the sensible, in other words, what can be sensed and what makes sense (de Freitas, 2016b). Here matter is “materialsemiotic” (Murris, 2016, p. 88), every thing in the world emitting signs, and having something to teach her (Deleuze, 1964/2000). But to avoid the need for an intense exploration of the object on its every presentation, a mode of thought develops in the creation of a set of mental representations that are used to stand for the object in thinking. This “semiosic” (Danesi, 2010, p. ix) enables the child to interact with her world in a displaced and indirect manner. Relying on a representation backgrounds the immediacy with the world from which it first emerged. The child’s sign use can become stratifying and restrict her to the dominant order of becoming when it is no longer grounded in a thorough exploration of the sensible, of a sign’s potentiality.

Whilst the child is capable of great flexibility and responsiveness in interactions with other bodies, she yet begins to habituate to certain kinds of actions (de Freitas, 2016b). Concepts and ideas repeat and are strengthened over time in sustained practices by her group of people (de Freitas, 2016b). Through repeated exposure to the stratified signs of her culture, and the becoming-habituation of her actions, the child progressively comes to interact with the world through delimited and decontextualised representations. Culture, context, and experience shape a filter for the child, by which she processes the raw information of the world into a narrow range of prescribed meanings (Danesi, 2010).

Making Sense of Signs

Signs are ubiquitous, involved everywhere and in every event, inherently linked to, and a factor of, all becoming. All living involves the sensing of signs, in other words, every action that occurs is a response to signs (Stables, 2010), or what is read in the material environment. Making sense of signs is not restricted to human activity. Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) gives the example of the tick, whose sense is formed by three factors—the smell of a passing mammal, the gravity of falling, the action of latching on. Tick-becoming in response to the appropriate set of signs being present and being read in a certain way by the tick, according to the tick’s conative problem. The tick constructs for
itself a world made up of what it is possible for it to sense; it combines with this world, connects with some parts of it and ignores the rest.

Thus sense is dependent on, and constituted in, the problems and perceptions of the sensing body in assemblage with signs. Like the tick, the child selects a world and forms relations with its elements, but the world she perceives is much vaster and more complex (Bogue, 2007), a world with enormous potentiality. Yet Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987) argues that she will always get the sense that she deserves. In other words, “all things are what they come to mean” (Stables, 2010, p. 24). Sense is always made in, and shaped by, its relation to a problem, but this does not make it unidirectional. A problem always contains “ambiguous signs” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 114), with diverse distributions of singularities opening up a multiplicity of possible solutions. Sense-making becomes an ethical activity which involves being responsive and open to the world (Bogue, 2007), to enable a fuller apprehension of potential.

The Power of Sense

In the event of expression what is produced is sense, not signifier. And here sense is not the property of a linguistic proposition, and it does not form an easy correspondence with expression. It thus contrasts with the conceptualisation that ties sense to the meaning of an expression. Sense is not about meaning or identity, what something is or what it means, but about how something might become (Cumming, 2014). Sense is a mode of existence (Manning, 2013); it is a becoming. Sense arises not in the activity of sensing, nor in the thing sensed, but in the relation between the two; sense is the relation connecting one to the other (Deely & Semetsky, 2017). Even language means little without its relations between phonemes, or between words, or between words and actions (Manning, 2013).

The sense of an expression is both its unactualised potential and its ontogenetic condition, both the virtuality prior to, and accompanying, its realisation in a particular state of affairs. Thus expression expresses in and as its own event of sense, the conditions that gave rise to it and the potentiality it enfolds (Massumi, 2002b). Sense incorporates a virtual potentiality, sense always subsisting in a sphere of unconscious, virtual thought and “infinite regress” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 155). It cannot be reduced to meaning.
This link with the virtuality of a pure, yet-to-be-realised event, makes sense not an attribute of the event but the event itself (Deleuze, 1969/1990); events are an ongoing sense production (Deleuze, 1968/1994). Here we have a synergy between sense, expression, and event. Expression as event is immanent with the potentiality of its virtual connections. This potentiality exists as an extra-being, a virtual remainder or redundancy, not obliged to any kind of production (Daignault, 2008). Sense is both an event and an extra-being; something virtual and incorporeal that goes beyond the event (Colebrook, 2002). It incorporates the indeterminacy of a self-organising, self-propelling expression-event prior to its settling into form, as well as a production of expression as an event.

The virtuality of sense makes difficult an ethical evaluation of sense, as in “good sense” or “common sense”, which Deleuze (1969/1990) dismisses as products of transcendence, operating through representationalism. Good sense expresses order and direction: It occurs in one direction only; it demands a direction and order selected and held as good sense (Deleuze, 1969/1990). It can only fix a direction by operating through transcendence, “relating the diverse to the form of a subject’s identity, or to the form of an object’s or a world’s permanence, which one assumes to be present from beginning to end” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 78). It is thus dependent on common sense, which assigns identities to forms, another operation of transcendence, determining identity by freezing diversity in order to measure and label it. Both good and common sense form specific apparatuses or machineries of thought that operate through representation and recognition; an understanding of the world in terms of preexisting concepts and solutions (Bogue, 2004).

With his revisioned concept of sense, Deleuze is attempting to replace what he sees as a “dogmatic image of thought” (Voss, 2013, p. 13) related to truth, or the seeking of truth, the good and common sense that leads thought in the proper direction, and that links the identity of concepts with their logical relations. Rather than operate with the common habitual sense engendered by representation and recognition, Deleuze (1968/1994) seeks an image of thought that can deal with singularity and the nondeterminate or indefinite, the potential that has not yet been made definite by habit and regulation (Rajchman, 2000). This he provides through viewing thought as the synthesis of sense, a logic for connecting singularities in a way that preserves their potential and keeps indeterminacy in play. This logic of sense is a logic of multiplicity.
(Rajchman, 2000) that occurs on the surface of things (Voss, 2013), produced in interactions and connections whilst also forming a virtual phenomena, outside of being, of excess and potential. Synthesis does not determine; sense is merely a surface organisation producing a resonance of divergent signs (Deleuze, 1969/1990), rather than meaning. This organisation is not a unification—which is provided by other apparatuses (Deleuze, 1969/1990)—signs do not converge but instead communicate, by means of a difference that flickers between them (Sauvagnargues, 2016), whilst retaining all their differences, and as such, potentiality.

Thus sense emerges in early childhood activities such as climbing, where the climbing box or ladder is a series of parts brought into communication with the body parts of the climber. Sense emerges in the activity of drawing, where marks on paper communicate with ideas and words, so that the drawing can have the sense of, rather than the meaning of, a house for bees. Another kind of sense emerges in the linkages across highchairs, produced in the communication of bodies and food and bottles and trays. Sense is not discovered in these activities, and cannot be said to emerge from a transcendent height or depth (Deleuze, 1969/1990), as if following the path of previously established knowledge and action. Instead sense is produced on the surface in the event of the connections between parts, and only hovers over these parts as potential (Deleuze, 1969/1990). As such, sense is not given, but a contingent actualisation, random and coming afterward (Sauvagnargues, 2016). It is always fragile (Deleuze, 1969/1990) because of its being a surface affect, buffeted by the transformations of the becomings in which it subsists.

As sense adheres in the communication of at least two series (Voss, 2013), a transversal is formed between them. A transversal communication is one which occurs between entities which are incommunicable, a communication that highlights and intensifies differences in order to bring forth new possibilities (Bogue, 2007). For Semetsky (2013a), this communication occurs via another sign functioning as semiotic bridge between the two series. Yet for Deleuze, (1969/1990), this communication does not hold static form but persists as a flickering or flashing, as a spark that passes between parts of the series. This is a briefest flash that functions to coordinate these parts, to produce resonations but also ramifications, or off-shoots, through the introduction of “multiple disjunctions” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 66) between the series. For Deleuze
(1969/1990) this element that flashes between series is both mobile and paradoxical, always engendering difference, always productive. This element is an aleatory point (Voss, 2013), or nonsense, something without any particular sense but an excess of sense (Deleuze, 1969/1990). It is not sense, but likewise it is not the absence of sense; it is “an excess produced and over-produced by nonsense as a lack of itself” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 71). Nonsense is co-present with sense (Deleuze, 1969/1990).

Deleuze (1969/1990) argues that it is through the paradoxical element, or nonsense, that sense is produced. Deleuze (1969/1990) says paradox is “the force of the unconscious” (p. 80), and in aligning consciousness with good sense and common sense, he makes paradox the unconscious or barely perceptible, occurring outside of, or between, consciousness(es). Paradox is something generative that upturns good sense or common sense. It is thus nonsense that traverses the series and makes them resonate; nonsense is the nomadic, fleeting element that sparks and bounces off diverse elements in the production of sense. Sense has to pass through nonsense, aiming to open that interval of nonsense and not to pass automatically into the coagulation of representation and habit. Sense and nonsense together perform the structural organisation of an incorporeal surface (Voss, 2013) which generates sense as event.

Outside of consciousness and paradoxical, sense is produced only in working the plane of immanence preorganisation, in making “pre-individual and nonpersonal singularities speak” (Deleuze, 1969/1990, p. 73). To work Deleuze’s notion of sense, we need access to the singular points of problems, something that happens on a subrepresentative level, beyond or beneath consciousness. First there is the construction of a problem: how to ride a bike; how to make a hand of clay; how to reach another’s drink bottle. Children have a “longing for invention of the not yet known, for producing sense and for the formulation and construction of questions and problems” (Olsson, 2013, p. 231). Learning to ride a bike is not about imitating the actions of another child or teacher, nor is it about experiencing another child’s bike-riding. Instead it is about connecting with bike, making relations between bike and body and air and ground, finding the singular points that must be connected and must function together . . . making sense in assembling bodily responses to new encounters with biking (see Deleuze’s (1968/1994) example of learning to swim).
Sense is a powerful notion, which can provide a solution to the problem of what is produced in the relations of content and expression, inclusive not only of the produced body, thing, or idea, but also of the ongoing potentiality that these hold. Sense encapsulates not only the becomings of matter as expressions but remains the “virtual milieu through which we live and become” (Colebrook, 2002, p. 111). It is required in an ontology that highlights creative production; the notion of sense providing an outcome to creative processes of production that are not enclosed in an identity or immutable to ongoing transformations, but remain in the play of production. Sense is a productivity engendered by the individuation of bodies as they connect with each other and become in a play of positions (Sauvagnargues, 2016), or battle of forces (Roy, 2003). The outcome of such play or combat is only a disequilibrium of forces, so that there is infinite differentiation and ongoing becoming (Voss, 2013). Yet sense risks being eclipsed by representation and order-word (processes of becoming-same, becoming-normative). To subvert representation and order-word, and allow a more creative nonsense to intervene in sense for a greater range of affect, sense might become a style.

Sensing a Way to a Style

A singular expression or sense comprises what Deleuze-Guattari calls a style. Style is a composition which holds intensities together in a generative way, not as a homogeneity (Massumi, 1992). Style is not the signification of a personal origin or a defined genre (Sauvagnargues, 2016), but asignifying and impersonal. Style is modal, not substantial, an event rather than a form, fashioning new individuations (Sauvagnargues, 2016). Like sense, style is a virtual power of variation, a power for generating the new without prior reference or ground (Colebrook, 2002).

Style is the production of affect, concerned particularly with the variation of actions and speech in terms of timing, intensity, and shape, to generate a multiplicity of stylistic versions of the event. It can be compared to stylistic affect in art, where perceptions of colour harmonies and linear perspective create virtual affects and generate emotions such as calmness (Stern, 1985). Style comprises an experimentation in affect. “What is called a style can be the most natural thing in the world; it is nothing other than the procedure of a continuous variation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 113).

Style, like sense, occurs as a surface event (Sauvagnargues, 2016), a particular assemblage of body parts and movements, words, grammar, and tone formed in the brief
flashes of connection between what remain singular parts. It is a synthesis that creates differences and not identities, a practical, impersonal assemblage that holds “a joyous impertinence and ludic impropriety” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 15). “Gestures and things, voices and sounds, are caught up in the same ‘opera,’ swept away by the same shifting effects of stammering, vibrato, tremolo, and overspilling” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 127), that is, modes of placing-into-variation and creativity.

To sense, to style (is) . . .

To look for sense as extra-being, something exceeding representation and propositional meaning, nonrepresenting, preconscious and prepersonal. To abstract and extract the singular points in a body and explore ways in which they might connect with points in another body. To uncover the “subrepresentational differential elements” (Voss, 2013, p. 11) encompassing both signs and the unconscious of thought.

To sense, to style (is) . . .

To draw difference from repetition. To find “something wild” (MacLure, 2013b, p. 658) in language that holds the generative power of sense, a kind of indetermination (Rajchman, 2000) with which sense emerges. To allow an aleatory point, nonsense, which is meaning-ful without a particular meaning, and nomadic, to traverse the surface of bodies and things, bringing with it a generative power.

To activate difference as a mode of passage; to pass through an asignifying gap. To deliberately move between sense and nonsense to scramble existing codes and coding. To mobilise indeterminacy, even as and through a determinate practice, by activating a point of collapse (O’Sullivan, 2010). To seek moments of disorientation and disequilibrium as a means to sense the virtual (Bogue, 2007).

To introduce the creative AND “which will make language shoot along” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 59).
To sense, to style (is) . . .

To seek moments of resistance, to confound “the banal violence of ordinary, representational language” (MacLure, 2013b, p. 662).
To choose perplexity.
To lose one’s self-assurance or direction through encounter with something that “shakes up thought” (Rajchman, 2000, p. 72).
To violate good sense.
To make every concept contestable (Murris, 2016)
To interrupt oneself (Rautio, 2013).
To complicate.
To seek what bewilders and confuses.
To assault method, and to attack consensus (Colebrook, 2002).

To sense, to style (is) . . .

To use the infinitive (Colebrook, 2002); to earthquake, to chair; to engage the immanent, virtual differential structure (Bogue, 2007) suspended over actualisation.
To use words as multiplicities of potential without primary identities or foundational contexts (Joughlin, 1990).
To generate curious, unconventional relations between words.
To produce what is not already recognisable.
To evade already established articulations; to stutter and stammer; to become “a foreigner in one’s own language” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 59).
“To put language itself to flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 58).

To sense, to style (is) . . .

To think by allowing oneself to be struck by thought, as if by lightning, entertain its potentiality, hold its power, and not confuse it with its partial expression in the significations of language (Massumi, 2002b).
To direct thought against powers that attempt to block or restrict it.
To push against boundaries.
To short-circuit logical, rational conceptual capacities (O’Sullivan, 2010).
To force thought beyond its usual operations (Semetsky, 2008).
To allow oneself to be harmed by a defiant thought, by the violence of thought (May &
Semetsky, 2008).

... 

**Sense(:) a Truth, but Only What Works.**

Truth is contextual to each particular generation of sense; “truth is only the
empirical result of sense” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 154). It is sense that produces truth,
because sense always has the truth, the contextual truth that it deserves (Deleuze,
1968/1994). Truth is only what works, not an indicator of transcendent being (Alcoff,
1999). Sense will never be presented in itself, but will differ according to the questions
posed, at the same time that it transforms the questions. This means there is no error,
fantasy, or absurdity, as so judged by rules of representation, reproduction, and
correspondence, but only sense (Olsson, 2013). Rather than judgement, there is just
synthesis, with style working through a synthesiser that places all of the parts in
continuous variation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). In relation to a problem that
constitutes it, style constantly produces a sense appropriate to it.

Style is then often generative of the atypical, comprising a deterritorialising force
which Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983) calls “asynctactical, agrammatical: the moment when
language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying
thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow, to explode” (p. 133). In language, it
composes previously unthought-of individuations through new syntactic usages
(Sauvagnargues, 2016), radically different to the stratified forms of language, so tedious
in their predictability (Verderber, 2016). In action, perhaps “a way of catching the eye of
players on the opposite team to make them self-conscious . . . an imperceptible spin . . .
skewing the potential movements composing the field” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 77). In early
childhood education, the fascination, disruption, and distraction engendered by a
researcher’s red earrings and breasts in the play space (Blaise, 2013); a Willy Wonka
entering Goldilocks porridge play in the sandpit (Sellers, 2013); or a monster entering the
scientific discourse of earthquake causality . . . An always-experimental stylistic
individuation.

To ethicise expression, sense and style which remain in touch with the virtual
potential surrounding any becoming are important notions. While sense is event, style is
reserved for those kinds of events that are particularly open to transformation, to individuating becomings. Style has an intensity of strangeness, “a haunting or disturbing quality” (Verderber, 2016, p. xiii) that has a greater power for affect.
Intensifying Researcher Account . . .

Methodological problem: How to write up research without instating the transcendence of researcher

If there is to be no transcendental I, only an immanent materialism of “collective assemblages rising and falling according to inextricably entangled fields of force” (Cole, 2012, p. 13), then the stratification of subjectification is to be resisted. Such stratification is that which demarcates and separates the researcher from the immanence of connections that might enhance research activity. Yet “how can we rid ourselves of ourselves, and demolish ourselves?” (Deleuze, 1983/1986, p. 69). The difficulty of this is not to be underestimated, as researchers must write within a humanist system whilst attempting to think outside of it (Snaza & Weaver, 2015). Language itself is an anthropocentric tool (Braidotti, 2013a), which is why many posthumanist writers find themselves sliding back into human-centric perspectives and practices (A. Taylor & Blaise, 2014). How to write without the habit of “I”, which makes the human the supreme centre (Manning, 2013)?

Instead of a human-centric positioning of my researching body, my researching-I must be seen as a machinic entity in-between relations, an AND. I cannot erase myself—like Murris (2016) I recognise I am fully implicated in the material-discursive practice of becoming-thesis.

Disrupting conceptions of self as something preexisting the act of research (Springgay, 2015), I gain my (researcher) existence in encountering data (Rautio & Vladimirova, in press), method, and theory.

If the human is not to be distinguished as a separate being outside of the research assemblage, then neither is it possible to provide an account of intentions and methods. To do so would be to assume a unified, coherent, decision-making, self-contained subject to which intentions and
actions can be attributed. Intentions are not internal to, and possessed by, human subjects (C. A. Taylor, 2016). Instead, human interests and intentions are located and produced in “multiple and messy relations between humans and all that surrounds them” (Rautio, 2014, p. 469), in an immanent entanglement that produces what we might term desire. Rather than locate agency and intention in subjects to account for the production of the world, Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983) suggests what is produced is a result of “libidinal investment” (p. 345) in intertwined and nondiscrete becomings (Ringrose, 2015). This desire becomes the force which produces and is produced by the research assemblage, including the researching-I.

Desire is reconceptualised by Deleuze-Parnet (1977/1987) as “the set of the affects which are transformed and circulate in an assemblage of symbiosis, defined by the co-functioning of its heterogeneous parts” (p. 70). Thus desire is capacities coming together, a connecting force, a connection-making machine, a “relation of effectuation” (Roy, 2003, p. 43). It has nothing to do with sacrifice, privation, lack (Rajchman, 2000), or fantasy (Roy, 2003) and is not relegated to the private and personal (Sauvagnargues, 2016). There is not a desire for, instead desire is a material, nonhumanistic production (Olkowski, 2000), an impersonal flow or life force (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007), an affirmative, positive, generative force. Desire does. It is productive of the real.

This machinic concept of desire does not provide us with a means to assign agency to a subject as the source of desire and thus the source of the research assemblage. Desire is both process and produced, but it is without subject or object. As such, desire is “radically intransitive” (Buchanan, 1997, p. 88). Desire only becomes linked (not tied) to bodies through desiring-machines, which capture and organise specific flows of desire.

This is a conception of desire only concerned with what desire enables a body to do (Hickey-Moody & Malins, 2007), instead of determining what desire represents, or assigning desire to a
subject, or directing it towards an object. Perhaps then it is better to conceive of desire as unconscious, as Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983) suggests, although arguably this does not go far enough to dislocate desire from an individual body. Nevertheless, desire as an unconscious production suggests that the unfolding of events and of all expression cannot be contained within personal identifications (Rajchman, 2000). Perhaps we can consider research as arising within an endless play of desire and affect, and the researching-I, the research problem, the methods as only "the intersection of specific interplays" (Roy, 2003, p. 42) of desire. Desire produces affect while affect may involve intensified, new or transformed desires; desire and affect become “ontological passions” (Braidotti, 2005, para. 1) in a never-ending cycling of production.

This thesis is a “passional” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 466) assemblage, a composition of desire and affect that provokes and produces further desire and affect. Desire connects several events with my researching-I in becoming-research—critical theory; reading Foucault; Dahlberg, Moss and Pence’s (2007) Beyond Quality; working with and in the English foundation stage curriculum (Department of Education and Employment, 2000) and then Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996); a visit to Reggio Emilia; conversations in lectures on the politics of early childhood education . . . these experiences have shaped a research-desire, and expanded it as it gathers force. Such a list is awkward, not objective but a creative construction of my past experience that emerges from the intra-action of thesis and other events, in this present in which I make sense of the problem of accounting for research intention. In fact, “I cannot step out of my past and reflect on it from a distance” (Murris, 2016, p. 9), as to do so is to disengage myself from the experience of, and smother the intensity of, the affect and desire (Rotas, 2015) that emerges in this attempt at account. I assemble desire in an active way in the now of my remembering and reconstructing, in order to extend these events in an ongoing sense-production.
Desire produces connections so that these experiences and events assemble in productive ways, gathering energy, gathering force. It then becomes pertinent to follow Ringrose and Renold’s (2014) approach in observing where and when energy flows, “when things heat up and congeal, and when they cool down and dissipate” (p. 774). Experiences then “catch fire, they light up, they become inflamed with desire” (Benozzo et al., 2013, p. 311), producing a “glow” (MacLure, 2013b, p. 661), something embodied and provocative, not deliberately or consciously controlled. Were the events I listed the ones to glow?

Desire is not a determination of form but an assemblage always assembling, with desire itself assembled in this assembling (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). It is future-oriented (Semetsky, 2006) and generative (Mazzei, 2013a), looking to form relations, connections, and alignments between different elements or bodies (Coleman & Ringrose, 2013). This makes desire an ethical, capacity-enhancing force; a creative desire that tinkers and experiments with potentiality, with chaos, with random, fleeting assemblings.

And thus perhaps for desire we could substitute ethical expression. Desire, central to “Anti-Oedipus” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983) is not a key concept in “A Thousand Plateaus” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987) . . . perhaps expression does the work of desire in this later Deleuze-Guattarian assemblage. Linked with desire in this way, expression is imbued with a restless, always-seeking, promiscuous nature—expression as a productive force with its own conatus, moving through subjects, institutions and all sorts of material and conceptual terrains, accessing the immanence of potentiality both virtual and actual in these bodies and spaces for its desired articulations. This is not to say expression is propelled by desire, or is a function of desire; expression must be seen as an ontological force in its own right, and not placed in a position of dependence on desire, and neither should desire become a property of expression.
Concepts can overlap, repeat each other, interweave and become each other . . . this is the immanent nature of Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari’s concepts.
Like expression, desire is not always a capacity-enhancing force of creative experimentation for becoming-new. Deleuze-Guattari (1972/1983) explains a free-flowing, creative desire of difference and becoming as schizo-desire, which moves against the strata, and follows the “lines of escape of desire; breaches the wall and causes flows to move” (p. 277). This desire occupies much of their thought and writing, but desire can be traversed by lines of stratification, imposed with structure by powerful strata. There are also paranoiac desires, those that produce social structures (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983). Desire orders and organises, moving in different directions, to freely access the potential of the plane of immanence or to reinforce and further bind strata-structures.

If a desiring-expression forms the impetus for the production of the research assemblage, and might also stratify it, it is also desiring-expression which forms the assemblage I come to know as I. The researcher as an I becomes a framing and organising of selected elements within the univocity of the plane of immanence; something assembled by desire, a composition of (schizo- or paranoiac-) desire and affect, always and already becoming through the ongoing workings of these ontological passions. The researching-I must be conceived as an opening to the workings of schizo-desire and ethical expression as a way of enhancing affect for bodies. It is about allowing ethics to work through the researcher-body, about sensing the natural pulsation of ethical expression, trying to remove blockages and impediments, following where expression might surge and burst forth into the new. In contemplating the potential of the world, the ethical researching-body might look for and make new connections and contractions and explore their affect.

A research account might begin in the middle, within an ontological theory and practice of “and...and....and” of relations. Research is a relational entity, constituted entirely of its relations with the world and constantly moving between states through the production of
affect, always in-between. A research account resides in the in-between of the connections of this research-as-process. I is omitted; there is only “an enthusiasm with and in a world that speaks not in the name of “I” but in the interval where the many become one” (Manning, 2013, p. 185). Involved in a multiplicity of (research and nonresearch) assemblages, I decentre my I and put it to work as an AND... as a conductor and conduit to draw new and heterogeneous parts into connection. Opening up to an immanence of connections, my researching-I can entangle with data, live data and join its flows of becoming, and the account of such a process cannot be superimposed, but is the event itself.
Methodological problem: How to write a method outside of representation

All practice and action entails ontological and epistemological assumptions (C. A. Taylor, 2016). Affected and affective, method is entangled with any becoming. Born of ontology, affected, method always presupposes its ontology; affective, method works within its ontological assumptions. Method then becomes ontology; methodology-ontology; that is to say method ontologises, and ontology is method . . . Then methodology as ontology cannot preexist or be separated out from research (Higgins et. al., 2017). Method, like subject, is without an in-itself, and never comes to the event fully formed, but is formed in counterpoint with it (Manning, 2013). Yet method matters. With its ontologising nature, what method is presupposes what method can do as research.

The significance of an ontological research assemblage is in discovering what (a) research can do, how it becomes, how it affects and continues to affect and transform (Ringrose & Renold, 2014). It is important to deliberate method, and consider how the posthuman, vital materialist ontologies that are described in this thesis are also enacted in its becoming-thesis, recognising posthumanism as a praxis as well as theory (Osgood & Giugni, 2015). Perhaps it is the case, as Springgay (2015) argues, that posthumanist enquiry does not need method? Indeed, St. Pierre (2016) suspects method is likely to flounder without the notion of the human subject. The human is central to an account of method for the subject-object relationship of research (Snaza & Weaver, 2015).

Yet perhaps it is not the concept of method that is at issue, but what method is assumed to do. Rather than ascribing method with the purpose of finding out, explaining and representing a reality, what we require are methods for disrupting reproduction of the known and accessing a
virtual realm of potential. Much is dependent on clarifying the ontology in which the concepts and activities of methodology must resonate productively, the context in which they are both affected and affective. An immanent materialist ontology might then require new concepts, or new combinations of concepts, or at least to empty and refresh existing concepts (Krejsler, 2016) for method. These would be concepts that not only can work outside of representationalism, but can enact a play of immanence and movement that is productive.

Method, and its structuring through the order-words of data, researcher, ethics, question, and theory, is not easy to dismantle. These are words that have been decontextualised from their epistemological and theoretical contexts so that they are hard to question or critique (Koro-Ljungberg, 2016). Moreover, they have been elevated into what Snaza and Weaver (2015) call a “methodocentrism” (p. 9), in which methodology becomes the primary concern of research, and reduces the human researcher, and nonhuman others, as secondary to a research which speaks for itself through the validity of its methods. Researchers navigate stratified trajectories that will lead them to research findings and conclusions, and method moves in a straight line, excremental, step by step.

Placed within an ontology of univocity all distinctions between these terms fade away—data are researcher are ethics are question are theory are method. Each aspect is entangled, as well as in movement and subject to a multitude of potential becomings. Linear method stutters and fails, becomes “fraught with connections, movement and becomings” (Myers, 2015, p. 59) rather than predictable, tidy, and controlled. Thus, rather than be guided by method, we might follow affectensity in the growing research assemblage.

An affectensity in place of method connects with and draws upon an ontology of univocity, and on a revisioned view of researcher, data, and language as intensities within the research event. Thus we have differing degrees of intensity between research bodies and events, which
nevertheless are degrees of intensity in movement, becoming-more-and-less-intense according to the assemblages with which they form. Research is a plane of immanence, because the plane of immanence can be considered as simply movement (Deleuze, 1983/1986). It is the movement between parts and forces “which crosses them all, stirs them all up together and subjects them all to the condition which prevents them from being absolutely closed” (Deleuze, 1983/1986, p. 61). Research is a force within the immanence of data-researcher-method-problem-theory which does not need to divide, which can allow differing degrees of intensity within research to emerge and fade, as part of the movement of the event of research.

Then instead of a procedure or representation, there is a methodology-ontology that seeks surges of intensity in potential affect, the intensity of an accentuation when forces of energy collide or overlap (Benozzo et al., 2013). Such a methodology-ontology experiments with a given assemblage, perhaps adding and connecting other parts into assemblage as appears conducive, without ever knowing in advance what will be useful (C. A. Taylor, 2016).

In an immanent materialism, research needs to be a practice that engages in collective experimentation with, rather than about or on, its object (Olsson, 2009). The concept of affectensity is without extension, but intensively inclusive of all potential events and bodies in research. Affectensity is immanent. Not a concept to represent method, instead affectensity must show itself as beyond representation. And thus, affectensity must stimulate, rather than contain, desiring-expression and affect, and it must make ethics possible without foreclosing or being determinate of what might be produced under its name. How can affectensity work outside of representation?

Movement is essential. With the “stop-operations” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 7) of signification and coding, conventional methodology operates by sedentary distribution; space is seen as extensive, divisible, and measurable, plotted by points which objects may occupy. Such notions
and practices of extension serve as “stopping the world in thought” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 6). Instead, affectensive thought should attempt to dislodge the usual structuration of form and try to work outside of the concept systems that are already held and the reality already known (Grosz, 2001); that is, outside systems of recognition, and within the production of the new.

Massumi (2002b) discusses strategies for “prolonging the thought-path of movement” (p. 12), which include practising affirmative methods rather than critique, vagueness and vague concepts (permitting indeterminacy to come into play), opening contexts to each other and “tweaking the regulated connection between contexts” (p. 243). Wresting concepts away from their usual configurations and coagulations (Grosz, 2001) and putting them into new contexts, into new associations, creates a “violence” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007, p. 24) that will trigger a self-organising affect. Such violence makes a surplus of potential accessible, much more so than when concepts are trapped in habit and regulated use. Rather than subsume moments of excess (the data that don’t fit the story) in predetermined structures and categories, developing a heightened awareness to singularity and the expression of what is in excess or virtual, will elaborate and extend the research assemblage (Massumi, 2002b).

Replacing categories and themes (stop-operations) with “tangents and rhizomes” (Rautio, 2013) will enable exploration of a profusion of ever-transforming connections that condition the event and its potential.

Affectensity might involve the unexplainable, the unexpected, and the disruptive. It might, as Myers (2015) suggests, focus on the relations and “reciprocity between resistances and accommodations” (p. viii) which characterise the entanglement generated and explored in posthumanist research. Here mapping becomes a method of movement rather than of representation.
Corner (1999) argues that mapping involves “processes of gathering, working, reworking, assembling, relating, revealing, sifting and speculating” (p. 228), that is, a speculative and generative putting into arrangement. Notions of (what becomes) data transform in this kind of cartographic assemblage (Ringrose, 2015). These processes enable certain sets of potentials to become actual but they are not deterministic. A map construes, constructs, and heightens “affective intensities” (Ringrose & Renold, 2014, p. 774), searching to reveal and release complex, latent forces (affectensity?), and to engender new connections between disparate parts. In doing so a map is “susceptible to constant modification” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 12). According to these functions, maps are neither signifying nor representative, and do not work through symbols which signify their referents, but as tools for connections between and across the virtual and actual. Maps are experiments, and they produce different formations that might be subversive and/or hold “revolutionary scope” (Ringrose, 2015, p. 397).

Massumi (2002b) also suggests examples can affect movement, when examples serve to modify concepts, rather have concepts traced over them (which imposes change on the example). In this becoming-thesis, concepts are brought into dialogue with examples, and they rebel. These concepts won’t be fixed, they start to take on new meanings as they are fleshed out, enriched with content and connections and changing shape; dilating, distending, distorting. A desire (was it paranoiac?) to apply concepts; to make the children’s concept of monster a perfect example of affectensity, tried to smooth out the events, putting all in alignment. The conatus of expression could not be captured through the affectensity of monster, as actually the mutinous monster resisted, he slipped away as lines of flight took bears onto roads . . . How intense is something that fades so? It wasn’t then the intensity of monster that was conative but the expression of something more primal, more instinctual . . . fear, perhaps?
Affectensity cannot be aligned with one event to the exclusion of others, affectensity becomes then a quality of the event in its relations to other events, in all its inter- and outer-connections, in its leaps and jumps into the seemingly unconnected. Affectensity, as a concept, changes in every encounter. Concepts must be “picked up by nonphilosophical hands actually engaged in collective experimentation” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 244), because it is this experimentation that modifies the concepts and makes them work.

Affectensity as a methodology-ontology involves working with immanent material, bodily affects (including words) in dynamic time and space, to enable becoming rather than represent being (St Pierre, 2013). In this way, research becomes ontogenetic (Springgay, 2015), emergent, and creative. It is focused on absolute movement as vibration, resonance (Manning, 2013) and intensity. Working with words and concepts in an active way, moving all the time, never settling with definition, but adding, subtracting, and always transforming, playing with the interplay and potential between content and expression. Always seeking to expand an unlimited empirical field, to which there is no limit, with the connection-making of generative thought. “The key to an expanded empiricism is additivity” (Massumi, 2002b, p. 256). In exploration of affectensity, words and concepts might perform and serve to “think possible worlds in which we might live differently” (St Pierre, 2013, p. 225).
EVENT: FLEEING THE MONSTER—WORKING THE INTERVAL FOR AN ETHICS OF THE SUBJECT

“And my cousin say and my father and my daddy say it and they say and all the people like this [holds table rim and moves it side to side] moving like the table and then and then and then and then and then and then they broke the park. They go like this doosh doosh [punching air] the monster did. [In] Samoa ... and the people died. Yeah and we didn’t hide and we died. That’s why we not die now we safe. That’s why we go rolled the ball like that [crouches down and hunches over like a ball] and then there’s some earthquake and there some shark. No no and we got the water shh shh. The water goes swoosh and some parts got wet. And they need they need their jackets. And the coats be yucky and the boys got mud on them er yuk.” (Hargraves, 2014b, p. 325)

Here is an action (a linguistic act) and in its enunciation are constituted subjects (Deleuze, 1983/1986)—the child-narrator subject and the listener or reader subject (to whom I assume can be ascribed educational intent, given the context of the thesis’ exploration into the ethics of expression in early childhood education). In this act of expression is produced not only the child-subject but the onlooker, the teacher present, or the reader of these pages, who perceives the child and acts to judge, to interpret, and to assign meaning. Each of these subjects emerges within the workings of this expression event, if only momentarily, as part of an ongoing individuation spurred by interactions with the world. As these becomings emerge, they transform with the ways in which they are responded to by others. Subjectivity as the product of an interval; the gap between perceiving potential and acting upon it. In the child, inbetween thought and speech. In the listener/reader, inbetween listening/reading and making sense of what is heard/read. In these inbetweens, centres are formed, loci for action, a refrain ascribed subject. Between the two, a mutuality of relations which influence and transform what each and the other may become.

An Education-Machine Interprets . . .

Does the reader/educator view this child as cycling through ideas, discarding ideas as unsuitable for his purpose or attempting to connect them? Is the discontinuity
and illogicity of this narrative playful and experimental, or just the result of incompetence? Is the narrative-child assemblage floundering or gathering strength?

Working with the logics of representation and of a good sense that follows the proper direction, with the typologies and definitions of stories and of learners’ development in language skills, the education-machine, and the subjects which express it, might identify a failed attempt at storying. A string of ideas without logical connection, without an explicative framework to make sense of them. Does the reader/educator look at this child and ask: How well can he construct a story, or articulate ideas, or maintain concentration? Does the reader/educator consider how to help him improve? If so, does the reader/educator conclude that the child is not skilled in the structuring of narrative, and requires more exposure to well-structured narratives and perhaps the scaffolding of templates and examples? To do so is to plug this event into the education-machine, stratifying it according to the machine’s flows of production, and insodoing, cementing a subject position for the reader/educator as judge and mediator. Instead, might the reader/educator see this child as an improviser, working with, and emerging in, an intra-action of matter and language (Rautio & Winston, 2015)?

. . . the Child Improvises

For Rautio and Winston (2015), the child is always already involved in an improvisation with words in relation to material and social objects, events, and interactions, in a playful and creative production of subjectivity, action, and thought. This is to pick up on Deleuze-Guattari’s (1980/1987) claim that improvisation is an act of entanglement; that “to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it” (p. 363); the matter(!) of thinking with the world, rather than about it (Holland, 2013; A. Taylor, Blaise & Giugni, 2013). A child playing with language as matter, with sense and with truth, inventing new worlds which continually shape the words-to-come, the narrative, but also the child and the reader/educator.

In the concept is a virtual mobility, an indeterminism that is generative (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013), if sensed as so (and not, as in the education-machine’s interpretation of the (failed) narrative, in assuming a fixed and immobile accuracy of the concept to be reached). These dynamic, animate, and animating words incite relations with a virtual, draw in other words, lead other concepts. The virtual is ephemeral, fleeting, renewing itself by constantly emitting new virtuals (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007). In these
compositions or assemblages lie co-constituting forces, which in their coming together as an event, define the newness of the next expression (Massumi, 2013). What (else) can this narrative improvise, in a potential learning-teaching event and in a becoming-thesis?

“The world turns into linguistic representations that in turn generate further possibilities of encountering, improvising with and being improvised by the very world” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 20). Might also the reader-educator view language to be a material player in this intra-action? Language, as matter, playing with the child? Language is both material and related to the material (Rautio & Winston, 2015), before it is social, representational, or functional. The shapes, patterns, and links between words generate “their own imaginative dynamic” (Rautio & Winston, 2015), and contribute to the assemblage created, with resulting implications for meaning and sense.

The contradictions and logical discontinuities, not usually seen as desirable in educational settings (Rautio & Winston, 2015), might be productive. Can the education-machine harness this potential? Does the reader/educator ask what potential this event can generate, with what matter does the child work and what matter works with the child, and what else might be connected? Does the reader/educator see this as an interval in which to intervene/interfere with his or her own multiplicities, with the aim of an enhanced potentiality? What if the reader/educator perceives this moment as an opportunity to witness the interval in play, stretched out in the pregnant ruminations of a child in thought?

For Rautio & Winston (2015), as for Deleuze-Guattari (1980/1987), it is the playful nature of responses to the world, the “opportunities for addressing and experiencing our being human in incongruent and nonsensical ways” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 22), which enables an ethical flexibility in our perceived selves or subjectivities. Thought deterrioralises the monster-figure, frees it from the breaking-the-house assemblage and places it into other assemblages in which the ever-individuating child-subject, like the monster and narrative and other elements involved, emerges anew and anew and anew. Thought travels through a gap of non-sense, an interval of indeterminacy in relation to a problem, before consolidating as sense, the sense of a narrative and of a subjectivity. It is this interval that enables the ethical exploration of potential. Affectensity too grows in this interval, if the interval can open up a play of potentiality.
Vandalism and violence and monsters and earthquakes and sharks and floods. There is no logical structure of a beginning, middle, and end, but just beginning after beginning after beginning . . .

There is an art to these operations, the production of “an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and reterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 186). Stretching a chaotic interval of indeterminacy is not to disrupt production, but contributes to the formation of expressions that are of maximum intensity and most advantageous to a body. Here is an opportunity to navigate the potentiality of the gap space and select the most capacious affect, a virtual experimentation into indeterminacy before the settling of actualisation.

Which monster to flee? The chaos that flings ideas and concepts so fast they cannot be put into logical order? Or the judgemental teacher reformer and education-machine? If chaos is not the monster, then how can the child and his reader/educator work with chaos? How can they maintain an interval of potentiality without capturing and coding and closing down? How long should they remain in such an interval before regrouping, making sense, if only to articulate a position from which to move off again? The dizziness of the swirl of virtual potentiality might require occasional points on which to rest, a brief pause upon the notion of earthquake before launching into floods and sharks. Note that the pause is not motionless, but more of a welling up (Manning & Massumi, 2014) . . .

Fleeing the monster of representation and judgement involves creating a rhythm of stops and starts, of movements through chaotic gap-spaces which culminate in an articulation of sense, before dissolving with a non-sense that is productive of the next expression. And in each expression, an affectensity produced in the infinite relations of a monstrous cloud of virtualities giving rise to a sense of multiplicitious capacity. Earthquakes and sharks and vandalism and violence and monsters and floods display a regenerative power of the new. Can the reader/educator become a co-orchestrator of virtual potential and affect?
6. Your Curriculum in Affect

What might you do in your early childhood education setting today?
How is your particular and singular curriculum becoming?
How can curriculum enhance your capacity and intensify affect?

You enter your setting, a chaos of matters of expression, presenting a dissonance of signs. Bodies make themselves visible through different energies, tempos, and tones (Rossholt, 2012); a milieu in movement singing out to you. It is the chaos of this environment which supports you to be conversant with matter, to be open to the invitations of things asking to play with you (Rautio, 2014). The signs that this chaotic assemblage emits are not signs for you to interpret, but indexes to a mutual becoming, the virtual potential of the becoming-with that simmers in the vibrant air of expectation. You are constantly being constituted in your encounters with the things that come to be your environment (Malone, 2016).

And becomings are already in progress, your teachers, your peers, matter, time, and space have already engaged one another, refrains are humming into life. The clay from the table dropped on the floor after use. Toy cars tumbled from an overturned basket, a block-tile roadway materialised in the work of busy hands, bent-over bodies, and the hmmm of vibrating lips. With what might your body assemble now? The warm and comforting arms of a familiar teacher in your greeting for the day, a gesture repeated over many mornings, and yet this cuddle is singular . . . a new smell at the teacher’s neck, a brooch catching on the collar of your shirt, words tumbling past your ear as the teacher reminds a child leaving the toilet area to wash their hands. A smell-hook-loudwords cuddle, offering new potentials for affect. To pull away, or bury your nose in her jumper? To finger the brooch, to examine its mechanism of connection? To protect your ears in the softness of the jumper? To look where words direct, to ponder the rules of this place and all you must remember to fit in here as you suck on your sleeve (a comforting refrain) and watch the activity around you? A range of affects are possible, produced in the relationship between states of being in which arise differentials rather than universals of representation. A representational interpretation is impossible when affect is experienced, like this, as a movement between states, as a passage of potential (Roy, 2003).
You join an assemblage on earthquakes . . . the teacher has the blocks on the table today, knock-crash-bang-EARTHQUAKE! Blocks invite you to play, they befriend you (Rautio, 2014), speak to you, they hum with a refrain that is familiar to you. Stack-us, connect-us, line-us-in a long-long-line, earthquake-us, use-us, purpose-us, what can we be for you today . . . ? Something in your desire to make use of the objects in front of you is pulsed by a refrain that precedes you, assemblages previously assembled working upon the potentiality of the assemblages of this moment now. There are perceptions and connections that, already in your short experience of the world, have become automatic, given.

These innate perceptions and gestures are those that discern or select the matters of expression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), giving them distinct, identifiable forms and immutable concepts: blocks are no longer abstract shapes, and no longer tree, but now territorialised as blocks. These ways in which you frame matter are also modulated by mechanisms we might term learning, or acquisition. That is, the matters of expression that populate the block area are appraised by you, not just in terms of their inherent characteristics, but also in terms of incorporeal transformations performed through learning. Learning, for example, that earthquakes can be made with blocks-on-table. Blocks come to express earthquake-ness within their virtual potential. By means of both innate and acquired perceptions, blocks are hard and loud and smooth and shape and stackable and earthquake and . . . there is still potential for matter to induce other assemblages, leading you to learn from/with matter and other bodies.

Your body and your mind meet the material simultaneously, you are so entangled that the boundaries of anatomy are inappropriate, your body has become one with the block in your hand, the noise inside your head. You are block-brrmm-arm. Your becomings are intimately interconnected with the becomings of others, the cars, the blocks, the teacher-body and child-body—even your body temperature is changed and changing the temperature of the room around you. And all of this—objects, room, your body and its internal states, other bodies, time, space—is co-experienced (Leander & Boldt, 2013) and at the same time, constantly emerging anew.

Both the innate and the acquired will be deterritorialised and reterritorialised as you work with them, as you become with them; even the innate can be decoded, and “passes to the margins of [its] code” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 386). Usually
your teachers are happy for you to invent and create your own refrains, deterritorialise and reterritorialise, invent your own constructions and techniques. Just do not throw or hit with blocks. Sometimes this isn’t the case, sometimes your action is not so free and your becomings-with-matter limited. Sometimes brushes must be kept with the right colours, and paint must only go on paper. Today there is an undercurrent of teacher intent: “Will you make an earthquake on yours?” (Join the group, join your peers, contribute to the discussion and the shared assemblage). You want only to connect the smooth surfaces of the blocks, they like to touch each other, see how they fit so perfectly together. And a space is emerging in the middle of the blocks. Matter modulates the assemblage, the blocks, with their hard, inflexible, inadaptable shapes, are dividing space, creating a hollow, a hole. What will you put there?

You scan: What possibilities in the baskets and boxes of resources around the edge of the carpet? Your thoughts and perceptions constantly in movement, activated by the (desiring-)machinery of your milieu (Manning, 2013). Might you choose one of those cars the other children are playing with? Part of their game, they are assigned more visibility, more vibrancy than other matter peeking from baskets. Will they see you take one? As you take matter and assign it with expression, at the same time matter makes you, develops with you a becoming-constructor, becoming-encloser, becoming-stealthy, in the interval of your ever-emerging subjectivity. Ideas that subsist in a preconscious realm of virtual potentialities are brought into consciousness and reterritorialised in the process of becoming-other (May & Semetsky, 2008).

You want to engage, hands on blocks, fingers curling, ears listening and eyes flitting across the potentiality of the matter before you. Here is an event ripe for a deterritorialisation-reterritorialisation, a becoming-new in modification which transforms all bodies involved. A deterritorialisation of the event will free up the fixed relations that construct your body, and the material human and nonhuman bodies around you, all the while exposing these bodies to new organisations. Deterritorialisation makes learning “a set of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialization, and draw variations and mutations of it” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 388). This is a machine that plugs into existing assemblages and opens them to other assemblages, other refrains, or indeed, to a wider chaos or plane of immanence. If deterritorialisation is a transversal process that defines the potential
creativity of an assemblage’s reterritorialisation, it must seek diversity and multiplicity and put these into play.

You are engaged in a practical exploration that, in order to be creative, must engage the imperceptible, or what Semetsky (2013b) terms the unconscious. An unconscious sensing of impending danger in the crashes and screams of the children at the block table, or the imperceptible flash of light as the sun meets the metal of the toy car. The smoothness of blocks that speaks to the smoothness of table. The number of the cars to which your response is to make one stand out, create it its own territory, its own space to protect it from cacophony and chaos. The unconscious is a multiplicity, an outside, and a collective desiring machine (Semetsky, 2013b), and learning a movement into the creative unknown and unthought, a response to intensities and affects that may be barely registered by your conscious mind. You are not the central protagonist leading an orchestration of the material, but “a follower of some action initiated by [your] material surroundings” (Rautio, 2013, p. 399). All of these sensations are threatened by crowding, so many elements vying for your attention.

With the unconscious leading your learning, no longer is your play a manipulation of an object and its linked representation in your thought and speech. Sign is not separate and linked to matter, but sign is matter, or better, something established on the surface of matter, a transitory and playful outline that constantly shifts, stretches, connects, and separates. The image of an object or material is created in the play of affect of sensory individuations (Sauvagnargues, 2016). You tune in to the power of sensory modulations as you play and experiment.

You find a dead bee on the grass. Wind ruffles the colourful hairs on its body, wings shake. To be completely open to unconscious intensities is to open yourself to the perception not of identity but of force, of the “composition of relations” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 50). Wind and hair and dead. And varying these relations, you modulate affect. To poke it, to move it, to pull on that wing? To blow on it, pour sand on it, to kick it with your toe? To animate with your fingers and a humming on your lips, inventing a dance of the dead bee? Provoking screams and giggles from mouths, a line of flight gathers momentum . . .
The signs emitted around you are not objects for recognition, but for individuating encounters (Sauvagnargues, 2016), encounters that individuate both you and the sign in a mutual becoming. This occurs as “contracts between [your] individual bodies” (Dahlbeck, 2014, p. 20) that are real and productive, something Dahlbeck (2014) argues for as a “pure ontology” (p. 8) based in relations with the real, rather than the abstract. But even the abstract has a body or a materiality you can encounter—you enter freely into relations with every thing—matter, concept, or language—forming the human and nonhuman materiality about you. This opens you up to an unfolding of “maps of affects” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 46), but also, to the potential for consistency, for the holding together of elements, the density of consolidation.

Rather than interpret objects and symbols in a conscious and reflective manner, for an intensification of affect, you absorb a pluralism of signs in a manner that does not privilege the mental or linguistic sphere. You experiment, connect and disconnect, transform and employ a constant variation of actions and modifications, broadening the spectrum of potential available to you. You have to reach beyond the constraining, conceptualising logic of language, in a sympathy and sensitivity to that which exceeds language (Jones & Hoskins, 2016). Engaging the sensory forces derived from affect, assemblages form, accelerate
and decelerate, and vary in their virtual power. Only such an openness can be ethical, can be capacity-enhancing in terms of increasing potential affect, potential action and becoming. Capacity enhanced in a multiplicity of connections.

When you work with the unconscious, with the plurality of intensities and affects that throb and pulsate in energies encircling you, you are working an ethics of expression. Rather than engage in the representation and comprehension of matter as a series of identities, you are sensing and anticipating potential by engaging matter and bodies as signs. Signs depend on encounters of sense, forming instruments for experiments for accessing the unthought, undetermined, uncodified (Rajchman, 2000). Signs do not have fixed meanings or affects, it is only a lack of experimentation with the sign that makes it appear the same (Roy, 2003).

You are sat in a highchair. An attempt to regulate and routinise your body, your action: this is the time you eat, this is the place, this is the way. This routine enacts a human dependency on the material flows of matter and language (Saldanha & Stark, 2016). But . . . you begin to sense and engage signs to expand your capacity. You can wriggle. Or wait? Squeeze both feet through here? Stand up? Be restrained, be strapped? Or figure the straps out for yourself. You can accept the drink bottle passed to you: heavy, challenging for your small fingers to manipulate, might you bang it? Shake it? Pour it? Or take the food? Eat it or throw it? Or turn your head away? Your sense of affect enlargens in this moment. Here is a game! You give your drink bottle to the body in the next highchair, and this body’s lips connect with plastic teat and drink, before relinquishing, teat returning to the space between your lips. (Perhaps the constraints of this event were conducive to your creativity, enforcing a creative stretching of the possibilities of a limited set of resources?) Much capacity for action in your bounded body, “differential experiences that are always in excess of what thought as recognition can expect” (Roy, 2003, p. 30).

Do you diminish affect for the teacher by doing something she refutes? Or does she diminish yours by not noting your new capacities? Is affect heightened by the secrecy of your new activity? If your teacher finds a creative response to the problem of you children drinking from the wrong bottles, perhaps inventing a passing game passing objects from highchair to highchair, engaging your desire to challenge your developing manipulative skills and your joy in social interaction. You all gain an enhanced capacity
for affect in this moment. Another new refrain: pass, pass, slip, drop, look, giggle, “uh-oh, try again!”

You deterritorialise the highchair events in order to reterritorialise them anew. You escape a certain striation through deterritorialisation, in order to reterritorialise or reposition yourself in this event, a new striation of space (Ringrose, 2011). And to reterritorialise is to set in motion a refrain that gains consistency, which might become so consistent it becomes regulatory—we always pass the drink bottles out before beginning our snack. The ethical practices that opened up expression to create these new refrains of action are subsumed by an emerging habit. There is always a reterritorialising aspect to any deterritorialisation, but in a curriculum intensifying affect, perhaps you can choose to focus on the deterritorialising aspect (Roy, 2003), remaining aware of potential sedimentation, staying watchful and experimental.

Thus the key question or problem for an ethical expression which engages maximum affect becomes: what can we produce from this event? How can this be productive? And not to halt production in marshalling behaviour and action and speech into expected forms, because, even though this provokes the creative use of rules and other tools for positive guidance or behaviour management and other invented concepts in early childhood education, it is put to the use of closing down affect, limiting capacity, and streamlining action along narrow, predictable pathways. Your curriculum in affect—an unconscious sensing of affect, working with matter as signs, an exploratory phase without intention, oscillating back and forth with a desire for production which asks What can you do with this? What can you create? What can you connect? To where can you fly? What affect? What affect? What affect?
7. To Dance a Rhythm

*Is rhythm “the milieu’s answer to chaos”* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 364)?

To the reader,

If you are hoping for some concluding comments, please turn back to the abstract. The thesis started with conclusions, and from there hopes only to engender lines of flight. Instead here prepare to dance . . . responding and contributing to a rhythm that moves you-me-thesis with the potentiality of endless and eternal difference . . .

To becoming-dance,

To dance is to put to work a (in)corporeal body, to experiment with the complex forces and relations that constitute a body, and its being/becoming, with a view to potential deterritorialisations. To dance potentiality is not to forego a bodily self or a structure that enables a body to function:

You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of signifiance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 187)

This chapter explores the ethics of being a bodily, identifiable, stratified self, but one that encompasses and engenders affectensity in dancing a rhythm, dancing a diagram “as opposed to still signifying and subjective programs” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 187). It is not easy to find new ways to act and think while still situated within and through the stratified order of expressions that produce bodies as subjects (Krejsler, 2016). The aim is not to dance oneself into a “catastrophic black hole” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 389), but to dismantle habit, fixed knowledge, and reproductive routine, little by little, moving always in an ethical line of enhanced capacity. And stratified expressions (teacher, adult, pupil) support bodies “to enter the game” (Krejsler, 2016, p. 1479) and participate.

Here the game is becoming-dance, and involves a particular conception of dance as improvisation attuned to sensation. Then becoming-dance is to engage bodies in
movement and sensation and to become “open to an elsewhere and an otherwise” (Springgay, 2015, p. 79) through co-composition with other elements. This is a dance that glides and jerks in an indeterminate movement-sensation of constant individuation. This dance may traverse human bodies, but is not performed by humans; instead it is activated “through semiotic-material processes which are never entirely within human control or understanding” (J. Bennett, 2016, p. 72).

To dance need not be a corporeal act, but a movement carried out in thought, in action, in words; any territorialising refrain that is immediately deterritorialised. And yet an embodied element to a becoming of dance challenges an emphasis on knowing based on what can be conceived linguistically (Rautio, 2013) and invites bodies to tune into to something bodily, or even extra-bodily, something in excess of what it appears possible to feel or to think. What is important is the virtuality that always engages movement (de Freitas & Sinclair, 2013). The danced move because moved to do so (Manning, 2013), by a rhythm traversing chaos in search of a new refrain. What does becoming-dance look like in early childhood education? What kind of becoming-dance for what kind of bodies? If all bodies are moving in becoming-dance, is there a synchrony that can become consistent as early childhood education?

A Becoming-Differential of Becoming-Dance

Is becoming-dance a mode of experimenting with difference? Each move a dancing body makes, each move it contemplates, senses or activates, marks a differential. Every muscle, each part of a body, poised to stretch or contract, is a cluster of potential movements experienced as a constant differentiating. “The move is less a point than a vectorial gestural nexus: a differential, dynamic knot of potential variations on itself” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 35).

This means dance is oriented always in the present, in the formation of relations and connections across objects and bodies (as signs). Dance is affected by and thinks with a multitude of bodies (A. Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015), forces and sensations; it becomes a “rhythmic folding of sensations” (de Freitas, 2016b, p. 192) as a process for an ongoing learning and becoming with the world. Dance also feeds forward, and pays attention to the way its becoming-dance changes, moves, bewilders, displaces, stimulates, or enlivens the world (A. Taylor & Blaise, 2014). More than a paying-of-attention, it is a
coming-into-attention-with (Manning, 2013). This attunement is a form of attention that co-constitutes the event rather than occurring outside of it (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017). Perhaps, drawing on Manning’s (2013) notion of attention as a protagonist, it is a coming-into-attention-with that dances? Or a milieu that dances a coming-into-attention-with in the making of events?

To dance is not about applying imagination to our endeavours in early childhood education, but a new logic of thought which assures the differentiating of parts. It is tapping out a rhythm of the potentiality that preexists every actualisation, all the conceivable connections the dance makes are already virtual, already contained in an all-encompassing potential. The virtual is not imagined but as real as the actual. How might we participate in a virtual realm without actualising it? How do we make our actualisations virtual? What is the point of the virtual if not to inform the actual?

To open a body and thought to the nexus of potentials through which dance becomes, enables stirrings of something “emergent, relational and ethical, opening towards intensities” (Gannon, 2016, p. 128), a growing awareness of the infinity of potential present. In this awareness in which bodies are constantly becoming-different through encounter and interaction, we might say that bodies are learning. A body in the constant movement of its self-transformation in an environment also always in the motion of transformation (Leander & Boldt, 2013). This is a dance that resonates with Manning and Massumi’s (2014) notion of technique; an immanent practice which “can only work itself out, following the momentum of its own unrolling process” (p. 89). There cannot be any sense of an intentional structuring by the dancing subject, but what remains important are the initial conditions which precipitate and contribute to the unfolding of the dance, and which dance explores and dances into relation. Dance creates a “melodic line of development” (Grosz, 2008, p. 43) in counterpoint to, and sounding off, qualities that the world provides for it to sense. Learners pay attention to what sounds off for them in the world. Thus Manning and Massumi (2014) advise entering into sensations, nothing more. Might sensations provoke habitual responses? What initial conditions support what kinds of sensations? Are these to be specified and planned for, or simply observed? How to plan initial conditions without being-intentional?

No longer is perception limited by what representation expects, assumes and recognises, instead de Freitas (2016b) suggests that in processes of sense and sensing,
perception develops a virtuality. Dance transforms objects into events, full of “potentiality, relationality, mobility, occurrence, and the future” (de Freitas, 2016b, p. 194). Becoming-dance observes a body’s tendency to enact habit and moves it toward a creative openness (Manning, 2013). How to move outside of habit? Can habit become-dance through improvisation?

Dance works the push and pull of forces competing in the turbulent clamour of a field overspilling with potential, but the danced cannot seek to understand a field of forces they are being changed by (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017). Dance works with a chaos that can never be truly experienced, as chaos self-organises itself into divergences and convergences, combinings and separatings that are ever in progress (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Instead dance is an instrument of transduction, acting to convert a force, event, or energy, into something else (Reinertsen & Otterstad, in press), not representing or translating, not explaining or analysing. The danced is only a “participatory node” (Manning, 2013, p. 122), a potential point of relation, in the dance of a life. Not being-dancer, but becoming-danced. Is there any agency or accountability for a human-body? Or, in withdrawing from intention, is it ethical just to be danced?

A Becoming-Passage of Becoming-Dance

Can becoming-dance build into a rhythm that moves through and disassembles even highly coded forms? “Every milieu is vibratory, in other words, a block of space time constituted by the periodic repetition of the component” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 364). In the early childhood setting, the periodic repetition of children, paint, playdough, teachers, child-sized furniture (highchairs), Te Whāriki, play . . . is a coding, as periodic repetition defines a code (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), more of a “reproductive meter” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 365) than a rhythm. The child milieu, the paint milieu, the highchair milieu; each is made up of coded vibrations, but this code is always being converted into new forms; milieus are constantly becoming. Milieus are coding and re-coding alongside and because of their interrelation, incorporating components from other milieus, building one atop the other, birthing new milieus or dissipating within another milieu. Each milieu is full of tendencies, concordances, and stirrings (Manning, 2013), and in the differences engendered in the encounter of milieus, that is, in the differences that emerge when child, paint, and highchair encounter each other, rhythm is a mark of difference (Jackson, 2016). Is it
possible to hear the tap-tap-tap of a coding and re-coding machine as milieu meets milieu? Is this a dance track?

Rhythm coordinates two or more “heterogeneous space-times” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 365), making them communicate and effecting their transformation. In this way it forms a passage of connection. Rhythm is a force that moves between milieus, between the coordinations and interactions of milieus as they become in new ways, generating new patterns of code. A rhythm between child and paint and highchair. Rhythms resonate and accumulate and compose and create (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Rhythm is the jumps and leaps-between, the slithers and slides-between, all kinds of “passage between milieus” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 366). In this inbetween of passage exists both chaos and rhythm. Chaos is the encompassing “milieu of all milieus” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 364), and rhythm the passages across and through it. Should becoming-dance follow rhythm as a passage between already-interacting milieus, or should it provoke milieu interactions for new passage-rhythm? Can it provoke while it follows?

It is in this connection and communication of the passage of milieus that becoming occurs, as bodies are “both conditioned and cajoled into creative improvisations” (Rautio & Winston, 2015, p. 22). Rhythm is concerned with differences, with “the Unequal or the Incommensurable” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 365) that spurs movement and is generative of becoming. And passage is also an indeterminate interval, “a borderland zone between modes of action” (Massumi, 1992, p. 106) in which becoming is not yet defined. Passing through chaos, rhythm focuses on the potentiality that arises and is experienced as intensity. Here rhythm is aided by the transversal, a specialised kind of line of connections that is involved in deterritorialisation, a passage that renders maximum intensity to the differences productive of becoming. How can difference be intensified?

Passage moves and it assembles. Monster AND Piaget AND Bees AND; the laying of things side by side to see what newness they generate (Boldt & Valente, 2016) between them. To move is not to move into position. There is nothing positional or postural in movement; movement is “always dynamically passing” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p.35). Dance is the movement of “transversal alliances” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 387), and a body a “surface of intensities” (Springgay & Zaliwska, 2017, p. 277)
transforming in the play of patterns across it. *Does change inhere in the body or to the dance that passes over it?*

What is required for passage is the activation of creative forces for resonation, interference, and generation. Such forces register in an intensity of affect, felt in the body as sensation, emotion, or energy (Leander & Boldt, 2013). MacLure (2013b) describes this as “a kind of ‘surfing’ of the intensity of the event that has caught us up, in order to arrive somewhere else” (p. 662). *But is it ethical to dance a passing between milieus, a passing between intensifying becomings, if dance blocks or constrains the dance and movement of another body?*

For Manning and Massumi (2014), “everything has rhythm, and rhythms have a way of coming together” (p. 32). A dance. A movement combined with a sound or a colour; a body part assembling with a wall. A dance requires “transcorporeal engagements, involving other faculties than the mind . . . [making] matter intelligible in new ways” (Lenz Taguchi, 2012, p. 267). Yet a free passage that unites and separates in fleeting formations may not amount to much. Movement may be so loose or so fast that there is no time for anything to coagulate. *Could intensity ever build?* Sometimes constraints may be enabling (Manning & Massumi, 2014): challenging a body to dance without touching the carpet, or to include anything red in its trajectories; or to think without identity; or to use only the infinitive of verbs. *How much intensity can commitment engender?*

Thinking is a movement, it composes with movement (Manning, 2013). Its movement is inevitable, due, paradoxically, to the consistency of concepts, ideas, and bodies because concepts, ideas, and bodies have many component parts that must constantly renew their connections. *If renewal is a movement, are strata dancing thought too?* An unstoppable rhythm, thinking is a force that enters bodies and causes them to compose affective relations with other bodies. In the passage from renewal to renewal, a space might be made in which the potential to renew with difference can be explored.

Becoming-dance might aim to set thought free from all that “captures or captivates it” (Grosz, 2001, p. 62); a becoming-dance might effect a scattering or diffracting of thought rather than renewal. Murris (2016) suggests emptying oneself to allow thought to occur, losing all sense of what might emerge and thereby throwing off
attachments to particular trajectories, creating an openness instead. Braidotti (2017) calls this “an ethics of affirmation”; a matter of “defamiliarizing our habits of thought [and dance] in a new direction” (p. 91). How is this to be done? Making “small ruptures in our everyday habits of thought [that] start minor dissident flows” (Roy, 2003, p. 31). Moving beyond our own experience and becoming so disoriented that the movement takes over (Manning, 2013). Immersing oneself in the moment of the event in a way which enables movement beyond the limits of a specific identity (Davies, 2011). How easy is it to move outside of identity? Or can movement flow across identity?

New thought is born from seeking thought’s differentials and irregularities in a clash or violence of incongruous encounter. “Something in the world forces us to think” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 139). To dance might be to rediscover monstrosity (Deleuze, 1968/1994) and chaos, underneath the order-word of representation; “tumult, restlessness and passion underneath apparent calm” (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 42). Could there be too much chaos and monstrosity, which frightens or paralyses in its limitless potentiality?

Things and concepts open up to become many expressions, no longer trapped in the judgment of representation. Learning is directed towards creativity and invention in perceiving the world, rather than cataloguing the world in “already established and therefore finite” (Dahlbeck, 2014, p.21) categories of representation. This is an active mode of thinking, not caught up in recognition and identification, but constantly reforming itself (Leander & Boldt, 2013); a mode of thinking propelled by the difference of repetition. Can we really think without recognition and identification? With what do we think instead? Is to dance to liberate a becoming that has been retarded by the overcoding of representation? Can we say that representation is not itself individuating, always and already becoming? And how to dance without representing?

**A Becoming-Territory of Becoming-Dance**

*Is a becoming-dance of rhythm to produce an early structuring device, to create a provisional sense of order from chaos in territorialisation of chaos? Is it to inhabit a space, even temporarily, to explore (push against?) its boundaries and its potentiality? This territorial organisation is one with much more provisionality than the structured formalisations of the strata, that does not deny potentiality or stultify the event’s becoming, but finds a middle ground, “both animated and inhabitable” (Stewart, 2007, p. 1). To become-dance is to distil movements from the chaos of potential in acts of*
composition (Manning, 2013). The rhythm of the dance becomes expressive and it expresses territory, now the “marking of a territory” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 367) is a rhythm.

Territorialisation by a becoming-dance might create consistency for teaching and learning in complex early childhood contexts. This is a consistency produced without stratifying, without categorising and fixing events, without responding with a solidifying generality. Instead this is a consistency produced in the creation of new affective assemblages of expanded ethical codes and political movements (Braidotti, 2017). All territories are “shot through with lines of flight testifying to the presence within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 63). These are lines of flight (dance?) that emerge when we strike out on a whim from “worn-out spaces” (Roy, 2003, p. 85). Monster and cushion and softness and kindness . . . Clay and shoe sole and imprints and stuck-now . . . Highchair separation and a secret and a stretch-to-topple-highchairs and a domino-effect . . . Becoming-dance borrows components from all the milieus, as if to bite into them, or physically seize them (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). When does a refrain provide brief shelter from the forces of chaos and at what point does it congeal in habit? Can we determine refrains or do they determine us? Are you dancing or danced?

Functions are only organised or created in a territorialisation of the unformed matters of chaos (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). But these are functions that have become objective, no longer tied to specific actions but acquiring a constancy across space and time. Blocks are territorialised as houses, and their knocking down territorialised as earthquake-monster. Clay is territorialised as pedagogic material. Mat-time is territorialised as group learning. Is this a solidification of events so that they cannot function differently? Does a function create dependency because it functions-for? Jackson (2016) argues the territorialising nature of the (dance) refrain works to create movement and improvisation in a repetition that enacts and affirms difference. The dance must be nomadic, never settled. Once a territory has been formed, the dance seeking maximum expressive affect might move to territorialise somewhere and something else, so as to “have a small plot of new land at all times” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 187). How long to stay in one spot?
Territorialisation becomes an improvisation that involves working with the world rather than upon it—“to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 363). This is a “reaching-toward . . . a kind of feeling-with the world” (Manning, 2013, p. 2). It is to enter into the creative unfolding of the early childhood environment and participate in an experimentation in which all manner of bodies involved, and early childhood itself, might become something new with enhanced capacities to affect and be affected. How to ensure working-with and not working-on?

A Becoming-Diagram of Becoming-Dance

Losing the fetters of our “identity-bound recognition” (Braidotti, 2016, p. 388), the ethical aim is instead developing new modes of expression in accumulating affirmative relations of mutual affect with a range of elements and forces. Might this be to dance an operational set of singularities as a diagram, producing a mapping of affect and potential that enhances expression?

The diagram is the “differentiated relation of forces that presides over a given assemblage” (Sauvagnargues, 2016, p. 201) of, for example early childhood education, and is neither constitutive of it nor constructed from it, but virtual and immanent with it. It provides a differentiated and virtual “geography of intensities” (Roy, 2003, p. 85), as a source of the assemblage’s variation, affect, and becoming. The constant renewal and transformation of the diagram is fast paced work, as new virtuals are constantly being emitted (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/2007).

A diagram is a map of “infinite movements” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 50) of intersecting lines, that are polymorphic and multi-dimensional, lending a complex potentiality to the object of the diagram. “We are made up of lines” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977/1987, p. 124); and “we are traversed by lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 237); and we may dance lines, or, better, as “we are moving relationships, lines move us” (Semetsky, 2006, p. 17). Becoming-dance is a mode of relationship, it is a manner of moving a body through space, passing through singular points and placing parts of a body into relationship with the floor, and walls, other bodies, objects, and concepts. Such a dance might also be described as learning. But how to make a line of points of contact?

Multiple transversal lines are enacted in rhizomatic networks (Semetsky, 2013b) which create novel becomings and events. This network or multiplicity of “transversal
communications between different lines” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 11) is without a single crossing or connecting point, forming an open system of multiple connections and interactions (Semetsky, 2006) by affirming difference (Bogue, 2007). The transverse is “the path in between, the diagonal across the grids of horizontal and vertical coordinates, the zigzag of a line of continuous variation” (Bogue, 2007, p. 5). In performing these communications between incommunicables (Bogue, 2007), the transversal cuts across categories by developing an inclusivity in which separate elements are reforged as one (Massumi, 2015). How do we come to view these not as separate parts in communication but as parts always connected in multiple ways to one another in virtuality? Can we connect what is already connected? Do our connections merely repeat virtuality at a superfluous level of actuality, making actuality something redundant, in excess?

Diagrams explore flows and forces rather than the stasis and separation of positions. The strata remain poised ready to capture and formalise these diagrammatic features in a regime of signs such as representation; becoming-dance will swerve and dodge to evade such capture. How much movement in a game of catch and chase! Diagrams must work to “carve up matter in new ways” (de Freitas, 2012, p. 564) in a mode of production that shapes bodies and things in potentially creative ways. The diagram does not represent a reality but it is productive and constructive of a reality-to-come. To be productive, the diagram is concerned with the unformed traits of expression and content before they have become forms; it does not work with the formalisations of the strata. The diagram extracts particle-signs from existing assemblages, forms relays between them, and fuses them in a shared deterritorialisation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987). Movement is always prompted in the making of relations (Manning & Massumi, 2014). How to access the before of a stratified formalisation?

This makes a becoming-diagram dance “a material practice of passion, difference and expansion” (C. A. Taylor, 2016, p. 16). A diagram explores affect, it explores and seeks out potential in order to engender new becomings; it “plays a piloting role” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 164). To be diagrammed is to be deterritorialised, to be carried off, raised to one’s own power (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), to work within the speculation of the what if (Manning & Massumi, 2014). Does this mean
becoming-dance is not without direction, but an experimental exploration of directionalities?

There are particular lines of becoming that can diagram new ways of being, new spaces, new thoughts. To become-diagrammatic is to seek sensation and transition, feeling for the spillover of excess, a “loss of sense of boundaries [which] takes us to the limit” (Roy, 2003, p. 174). Thoughts and action become subject-less, immanent, rhizomatically forming lines not points. To become-diagrammatic is to let go of attempts to control the teaching and learning event, letting go of controlling children (Somerville, 2015), but also objects, time, and spaces. It might mean following children “who write, draw, speak, jump and shout without a clear purpose” (Rautio, 2013, p. 403) in order to escape the striations of expectation and understanding. Is it the violation of expectation that is productive?

It is possibly easier to dance or draw a diagram than to think or write one, to avoid the schematism which links experience and cognition. A diagram is not a cognitive object of symbolism and representation but more a cartographic one related to shape and space, movement and direction (Rajchman, 2000). Becoming-dance then, will involve abstraction, connection, and experimentation, but on a pragmatic level, and not at the level of the imagination. Imagination only “loses itself in a play of mirrors” (Deleuze, 2002/2003, p. 181); it is only the projections, reflections and distortions of a representational reality. Instead, to become-dance-diagram involves fusing with, even dissolving into, flows and forces and their conjunctions. “It suffices that we dissipate ourselves a little, that we be able to be at the surface, that we stretch our skin like a drum, in order that the ‘great politics’ begin” (Deleuze 1969/1990, p. 72). Is it more ethical, and less humancentric, to reterritorialise oneself as a surface for the play of flow than as that flow itself?

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Can dance affect an ethics of expression in early childhood education?

Ringrose (2015) argues that our thinking and acting and becoming affects a wider, immanent becoming of the world, and that we have a responsibility to find out how to affect a capacity for social and political transformation. This might be through producing “flow conjunctions here and there, trying out continuums of intensities segment by
segment” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 187). It might mean working the order-word in a manner that draws out its “revolutionary potential” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 128), always attempting to move beyond, out towards the limit. It might involve the loosening of structures and stratifications to release affects, “precisely these affects that are continuously being siphoned off and overcoded, that is, eclipsed from sight, and therefore robbed of their potential for contributing to curriculum” (Roy, 2003, p. 151). Starting with the smallest of movements, avoiding the totalising tendencies of grand gestures (Roy, 2003), becoming-dance seeks to rupture the sense of a refrain and dance it anew. Through the workings of affect, strata might even gain an elasticity (Nordstrom, in press).

And then becoming-dance is rhythm in its leap over the gap or interval of potentiality, a leap in which dance may look down into the abyss of chaos that opens up beneath it, surging with affect before landing in a new expression. A “dance of attention of the bare activity of becomings coalescing into a coming event” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 29). A line of flight through a virtual plane, a dance of indeterminacy which explores virtual possibilities, drawing from actualisations as stepping stones, brief touchdowns prior to a new launching forth, because “rhythm is never on the same plane as that which has rhythm” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 365).

How to dance an absolute limit? And do we want to? Do we risk breaking ourselves into a flow that never settles into form and is thus invisible in the workings of early childhood education? Where would our political and ethical affect lie then? Can a body-without-organs even dance?

What does it mean to be inbetween every and all actualisations? Is to dance merely a creative and never-ending free-fall, in the space between stepping and landing, of imperceivable movements that never connect to an actuality? And if so, could the becoming-dance retain enough of the teacher, the child, early childhood education, to “reform each dawn”, for a new beginning? Each re-formation a new singularity, born of experimental conjunctions and playful lines of flight. Beginning again, and beginning again, and beginning again, the always-individuation of becoming-new and becoming-different. An ethics of expression: to dance an indeterminacy for the constant individuation of singular events?
In free-falling through thesis, becoming-dance inbetween . . .

**Chaos**

**Highchair**

**Teacher**   **Expression**

**Intensity**   **Monster**

**Affect**

**Early childhood education**   **Repetition**

**Difference**

**Piaget**   **Refrain**   **Clay**

**Sense**

**Deleuze-Guattari**

**Style**

**Bee**

**Rhythm**

In a chaotic ontology of univocity, all events and practices and objects and subjects and concepts and structures are univocal, connected, immanent, so that ethics cannot take a transcendent spotlight. Does this occlude perception of an ethical stance? If there is the merest glimpse of an ethics of expression that you-me-thesis create in constructing an assemblage of highchairs, clay, earthquakes, monsters, affectensity, dancing, and Deleuze-Guattari among others, what space is there for your (reader’s) action, constituting what kinds of expressions for, around, and as reader, thesis, and ethics in early childhood education? As thesis begins to solidify and substantiate, in dance is the deterritorialisation of a refrain in order to set it free; to “release it in the Cosmos - that is more important than building a new system” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 407).
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