Becoming Earth
A Post Human Turn in Educational Discourse
Collapsing Nature/Culture Divides
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Becoming earth is about how we can write and tell stories in a way that allows us to collaborate and be stewards and partners of the (natural) world – our earth – rather than dominators of it. That is what this assemblage is about: about trying to take seriously the minor politics of sensing, experimenting with questions of attending and attuning to difference, contestation, nomadism, relationality, and permeability in sensing cultivating muchness, newness, communities of acceptance and decision making. Going beyond the binaries, dualisms, instrumentalist criteria, etc., and supplying third space conceptions of agency not tied to human action alone, but rather examining human and more-than human relational assemblages of affecting and being affected. The tasks for educators becoming not merely people who pass on traditions, institutions, systems and/or structures, but prepare for future contingent events ultimately creates vital pedagogies of many prospects in our classrooms and exceeds forms of contracts between generations. These are embodied ecologies and/or enacting ecologies in practice showing the practical and political strength of new materialisms and presenting its potential and usefulness to simultaneously work and analyse local and global political strategies and sustainability. Making virtuality productive as a form of life: our wonderings are thus always stronger than our assertions. The sometimes fierce stories in this book might light some paths.
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ANNE B. REINERTSEN

1. BECOMING EARTH

A New Materialism Turn in Educational Discourses Collapsing Nature Culture Divides or Greenish Post-Anthropocene Humanities

INTRODUCTION

I work hard with fun increasing headings to build in critical dense dynamics from the start. So I try several as I introduce the book. This is therefore a joyful cacophony of high voltage voices offering playful, earnest, challenging, and hopeful versions of our collective future in the form of creative nonfiction, fiction, art, essays, poetry, and more. Here are thus voices full of determination and power wanting more signalling new and radical directions in education ultimately also in our climate debates and more.

Take one

BECOMING EARTHLINGS AND PIKETTY TALK; THE DOUBLE(D) LOGIC OF THE GIFT

That is what this is about, and about trying to take seriously the minor politics of sensing, experimenting with questions of attending and attuning to difference, contestation, nomadism, relationality, and permeability in sensing, so I start again. But first I ask; can banks and corporations change? Is green bonds, monetizing and financialization of nature the most realistic way to go? Nature is becoming – but is already a speculation object. Banks and businesses are offering trading platforms. Ecosystem marketplaces are established to trade with e.g. carbon quotas or credits. Turning some countries into carbon hunters whilst others can pay for being allowed to go on polluting, not changing neither mindsets nor economic structures. It might turn into a prized destruction of nature. We speak of ecosystem services today: Green certificates are sometimes guaranteeing the survival of a species for 50 years. The value of the certificate may rise, but it may not … Can we – or rather actually we can – speculate in the extinction of a species let us say in 20, 40, or 50 years. The overall economic invisibility of nature is perhaps one of our biggest problems given the economic structures and our mindsets producing and maintaining them. Changing mindsets and breaking up is what we try. Who and what are we? What is our gift to us? Is it ours to have and give? What might a green stock exchange and natural capital become? Embodied ecologies, Ecological literacy; here are propositions that might create something unforeseen. Enacting ecologies in practice …

Take two
We speak of inner outer dimensions of life … – the collective social body. –
Creating conditions of possibilities for the event of learning and everyday living
democracy. – Tasting, touching, speaking, hearing, seeing, and feeling sustainable
liberation: Our lives in the eco-machine. Risk taking is doing nothing. Our journey
toward justice is lifelong … the fierce sometimes stories in this book light some
paths. Ungrammatical money languages …?

Take three

ALWAYS CONNECTED TO A POLITICAL IMMIDIACY IS
MY LIVING THE POLITICAL JOURNEY

It is about cultivating muchness, newness, communities of acceptance and decision
making. Cultivating dispositions conducive to life-sustaining entanglements, so
that we might interdependently dwell in “quiet country” spaces shaped by care and
concern for our shared lives on/with our planet.1 Infusing more perspectives from
margins; politics of the cracks.

Take four

ACTING IN THE FACE OF THE MYSTORIES OF THE WORLD

So perhaps this is not a book at all, but a rhizome and new materialism writings
understood as complexities intra-acting/intra-acted and emerging as an assemblage.
Discourses and matter are always mutually constituted/-ing in the production
of beingknowing. Matter perceived theoretically and practically as active and
agentical. Humans always recognized as products and producers thus participants
of their/our material, discursive and historical positions. It includes the non human
and the more-than human and virtuality: Human and more than human experiences
meshing with institutional policies and public life. Writings therefore attempting to
go beyond the binaries, dualisms, instrumentalist criteria etc. and also to supply 3rd.
space conceptions of agency not tied to human action alone, but rather to examine
relational assemblages of affecting and being affected.

They are not easily found. They are poetic, paradoxical, intra-inter-generational
and as stated already; human, more-than human, visible, invisible, tangible,
intangible, timeless, killed but not again and again. And the colour of green is
sometimes pitch-black.

Oh Jodi Jodi, what can I say! Strong, brave, sad, awful, real, monstrous, glorious
and and and story. I cannot say thank you but I do so not. Our brains in our hands our
measuring apparatuses (of qualitative inquiry): our lives and our pardons – yours. Imagining a better world; looking to the future with optimism and strength. I love.

This is an attempt therefore to reconsider the notion of both discourse and matter in a transversing dialogue between humanities, natural-, cultural and social sciences. It is an attempt to dwell on, discuss and show the practical and political strength of new materialisms presenting its potential and usefulness for/to simultaneously work and analyse local and global political strategies. So many possibilities, solutions, walks and talks are offered: Particular universal stories of qualia quality machineries. Passionate possibilities read on.

All/everything/always is only relationally super-, supra-positioned until something makes happen. And sometimes “I” am in a moment with an event. Properties microscopic entities existing at scales far below that where specifically biological, physical, chemical, sociological, cultural activities generally take place. With a pansemiotic perspective, such possible properties become interesting to think with. Asking hows and whys with … These are nontrivial question for the enquiring bodymind, and the sort of stuff that might hopefully shunt us outside the box to review everything that we think we understand about the workings of nature and culture both.

Sometimes one might ask; how might the monstrous help one think and imagine the world differently? How might the monster help unsettle and rethink traditional ontology, epistemology and ethics?

We write from different angles, interests, genres and subjects but as a joint innovative effort. Transitions, transformations or transpositions of discourses and matter are forcing movements- educational too, into something radically new collapsing dichotomous divides. We challenge and explore. We create durational movements.

Thank you, Patti, for your mature and experienced voice. For letting us take part in your academic travel over last decades. Simultaneously positioning and giving directions: your peaceful loving killings not: Always all paradoxical. However, ending with the hope of/for all of us; “collectively imagining sustainable possible futures via new thought and present-based practices of everyday life”. Generative generationality … Capturing the vibrancy that is currently infusing a new generation of scholars, while challenging the limitations still informed by politics and history. Let it sink in and what this nonbook perhaps is about and an example.

A CONTEMPLATING STRECHING TRAIN JOURNEY TO MY WORKPLACE

We are stretching our concepts of theory and practice, research and research methodologies. Meanings and logics are coordinate not subordinate. Similarities and differences, knowing and not knowing are equally important to investigate
further. The tasks for educators becoming that of building in a willingness to work with uncertainty, dissensus, dilemmas and paradoxes and thus simultaneously resisting conformist pedagogical consensus which may even constrain learning and change.

Thank you Valerie, for poems found or not, mine and others. You make me think. You offer ways of seeing differently. Infra-empiricism “makes sense” when you write it. Above I borrowed the stretching word from you. Poetry as research as crash as challenge. – As beauty, empowerment and ultimately studying 09.11.01 with poems and poetic thinking. Seeing the world – our earth – as poetry is making us strong. The always relevant John Dewey *Art as Experience* and on how we think and our habits stretched towards creativity as habit.

I write this introduction in the wake of the latest terror attacks in Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt/Russia, Paris/France, Bamako/Mali and Tunisia in November 2015.

I am introducing something inventing the force of becoming elaborated with this nonbook assemblage but suddenly with horror and also a train/travel to my work place and wealth, as you will soon read, thinking/feeling events and some photos. Multiplying and creating new processes for life and the imperceptible and ungrammatical beingness of engagement. I try through writing a virtual essay. At least I’ll call it that for now. It is a desire and form of life and becoming. An ongoing performance of understanding matter/mattering sciencepoetical approaches; multiparadigmatic and viral.

*So Now I Start Again*

The travel to my workplace includes a railway trip. With the view from the train windows I contemplate on past and present thinking with increasing wealth. – Perhaps … There are the station buildings from 1902. It was a time of progressing industrialization, capitalization, urbanization and migration. Here are the wonderful station buildings at Stjordal and Levanger. They were/are gifts.

[URLs and images provided]
Together we write about a preparing or preparedness for future contingent events. In a broad sense, this is therefore a practical philosophy of education assemblage. It is assemblages on pedagogies in the Twenty-First Century ultimately aiming at creating better languages; as in minor languages, for being and doing differently together. Ours is now a chance to enter the debates through merging research and advocacy through the mantra of inequality. Capital letters are gone. We are therefore all post- … something to increase our relevance:

- post-modern, -structural, -intention, -human, -anthropocene …
- post-data, -analysis, -interpretation, -representation, -truth
- post-quantitative/qualitative/ANT/mix/modal/big sciences
- post-question, -problem, -critique, -responsibility
- post-mother, -father, -us -our empty postnesses newness

Any social distance, any distance in time and space or thoughts on lack of impact and influence no longer an excuse; just perform. I must.

At the limit, the gift as gift ought not appear as gift: either to the donee or to the donor. It cannot be gift as gift except by not being present as gift … If the other perceives or receives it, if he or she keeps it as a gift, the gift is annulled. But the one who gives it must not see it or know it either; otherwise he begins to, at the threshold, as soon as he intends to give, to pay himself with a symbolic recognition, to praise himself, to approve of himself, to gratify himself, to congratulate himself, to give back to himself symbolically the value of what he thinks he has given or what he is preparing to give. (Derrida, 1992, p. 14, italics in the original)

Thank you, Louise, for your data erosions: Data as never fully known data becomings. It is what we must. De-comforting never knowable … Power not, not power, identity not, always identities or rather speaking identities into existence performing the present. It is a general becoming to come … becoming becoming. It is so important to tie this to leadership issues and professionalism in everyday everywhere life, in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) organizations and in society and our world and earth. In my own contribution somewhere in the assemblage I make such erosions conditional for performing professional infra-empiricist walks with children …

No doom and gloom thus moving beyond panic and mourning and produce a more workable platform. (Braidotti, 2013, p. 104)

What does a/the monster index in a rapidly developing technological globe where inequalities are ever-more apparent and expanding?

In short and to elaborate; these writings represent a move from the linguistic to the ontological turn in research. New technologies, cross curricular-, performance and
arts-based approaches, brain research and neurodidactics, geo-bio-nature, humusist and/or new material approaches challenge, represent and offer expanded and critical inter-/intra-relational approaches to learning and change as embedded/embodied complexity issues going beyond language, ultimately leading to dynamic and chaotic (read panedusemiotic paradoxical) understandings of knowledge and knowledge creation … learning and change. In the ethic – aesthetic – diffractive – vibration center of learning, processes of movements, dynamics and sensations are opening up new spaces not yet thought of for professional educators, turning our professional educational efforts/affects and systems into translocal and transgressive practices; movements, meanings and matterings hopefully crating vitalist pedagogies of many prospects in our respective “classrooms” and/as exceeding forms of contracts between generations. Read again and on.

There are the national oil company buildings from 1993 at Rotvoll and again at Stjørdal. As petroleum exporting nation we (Norway) now have one of the worlds’ largest public pension funds enabling us to actually buy parts of our planet and live off interest rates of our accumulated capital. What are they, these buildings? What do they do? Do they?

http://www.byggutengrenser.no/inspirasjon/statOilhydro
http://www.adressa.no/nyheter/trondheim/article82631.ece
Thank you, Nina and Nina for your in-between spaces of recycling materials, furnishings, micro-climate, objects, bodies implications. I view this as an ecology of practices that creates in excess of the human body, producing events of difference: Learning is/as an embodied act more much more. Economic-money-language again and toxic consequences … Holding the reusable materials in our hands … what else …: our brains our measuring apparatuses … – And a dance …

It is a performative moral discourse and about the transformations that I want to be a part of. I am trying to find a space for myself. My attention… My consciousness … Responsi/a/bility … as practical and philosophical processes and ethical living …

Thank you, Margaret and Frances, for your worldly methodological entanglements and their pedagogical enactments. The Love Your Lagoons Pelican Bronze Winged Pigeon Feather Storyline Bird Creation Ancestor Walks project evoked at the heart of the matter or perhaps the other way round or not and interspecies communication. Becoming … earth and me differently always … open-ended, multi sexed and trans-specied flows of becoming through interaction with multiple earth others:

Pedagogies of affect
Pedagogies of care-full observations
Pedagogies of organized chaos

A human becoming bird assemblage, I too walk and touch that theme in my sustainable eco-justice placemaking writing:

Nature/culture flows of immanence
Life-sustaining webs of movement
Justice …
Equality …
Wealth …

Perhaps I here try to do what I think this might look like? This constant confused frenetic natureculture rethinkings of myself and you…our entangled togetherness. Care and recklessness confusion … Ontological insecurities … Pedagogies of concepts (Reinertsen, in press).

Thank you, Hanna, for your profound always writing yourself stories eroding, expanding, word(l)ing swingarounds. When you jump you make me too. -And the urgency of expansions but precarious and humble. What kind of research? What kind of researchers? Lets us speak them. Bring Louise. Writing/reading/speaking/ jumping/Pessoa onwards, ho … oh … Asking post-questions about the games we play or not … Wanting to do better research … against normal …

In his book *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Piketty (2014), building on a huge amount of data on increasing structural inequalities in different countries, developed the formula \( r > g \) showing that in the world today the return on capital (\( r \)) is larger than the – or our – economic growth (\( g \)). Piketty shows that the growth of such pension funds, as one factor among others, is leading to endless accumulation, “which the inequality \( r > g \) transforms into permanent divergence in the global
capital distribution” (Piketty, 2014, p. 462). It is a formula for inequality. It is what philosophers and philosophy have told us a long time already. Come Derrida …

A formula for inequality … Barad (2007) thinkfeel that for a while … Deleuzeoguattary (1987) feelthink with it… and with the concepts of data and structure …ultimately institution … economy … ecology … sustainability …

I want these dead data to live … work … matter … thing power data explorations …? Abstractions as the ultimate expression of truth …? … Dead data but not … – killed but not. Read Patti, again. Contingent solidarities … activisms … They are possibilities not proofs. They have explanatory powers not … They are my data apology…It is just another genre that does not exist … Come Derrida …

In this assemblage we are fashioning larger-than-life images, stories, essays, chapters, assemblages that transform and metamorphose conventional representations and conceptions of collectivities, thereby enabling the invention of sustainability and a humanity to come …

Ultimately perhaps starting talking of cycles of advantages too not just disadvantage and who benefits from these cycles. My train journey through time and wealth and gifts and my rich little country my world my earth.

It is however, just another problem that does not exist … come Derrida … because in the end after singing songs together it goes away … nonproblem – nonbooks – or the immanent critique practices I want. Not debunking but as an art of dosage opening for the new and clinical practices. Read Jodi again.

Consciousness and wealth: Thinkingfeeling with wealth and/or performing wealth possibilities. Nonproblem wealthactivism … is that possible to think, and what might it do? And about the color of green again perhaps … green nonproblem wealthactivism pension funds?

This is my practicality useful utopia. MYMINORLANGUAGE – Creativitylanguages. Valerie, yes yes yes! Always and already political, intervenist…

Smuggling new ideas into the field of economics I hope … – Fighting the fight. Not aiming at winning but always a YES YES YES fighting. It is a practical edu- eco-philosophical as eco-sophy sciencing up towards Queering/Worlding/Earthling … gogogo … I am “taking a serious interest in money, its measurements, the facts surrounding it, and its history. Those who have a lot of it never fail to defend their interests. Refusing to deal with numbers rarely serves the interests of the least well-off” (Piketty, 2014, p. 577) … – Piketttalking … And Piketty’s Utopia of regulating capital in the 21st century … education/-money/-sciencing/-sensing …

But if democracy is to regain control over the globalized financial capitalism of this century, it must also invent new tools, adapted to today’s challenges. The ideal tool would be a progressive global tax on capital, coupled with a very high level of international financial transparency. Such a tax would provide a way to avoid an endless inegalitarian spiral and to control the worrisome dynamics of global capital concentration. Whatever tools and regulations are
actually decided on, need to be measured against this ideal. (Piketty, 2014, p. 515)

Our need not for structures … – and a post-anthropocentric embodied/embrained multiparadigmatic writing story of wonder essay. – Money queering worlding?

Thank you therefore, Ann Merete for your notes on worldly becomings together with child/ren/hood(s) – in the middle-of-small thing writing, respons-ability being in common with. Deconstructing, reconstituting coconstructing again and again and again always political. Re-imagining concepts; structures, things, gifts, the color of green and ourselves anew demands engagement in the profound political and generative nature of organization: your holidays in Greece twisting and turning you and me all. Refugees/war/inequality/terror again lingering … what have we … precariousness and the art of staying troubled and humble thinking again and again and again. No new dichotomies will work.

There are these newly built kindergartens. They are all wonderful, magnificent, fantastic buildings. They are gifts to me and you; our children. I wonder what they do and learning. I wonder what they do and responsibility. I wonder what they do and sustainability. I wonder what they do and me. – So now thinkfeel with the concepts of sustainability, responsibility, learning, change even … and gifts … r>g … Our little land … Child/ren/hood/s.

There is something working, pulsating, hammering … Sniff it, inhale it and let it stay with you: Your/My/Our affective bodies in the making becoming earth differently always. It is in my self-interest.
This is about the double(d) logic of gifts and vital-becoming earth – materialisms collapsing nature culture divides thus requiring new vocabularies with new figurations to refer to the elements of our embodied and embedded subjectivities. It is a form of ontological-pacifism (Braidotti, 2013, p. 86) and monistic relationality. I try fabulating (Deleuze, 1995) through writing compassionate (Braidotti, 2013) and rigorously confused (Lather, 2007). Virtual Essays as a form of Life. I thinkfeel and hope for wealth with the possibilities of green pension funds and notions of working sustainable capital. Constantly troubling the concept of enactment and enacting (real)fictions. It is a super-supra- empiricist practicality approach (Reinertsen, 2015) and/or about translocality; our main task becoming that of not passing on traditions, institutions, systems and structures, but to prepare for future generative generationality contingent events.

Thank you, Liz for being inventive in how you think and the ohs that we utter and the humming stones in our lives that prepersonal matter and you/I think a prerequisite for ecological becoming. Writing the more substantial than bodies shadows. The panX factor somewhere … Exploding nature/culture divides and/or humans in survival, inheritance and necessity together and/or thus simultaneous and again becomings coming: This collectivism in my individualism … Realities consisting of qualities in contemplating constant change, and subjectivity sensed as a force preventing randomization. The buildings might however be completely irrelevant and have perhaps nothing to do with anything … this Deleuzeoguattarian a-signifying semiotics and round and about all 1-2-3-4 … 0ⁿ parts. My wonderings are thus always stronger than my assertions. The earth is not mine, not mine to have, not mine to give, all mine, all mine to have, all mine to give.

The gift is mad. It is a madness. Like différance. (Derrida, 1994. p. 27)

Beyond ‘regimes of signs’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) thus beyond facts and fears, desire and aporetic urgency (Derrida, 1993) is allowing us to think differently about anything and any concept: concepts becoming mattering moments of “grace” (Weil, 1959) perhaps: Concepts thus working as events and actions, as experimentations with bodily affects and sensing movements, thus as forceful troubling vibrating, swinging, pan-edusemiotic – ecophilosophic desiring machines and what I/we therefore must.

Thank you, Camilla for your nagging curiosity take on ungrounding earth staying with race-events problematizations and actualizations in early childhood landscapes. Professionalism again; what, how, who, when, why might? – Spivaking storying all eventually mostly about power and performances, and Deleuzian micro mobile and non-localized connections: Some/thing/s without languages and/or/but always new starting points. I stick to that Camilla so I too start again and again. And these train-stories of yours and mine diffracting creating resisting. Engagement with creative
surfaces of thought stuttering differences from every point of views and ethics again and again and again. Always ungrammatical

So I ultimately philosophize with Derrida over the double(d) logic of gifts and through this starting to address questions about new vocabularies with new figurations to refer to elements of our embodied and embedded subjectivities ultimately creating new ontologisations: humanity all to/o human and/as exceeding forms of green sustainable contracts between generations. It is a post-anthropocentric shift towards a planetary, geo-centered perspective: New figurations combining vital personal development with societal change and sustainability. The planetary opens onto the cosmic in an imminent materialist dimension. Braidotti (2013) writes:

The pursuit of collective projects aimed at affirmation of hope, rooted in the ordinary micro-practices of everyday life, is a strategy to set up, sustain and map out sustainable transformations. The motivation for the social construction of hope is grounded in a sense of responsibility and inter-generational accountability. A fundamental gratuitousness and a sense of hope is part of it. (p. 192)

And to underline: I think hope needs its own language to materialize in our environmental and fiscal practices. Our main tools might be our words but seen as thinking-tools not primarily as tools for communication. This means opening thought beyond its articulation in language toward what Bergson (1998) called “the movement of thought,” engaging it at the immanent limit where it is still fully in the act. Solving problems of the earth through thought, as salient Einstein claimed possible. Understanding myself.

Oil, money, life, love, theory, matter, particles, pixels, ecologies, technologies, biobodycompost, community, sustainability … dream … gift … death …

I ask how much force is there in abstractions thus about the potentiality of virtuality and/or virtuality as empirical materiality ultimately making virtuality productive. It is to make both society and individuals better capable of meeting future challenges. They will come.

AND TO BE EVEN MORE SERIOUS AND A LAST START

I am pikettytalking about paradoxical pedagogical challenges in the 21st century between effects of neoliberalism and the seemingly fading importance of structural inequalities in the minds of policymakers on the one hand, and the devastating, as Piketty has documented, effects of fixed structures and instrumentalization on the other.

“The Question” – a poem – remains a testimony, in a dream, to the ghostliness of the present: a poem can no more be a gift, perhaps, than can a dream. But for just this reason the poem and the dream become privileged figures for trying to think about the gift. (Derrida, 1998 in Royle, 2003, p. 140)

A Gift might be “en presang” or “en gave” in Norwegian, “a present” maybe in English. Gift as in Giftich in German maybe and maybe in Norwegian once if we go
back in time and origin? And in English therefore a poison and poisonous too. The phàrmakon ultimately simultaneously both remedy and/or poison. No word can be given once and for all. No word has a definite meaning once and for all. To give in the meaning of giving a gift and maybe expect a gift in return may quickly turn into the German “Giftich” if the relation between the giver and the receiver is poisoned by expectations of repayment and/or returns and thereby creating debts. Therefore Derrida states that the gift is “that which one does not have” (Derrida, 1994, p. 27). As soon as we construe the gift in terms of subjects and objects, the thinking of the gift is already locked into a logic of give-and-take, circularity and exchange, conscious or unconscious reward or gratification. Further, Derrida argues:

The gift, if there is any, requires and at the same time excludes the possibility of narrative. The gift is on condition of the narrative, but simultaneously on the condition of the possibility and impossibility of the narrative. (Derrida, 1992, p. 103)

So when Derrida gives a gift it is always a gift without: a gift always, but not: Always under erasure and always after the trial and experience of aporia or this necessary aporetic analysis of gift and thus duty, both double and single or rather an “over-duty” and thus action undertaken “out of the sense of duty” and therefore (in agreement with Kant) as the very condition of morality (Derrida, 1993, p. 16).

Our building, our gifts our money … what do they do? Do they we? Child/ren/hood(s)

Thank you, dear Norman for your non-intentional guiding always setting time and space in motion, ultimately creating pedagogies from and with these not easily found concepts. The world as performance you/do/are all these things; where would we be without?

How can we not act financially sustainable and what will happen if we do not? Leaving me to me and my will thus to act morally together and with others.

With these writings I/we invite to a party of pedagogies and methods and moments of realisms thus potentiality emerging as a powerful force for adaptation and evolution holding movements of moments and situations going; creating stories that tell us that we can collaborate and be stewards and partners of the (natural) world – our earth – rather than dominators of it. Mystory.

Enjoy

NOTE

1 This is one of the questions we posed “how to” at 23rd Annual International Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Conference 27–31 October, 2015 in Dublin. We were Gaile S. Cannella, Mathias Urban, Jayne Osgood, Jenny Richie, Ann Merete Otterstad, Camilla Andersen and Anne B. Reinertsen. I hope you have some new thoughts after having read these chapters.
REFERENCES


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2. QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND THE MEASURING APPARATUS

TRACES

She fit in the corner tightly, squeezing through the seams of plasterboard. Butt to the corner, finger in mouth, blanket in hand, at once desiring to be found and wanting to disappear. Energetically calling for notice and thus signaling of mother love while yearning for seepage into the walls and thus forgetting all. No one came, and she did not disappear, so she emerged damaged.

Too much damage, tired of the story, but not enough healing to penetrate the bones. Walking in a faux confidence built on pus and maggots.

I have a vision. Exited of the womb, cleaned of blood and mucus, swaddled in a blue and white checked blanket, my mother presents me to my father. Looking at my red welted face, he says, “Oh, no, not you again.” I don’t remember him again until I am lying between his legs at the age of 3 or so trying to get milk from his penis.

I don’t really know how to tell this story, fearing you will dismiss. Yet, I must tell in “an effort to over-come a repetition that fails to put an end to forgetting and the paralysis of voice” (Clough, 2000, p. 288). Not known, yet repeating, you say you are tired of it. But, such boredom is perhaps resistance as we lack the capacity to take responsibility for our part in the demise. Our breath, even in the solitude of our apparent isolation, fabricates the tale that manifests maggots in my body.

But let’s talk of sweeter things, so you don’t turn away and abandon. That is actually a tactic of my father, “I don’t talk of negative things; I don’t know why you insist on holding onto the past.” I vibrate a resonance of guilt at my inadequacy to heal.

Oh yes, sweeter things … I ponder and pick at my memory – sunshine, lollipops and rainbows everywhere is what I am trying to find, a story to tell to alleviate the intensity. I find only a void of hazed imaginings refusing to solidify. Perhaps, that is why I lather in theory, think with theory (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012), a break from the intensity of maggots and pus and bleeding anuses and deranged neuron pathways in my brain. A head rush of desire to become (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), break the joints differently (Rorty, 1991), grab the Other by the collar (Caputo, 1993), “hold my brain in my hands” (Reinertsen, 2014, p. 256), alter the measuring apparatus (Barad, 2007).
I fell into this re-inhabited abyss of self-hatred four days ago. Two friends and their canine athletes came over Saturday to play the game of dog agility. I was excited of their planned arrival, visualizing laughter and pushing each other with giddiness of competition. All that emerged, entangled with thoughts of self-destruction: Do I say or do I silent? Do I know or do I ignorance? Thoughts that eat myself between swallows of too much beer consumed to diffract the pain of annihilation.

So how does my neurosis pertain to you? Individualism prized, should I not heal myself as you bath in the health of your narcissism? The fault, if there is such a thing, is not in our stars, it is ours – you, me, all of us, our discursive and ontological structures of agentic entanglement, and we are drowning in our own putridity.

Oh yes, sweeter things…for telling it as fathers and daughters, penises and baby skin, makes it again and again, carving deeper the pathways in my brain, the memories in my cells, the fear of my being. But how do we entangle, become differently when the past is always present in the present, its traces not erased (Barad, 2014). How do we live through/in/with the entanglement of being, becoming where the past as present does not constitute the response to the now?

REMINISCE

As a child, I wanted to be a prophet, touch faces and feet, infusing healing with a glow of white light. When I realized girls were not prophets, I meandered searching.

Still holding on to some Christian hope, I woke from the bathroom floor at a Young Christian Group meeting, smelling of vomit and bourbon and loss. Christianity abandoned, I looped cul-de-sacs with exits to alleyways best not traversed.

With a daughter to my breast and an ex-husband held away with restraining orders, I hummed mantras and chants, breathed meditations and ohms, searched for Zen and the energy that vibrated all. I still want this to be the story, but dead bodies continue to mount, babies cry, and power eats the Other to gorge its own.

In graduate school, Foucault told me of power/knowledge/truth, discourse, and sexuality. He gave me thoughts to suck and roll over in my mouth. I savored the understanding, but ended empty as I walked among suits pushing through the homeless on my way to teach at the University.

I have remained in that empty place, searching for answers in academia, theory, research and teaching. Watching as the work about which we are so excited – critically and poststructurally underpinned, consumes our mind and time as Troy Davis is executed, Michael Brown is shot, Trayvon Martin is guilty, Frank Hertel rapes his daughter and, and, and we pledge our allegiance to a flag hailed for streaming under bombs bursting in air.

So where is this going? I squeeze in corners seeking love given in the form of penises for milk while I infest with maggots and feign confidence over pus and innocent die with my/our guilt and bombs are celebrated in air while I search for a narrative that is not that will make a world better to come.
QUALITATIVE INQUIRY AND THE MEASURING APPARATUS

RESEARCH

I am an unbeliever. If phenomena emerge through the agential cut of the measuring
apparatus (Barad, 2007), what is generated in social research is that which is
constituted through the apparatus of my measurement. Keeping to my own
story, incest bodies signified as such prior to inquiry constitute an incest body
that is ontologically real through the measuring apparatus and agentially cut as a
phenomenon through each measuring intra-action, which emerges dis/continuously
my incest body in a dis/continuous time and space.

RESPONSE

“It DID happen!”
“Yes.”
“Is that because I use the same measuring apparatus?”
“Possibly.”
“How would I measure differently?”
“An intra-active methodology, thinking with Barad (2007), in a diffractive reading
that entangles the breath of cigar smoke in a never-ending apparatus…”
“Would such an apparatus stop the babies from crying?”
“I don’t know. And this is where I return, to the hopeless failure of thought to stop
babies from crying, wo/men from dying, and bombs from bursting. As Jefferson, I
am caught in a machine and know/be not how to function outside the phenomena
of my demise.”
“How do I cut myself as an electron?”
“You are.”

BARAD

1. The quantum world and the macro world follow the same principles. It is not
that the quantum world and the macro world of our everyday reality function
differently, it is only the effects in the macro world so minute, they are challenging/
impossible to detect as I walk through my living room. The light from the lamp
moves the couch just as the light in a two-slit experiment moves the platform.
2. The measuring apparatus constitutes the phenomenon measured. When electrons
are shot, one at a time, thus treated as particles, through a two-slit apparatus onto
a stable platform so that which slit the electron traveled is not calculated, a wave
pattern is produced. If a moveable platform is used so that which slit the electron
went through can be calculated, a particle pattern is produced. If one erases the
knowing of which slit the particle went through, a wave pattern is once again re-
calculated. Light is ontologically a wave or a particle according to the apparatus
of measurement, as “…the nature of the observed phenomenon changes with
corresponding changes in the [measuring] apparatus” (Barad, location 2150).
1 and 2 and thus: I am, or not, an ontologically real incested body according the apparatus of measurement. This is not relativism; I am an ontological real whose meaning, boundaries, identity, and, and, and, are phenomena which are an emergence of the agential cut of the apparatus of measurement.

3. Agency is a function of all matter. It is not a human capacity alone, but a response of phenomena in its ever-changing entanglements.

4. Respons/ibility is being. As an agential phenomena of phenomena becoming, I do not make the agential cut, but am a phenomena of the cut that is responsible for the cuts of which I am apart (in both senses). Response is not a choice, it is being. I am response and responsible for my responses in/of the appuratuses of measure of which I am a phenomena.

3 and 4 and thus: Through untangling entanglements of the phenomena of the measuring apparatus, it can entangle differently, constructing another measuring apparatus, which will produce through different agential cuts the world differently. My ethics is my response.

MEASURE

My father is a phenomena. Born in 1920 on a small farm in the Pacific Northwest in the United States to German immigrants, he is an elaborate entanglement. Although as any phenomena, I can never know his boundaries or meaning; he entangled a fear and love of power, a patriarchy, a misogyny, a narcissism, a brilliance of mind and dance, a German/Jewish work ethic, a charisma, a lust of women and children. He entangled with a woman from a nearby farm. This woman was born in 1926 the youngest daughter of Danish immigrants, often abandoned, beautiful in body, lost in soul, and too in need of love. This entanglement mattered me, wanted and resented. This phenomena of familial relations and taboos, beds, bathrooms, body parts, closed eyes and, and, and … What matters in this mattering? A patriarchy, a loneliness, a misplaced lust, a narcissism, a sadness, a man, a woman, a child, a lost? All I can think is that which has already been thought. The measuring apparatus of incest are already reliant on the ontological matter of the signifiers of its measuring apparatus.

MEASURE II

In the erasure experiment, traces remain as the which-slit information is “erased” and the wave/particle pattern complexly recalculated (Barad, 2007). It has long been known that when which-slit information is determined, a particle pattern is calculated. Yet it has now been shown that if the which-slit information is “erased,” a wave pattern is calculated. According to Barad such “erasure” does not erase the memory of the previous calculation, however. “The observed phenomenon holds the memory of the fact that the which-path information was first determined and then made to be indeterminate once more through an appropriate modification of
qualitative inquiry and the measuring apparatus

the apparatus” (location 6244). Thus, it is not that the electron was a particle and is now a wave, but that a new measuring apparatus makes a new phenomenon in which memory of the past becomes a part of the new measuring apparatus.

How then can I recalculate the mattering of incest where the traces are not insensitively and erroneously feigned forgotten, but a new pattern emerges which is? To do this, perhaps, would entail changing the semantic/ontological components of the measuring apparatus. But, this continues to be challenging to think, as I resist altering my current significations. I hold tightly the ontological signification of my terms, thinking differently makes my head hurt, my body temperature rise; I am afraid. Yet, if I continue to use the same measuring apparatus, incest will not be a trace but a continuous present.

measure iii

If agency is not an individual function, but an entangled, dynamic response, is it possible that individual action, too, is a fallacy, and action/responsibility are entangled, dynamic responses of the phenomena of which we are a phenomena? If we are an emergence of the agential cut of the measuring apparatus, all components, which is all of us and all of nature and all semantic meanings and, and, and, are responsible for the emergence, the matterings. There is no individual/ism. The response of my father is a function not of the individual man, but of the phenomena in which he emerged and entangled. In such a measuring apparatus, each of us is responsible for all responses in the phenomena. I am responsible for Troy Davis, Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, Frank Hertel, bombs, hailed flags, maggots, and … my father. A scary and foreboding thought.

research ii

Changing the measuring apparatus, as imagined above, agentially cuts qualitative inquiry differently. It is a cut in which my response becomes a trace, and diligence emerges as a line. No longer relying on an implicit individualism, an ontology which we hold with white knuckles and deny with a grim grin, the research question no longer asks of an/other – how they, individualized as the police, Islam, bombs, fathers … kill, oppress, eat … the Other, but how we, all the entangled phenomena of our phenomena – including me and you, emerge suffering.

uncertainty

Sipping sweet tea, I remember a story my father told me: A mother brought her child to Gandhi. She asked, “Please tell my son not to eat sugar.” Gandhi replied, “Bring him back in two weeks.” The mother obeyed and returned. Gandhi told the child, “Do not eat sugar.” The mother asked, “Why did not you not tell him on our last visit?” Gandhi replied, “I first needed to quit eating sugar.”
Under Mao, intellectuals were encouraged to engage in research and theory in order to divert their attention from political dissonance (Chang, 2010). I wonder if I am a pawn of such a game.

NOTE

1 Keeping to my story is an ethical choice, but one in which I believe also contains traces of a narcissistic obsession. Narcissistic, not due to the auto, but due to the plane of research as currently constructed. Social research is a practice built on the I of the researcher, whether this I is visible or feigned erased. As on the I it stands, here I center a spit of my too visible identity in order to risk fault, failure, and fracture of my own ontological narrative, rather than that of an/other. Although this appears to disallow grabbing the Other by the collar, perhaps in altering the measuring apparatus a phenomenon will cut where the traces of the past are discontinuous – as the electron jumping rings, there is no in between, there then and here now – and response is entangled not so tightly to a past in the present, but to a present in the present in its phenomenological constitution of time, space, being.

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