

Naming Enigmas

The practice of *speculative futuring* entails kaleidoscoping with mosaic shards and events that involve processes of *becoming*. This kaleidoscoping widens the practice of ‘scoping’ from focus on *becoming-teacher* to also include *becoming-WITE-program* (*Work-Integrated Teacher Education-program*) and *becoming-Inquiry-Machine*.

The concept of *naming enigmas* helps make sense of how the three entwined processes of this thesis (*becoming-WITE-program*, *becoming-teacher*, and *becoming-inquiry-machine*) create futures of difference through speculative *onto-epistemolog-ing*. That is to say, what might become when shifting from the certainty of knowledge and knowing to inquisitive modes of encountering the world.

Naming Enigmas as Becoming Worthy

Naming enigmas as concept refers to practices that suspend *representational thought* in transient encounters. Although everything keeps changing, habitual naming and the use of established categories stifle imagination and cut short what *might be*. Naming enigmas therefore involves neologism-ing haecceities – that is, the invention of language for singular compositions that resist naming.

So why add yet another concept? Because *naming enigmas* highlights how this is an active *process* that takes place in everyday encounters where life keeps offering newness. *Enigmas*, meanwhile, sustains the transcendental empiricist stance that emphasizes how there is always more to the virtual/actual real than naming admits. Naming is nevertheless also a transformational *ontological* practice that makes a cut into duration, an *arrest*, of a world that is always *becoming*.

The task is therefore to ‘become worthy of what happens to us’, as Deleuze put it ([1969]1990), through careful naming – or even by refusing naming. For naming the yet unnamed is an ethico-political act built on inclusions and exclusions.

Onto-Education

This thesis examines three interrelated processes of change: *Becoming-WITE-program*, *becoming-teacher*, and *becoming-inquiry-machine* are all experiments in their own way. The named enigma ‘WITE-program’, firstly, is an unfolding experiment with how to organize (higher) education in novel ways.

Becoming-teacher, meanwhile, is about how the actualization of a WITE-program unfolds in school assemblages. Some becoming-teachers engage in naming enigmas (go to mosaic *The Backwards Booklet*) – or even refuse naming (go to mosaic *Oh...*).

Lastly, there is *becoming-inquiry-machine* where naming enigmas is a way of inquiring. Naming enigmas is to become humble and audacious at the same time, as a side-effect of Deleuzian ontology having made words themselves volatile. At times, language becomes too stifling, which is why becoming-inquiry-machine experiments with alternative modalities to affect visitors.

Why go through all this hassle with language? Why not simply call things as we see and know them? Because the way we have grown to know the world through language was already a coarse reduction to begin with, inherited for generations and repeated to the point where we seem to

have forgotten that i) things never *were* in the first place, and ii) what they were named to be, would never come to name a returning *Sameness*, and iii) things that never *were* nor would come to name returning *Samenesses*, ought therefore not to be mistaken as things that *are*. So, continue naming enigmas – or refuse naming all together! As counterintuitive as it may seem, it appears as if the activist position Reinertsen (2021) writes about as ‘non-knowledge’ and the ‘art of not knowing’ may become particularly important *because* this thesis evolves around education¹ and learning as ‘change’ (Bodén et al., 2021). Thought and truth as stable components of knowledge, therefore, ought not be conceived as the primary objective of education:

Thought is not the grasp or apprehension of truth, and truth is not a correct idea or content. Striving for truth is still an education, a leading away from the present and self-evident, but this is not towards some already present content, but to *problems*. [...] Deleuze is critical of a truth that thought must simply represent adequately, and is critical of an education, which would consist of the formation of a correct method. ([emphasis in original] Colebrook, 2008, p. 36)

Resist correct methods, resist the illusion of correct ideas, and nurture problem-posing as practice. To call the enigma of a teacher-education experiment a *WITE-program*, and for becoming-teacher to resist naming in school encounters, and for an inquiry-machine to become puzzled by the mundane are practices that palpate truths by posing *problems*. By kaleidoscoping futures of difference, we speculate about the non-arrival of *becoming-WITE-program*, *becoming-teacher*, *becoming-inquiry-machine*. Three entwined forms of *onto-education*.

Becoming-WITE-Program

The *WITE-program* was the chosen name for the enigma of an experimental policy solution. The WITE-program sought, and still seeks, to solve problems in society and (higher) education. The new name gave leeway to experimentation and to leave established ways of actualizing teacher education. However, although actualizations of teacher becoming in school assemblages were diverse during the first semester of the program, they were not necessarily as avantgarde as the *Dala-Gathering: 9 February 2018* indicated.

One of the ‘new’ problems the WITE-program as solution comes to pose, has to do with what sets the program apart from ‘regular’ programs where students are not required to *work as part-time teachers in schools*, and that is that students *do* have to work part-time as teachers at schools. During the first semester of the program, teaching sometimes creates problems, partly as an effect of the varying affective capacities of becoming-teachers. Or rather, diversity risks *turning* into a problem. This is because the (higher) education system’s lack of experience of creating milieus that secure time and support to explore, nurture, and encourage affective modes of value for teacher becoming in the busyness of school settings.

But then again, the incentive to employ becoming-teachers in the first place was for many organizations the dire need for more *teachers* to provide relief to already overwhelmed school staff. Mapped events show how most teacher colleagues go out of their way to help becoming-teachers. And most becoming-teachers, likewise, worked well beyond planned working hours to prepare for classes and meetings (and campus courses). It is unclear, however, whether school assemblages explore capacities beyond becoming-teachers’ academic merits and prior

¹ An inquiry about the actualization of a WITE-program that explores teacher becoming in school assemblages as part of a thesis in a doctoral program.

experience from teaching. Moreover, since *children's* learning should remain the main objective in already pressured schools, organizations may even come to favor “reduction of variety” as part of learning the *organization* (Contu et al., 2003, p. 934) rather than learning the *profession*.

Teacher becoming within a WITE-program seems to be a fragile project during the first semester of the program². One way of augmenting a becoming-teacher's capacity during this period could be to create spaces where becoming-teacher might mobilize and experiment with alternative ways of knowledge-ing. And to make sure organizations secure becoming-teachers' rights as *learners* by offering the agreed upon practicum lesson from day one.

But the WITE-design was new and schools unaccustomed to having becoming-teachers in their organization. However, the question is whether this can be said to be a ‘new’ program if no practicum lessons are offered, and becoming-teachers are sent alone to teach – or at best to teach with classroom assistants. How does this differ from substituting? Also, it seems the worry about undue categorizations between professional groups might have been an analytical problem rather than an organizational one. In school assemblages, most becoming-teachers are actualized as yet another colleague, as yet another teacher. Thus, there seems to be no lack of trust in the capacities of becoming-teachers, quite the opposite; principals and colleagues might at times even forget (or perhaps ignore) that they are *becoming-teachers*. However, two organizations actualized becoming-teachers primarily as *learners* by scheduling them as assistants to qualified teachers, and with planned practicum lessons as the allotted time for teaching.

Becoming-teacher was never a homogenous category. The raw and vulnerable events where learners – children and becoming-teachers alike – are left to their own devices to solve the problems of education, are examples where education fails *learners*. That said, there are also assemblages where I would go as far as saying that it would be impossible to distinguish teachers with academic merits and teaching experience from those without. This is not to suggest that there are no differences between qualified teachers and a becoming-teacher in a WITE-program. Rather, it is to point at the myriads of encounters where becoming-teachers make successful molecular alliances through relational architecting and chromorphing that create joyous compositions with colleagues and children.

Furthermore, some becoming-teachers had already spent years fine-tuning how to teach subject content before entering the program. Amid important resources, they mention reading literature, browsing online resources, having coached sports, having had the chance to try out materials together with children in previous classes, and the help of experienced teacher colleagues. They had accordingly mobilized resources to connect with during capricious and inexorable school presents. Having tried and failed before were mentioned as important, even though the mosaics suggest that the difference that emerges in the repeated, and the intensity of classroom life, may cancel the benefits of prior experience as affects might trump what we ‘know’.

The fact that the WITE-program becomes actualized differently in each school assemblage is not merely ontologically unavoidable, but organizationally sensible. In fact, the mosaics illustrate how equivalent organizational solutions render radically different effects. Instead of seeking generalizable formats, therefore, the challenge for schools is to create a working fit between the specifics of the school assemblage and the individual becoming-teacher. And to treat the fit as temporary and unfolding – “the *present-becoming*” is after all the pedagogical argument for

² And might continue to be so.

employing a becoming-teacher in the first place, “that is, [here: becoming-teacher as] a possibility for *becoming-other* in each and every moment” ([emphasis in original] Bogue & Semetsky, 2010, p. 115).

The inexorability and capriciousness of the present are therefore not just words put into a sentence to justify an inquiry. Rather, the onto-epistemological project of education and change taken as ‘learning’ is at the mercy of present-affect. Let me try again, the onto-epistemological project of education and learning is the *proof* of the inexorability and capriciousness of the present. Had non/human bodies involved in education *not* been at the mercy of unfolding presents, then learning would be a matter of programming. There would be recipes on how to achieve desired changes in beings based on calculations made on stable variables. But there is no recipe. There are no stable variables. There is only naming enigmas. Life is a flux we try to organize and in retrospect make more or less coherent stories about – always at the expense of complexity, always at the expense of some/-thing/-one.

Lastly, change processes have already been proposed as what education is all about (Bodén et al, 2021). But even organized, normative, and measurable change processes (also labeled ‘education’, ‘teaching’, and ‘learning’), are volatile processes that leak; we can only *hope* that education produces responsible and democratic citizens by teaching a selected content in keeping with a predefined curriculum that learners then learn. But we cannot know for certain that they do. What we can know is that all bodies will be affected, although not necessarily in the desired way. But non-desired effects of organized learning processes are not necessarily *undesirable*. This is not wordplay. This is what I propose ought to be the aim of (teacher) education; instead of *judging* effects, *measuring* them, and *naming* them, (higher) education must augment its capacity to *follow and sense* the effects of affect in the flux that is reality. Because the ferality of learning sneaks through the cracks, moves through bodies, lurks in the unconscious, and makes a home in habit. If (higher) education only pays attention to the intentional sides of learning and focus on intended knowledge, then we miss out on the affect that suspends education as a teleological project in the first place, the inexorability and capriciousness of the present. And what other way is there when we are grasping for the ‘not yet’ and hoping for becomings, than to engage in naming enigmas.

Becoming-Teacher

This section is a tricky piece to put together. How so, you ask. Because becoming-teacher as *concept*, is a named enigma produced through the inquiry-machine. But becoming-teacher as the examined process under investigation, on the other hand, is also *naming enigmas*. It is the latter process that this section explores, that is, how naming enigmas is proposed as one of the affective capacities of becoming-teacher.

A routine copying goes wrong, and an entire class set of booklets ends up backwards. But becoming-teacher does not discard the copies nor deem them erroneous; instead they are brought to biology class introduced as ‘backwards booklets’ (go to mosaic *The Backwards Booklet*). A nameless mishappening transformed from mistake to a ‘backwards booklet’, a ‘silly’ incident that the class gets a laugh from each time they work with biology. Thus, naming the enigma of a silly incident a ‘backwards booklet’, comes to charge a negligible leaflet with great affective powers whilst reinscribing mistakes as imaginative openings. Mistakes go from

something to fear to something to aspire to, or as Allan puts it, as “*failing better*” and “*knowing worse*”³ ([italics in original] 2013, p. 51).

In other events, a becoming-teacher refrains from naming enigmas altogether when excited children forget that they are to listen or work quietly. Instead of rebuking unwanted behavior, becoming-teacher simply sounds a surprised *Oh...* whilst looking around the room in surprise (go to mosaic *Oh...*). The sudden sound jolts accidental lines of flight back to the lesson-territory without anyone having been shamed, no act been judged, and no time spent on decomposing relations. Thus, refusing to name enables open futures and re-drawn lines.

Becoming-Inquiry-Machine

Becoming-inquiry-machine is the actualization of a named enigma that has naming enigmas as its modus operandi. Accordingly, it is the way in which becoming-inquiry-machine inquires by naming enigmas that is surveyed in this section.

The undone ‘researcher-I’, collapsed into a *becoming*-inquiry-machine, is co-habiting on pages, living actively in footnotes. Stories in mosaics are co-produced through molecular alliances with sixteen becoming-teachers and numerous encounters in school assemblages, and then combined with ‘spark data’ (encounters with music, literature, articles etc.); inquiring cannot *but* work by naming enigmas. For it is true of becoming-inquiry-machine too, that inexorable and capricious presents have been rummaged and temporally modulated in order to make sense of how the actualization of teacher becoming works.

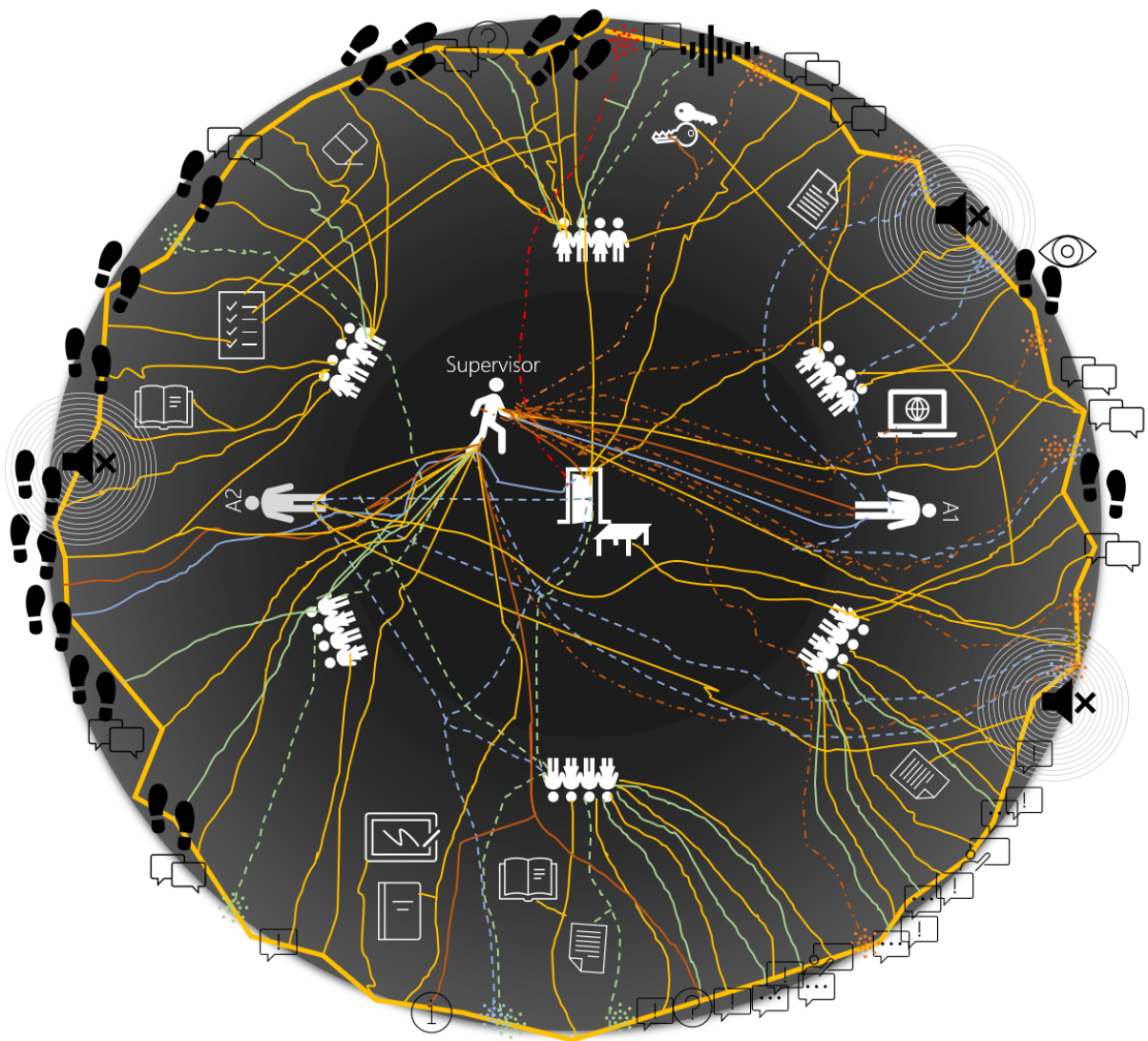
In addition to the novel concepts introduced in this thesis – which belong to the practice of naming enigmas – there are also events that evade naming and language altogether. Instead of explaining, let me show you. In the below *questions and answers* segment, questions are answered through a snippet from different mosaics. Not through traditional quotes, but through the alternative modes of knowledge-ing that this thesis suggests offer more diverse ways of inquiring.

³ The discussion draws on Deleuze and Guattari’s ([1980]1987) notion ‘creative subtraction’ and involves a third component in Allan, “*refraining from that which the student does not desire*” ([italics in original] 2013, p. 50).

Q&A

Q: What's the capriciousness of the present like?

A:



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|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|---------------------|
| | BT | | Observing | | Whiteboard-cleaning |
| | Supervisor | | Talking | | Math-material-ing |
| | Children | | Sounding | | Erasing |
| | BT | | No-one-talking | | Laptoping |
| | Supervisor | | Subject-content-teaching | | Dooring |
| | Assistant (A1 and A2) | | Subject-content-answering | | Notebook-noting |
| | Children | | Whiteboard-writing | | Hand-outing |
| | Teacher 2 | | Subject-content-asking | | Key-clinking |
| | Monitorable encounter | | Supervising | | Desking |
| | Encounter without monitorable effects | | | | |

Illustration 1: A Lesson Cartography (go to mosaic Holy Grailing)

Q: How can the sound of wordless voicelessness be described?

A:

*Illustration 2: Wordless Voicelessness (go to mosaic *Two Themes on a Silence*)*

Q: What's it like to endure violent presents?

A:

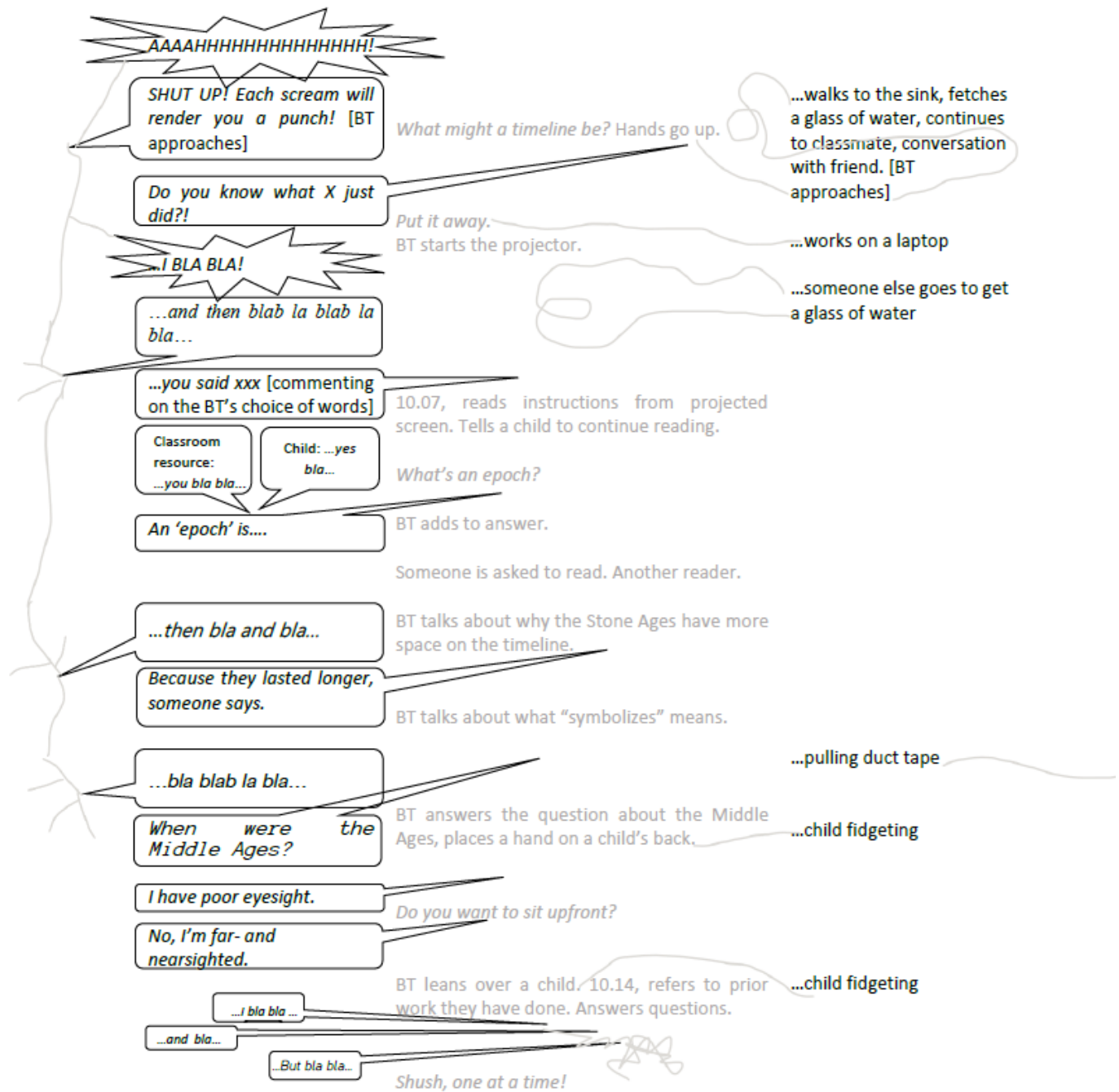


Illustration 3: Saying and Doing (go to mosaic *Two Hours before Fucking Whore*)

Q: What's it like to stay in gentle presents?

A: [Go to digital platform to listen.]

Go to mosaic *Coloring-Pencil Sound*

Q: *What's the inexorability of the present like?*

A: [Go to digital platform to listen.]

Go to mosaic *The Music of (Air)plane-Math*

Speculative Futuring

Thus, naming enigmas – or refuse naming practices all together – might be (a) way(s) of creating futures of difference that attend to new ways of, not only *speaking* about the world, but new ways of *engaging* with-in capricious and inexorable presents. Inquiring differently and knowledge-ing differently connects to new ways of doing (higher) education where we encounter and affirm the world in all its perplexity. But this requires that (higher) education engages in affective modes of being that dare to move beyond cartesian dualisms and the production of “employable students and marketable, ‘usable’ knowledge” (Sunnemark et al., 2023, p. 15).

Encounters in institutional assemblages are fragile mosaics where futures begin. To compose ‘more powerful wholes’ with non/human others in precarious times, is nothing less than an ethical practice that trumps illusory maybes built on teleological illusions. But this is never a question of anything goes, nor is it the promotion of brute and naïve maximation for its own sake; rather, the kind of education this thesis proposes, begins in the question Deleuze’s Spinoza asks: “[h]ow can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other’s own relations and world?” ([1981]1988). And yes, it is a reterritorialization of the traditional model of pedagogy where the redrawn configuration entails “the teacher who learns, the student who investigates, and the material that appears” (May & Semetsky, 2008, p. 148). We are now moving away from control societies and uniformity and transition into an education with shared responsibilities and trust where “[t]rue freedom lies in a power to decide, to constitute problems themselves” (Deleuze, [1966]1988, p. 15). Thus, embodied, affective, and experimental practices might open new vistas for teacher becoming so that what counts as knowledge and knowledge-ing, turns machinic.

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