Relational Architecting

The practice of kaleidoscoping involves *speculative futuring* with mosaic shards and events where becoming-teacher creates *molecular alliances* through *relational architecting*. The concept of *relational architecting* helps make sense of how becoming-teacher calibrates relations in tune with the spatial and material conditions in school assemblages to modulate affective capacities in *capricious* presents.

Relational Architecting as Affective Capacity

Entering a classroom and going to stand at the front of the room, going to take a coffee in a staffroom, bending over a desk to help someone, making a sprint with a cart through a corridor, fetching a teacher's key in a bag, reading a child's answers, partaking in a staff meeting, sharpening a coloring pencil, or writing with a marker on a whiteboard, are examples of bodies meeting halfway in events through *relational architecting*. Architecting creates modulations in the relational setup in medias res (e.g. mosaics *When Outside Becomes Inside, Quizzing, Holy Grailing, Tick-Tock, Tick-Tock, The Music of (Air)Plane-Math, Park of Silence*).

Relational architecting is a speculative business that modulates a body's capacity to act by calibrating existing relational configurations. Relational architecting is an effect of navigating *capricious* presents in school assemblages where unpredictable and layered events demand adjusting to minor changes in the environment. Through embodied practices, non-/human bodies calibrate relations based on spatial conditions with-in transient and morphing constellations. An encounter between bodies forms a transient event that pulls bodies from other configurations into a new relational nexus, an agitation that stirs each connecting body in an individual way. The shared event becomes a guide.

Thus, all bodies participate in the relational architecting of an encounter from its horizon of engagement; the passiveness of refusal is engagement, as is the stasis of the chair. Capricious presents and unfolding situations entail problems to be collectively solved through relational architecting. At times, institutional striation through the orderliness of classroom furniture, the gaze of a colleague, ordering of schedules, and whiteboards and markers, have becoming-teacher rest in molar coordinates. Perhaps even mimic majoritarian standards. In other words, you do as you have seen others do without considering the specifics of the unfolding situation.

On other occasions, becoming-teacher engages in experimentation by making molecular alliances. It is capriciousness as an ontological condition of the present that invites becoming-teacher to architect relations through pre-individual, often pre-conscious, and embodied enactments as part of teacher becoming. Based on mosaic events, becoming-teacher is proposed to be exhibiting the embodied affective capacity to form diverse molecular alliances through relational architecting.

Speculative Molecularity

During this first semester of a *Work-Integrated Teacher Education-Program* (*WITE-program*) where working as a teacher in a school is part of the program design, becoming-teacher may face vulnerable situations. Becoming-teacher must therefore invent solutions to the unforeseen problems of education. Like when becoming-teacher grabs hold of a child's request for permission to continue working instead of doing the instructed pausing. The child's resistance

towards the instructed pause is used by becoming-teacher as an opportunity to join forces with the child through the reply '*I don't know; you'll have to ask the chief'*. Becoming-teacher makes a molecular alliance with the child and thereby enacts a simultaneous distancing from the colleague. The colleague is positioned as the schoolteacher that instructs commands through order-words, whereas children are actualized as having rights *to* schoolwork and education, rather than rights *from* schoolwork and education (go to mosaic *Following John*).

Becoming-teachers seize unforeseen things/utterances/spaces/sounds (rhythm bodies) to change existing assemblage conditions. Like when a becoming-teacher not able to see children allocated to different spaces during group work forms repeated alliances with *doors* to annul the wall-affect. Through a form of *doorway peekaboo,* becoming-teacher calibrates spatial relations and in effect alters groupwork as an epistemic practice where the *children* were supposed to steer processes (go to mosaic *Dooreway Peekaboo*). Or when a supervisor's feedback becomes a molecular alliance as becoming-teacher takes hold of by noting it and following the advice. Relational architecting through supervisor response enables actualizing a new math introduction that better aligns with lesson objectives (go to mosaic *Holy Grailing*). Or when a descending paper airplane becomes a molecular alliance to modulating a child's expressed resistance; relational architecting transforms the paper airplane from unwanted behavior into a math incentive (go to mosaic *The Music of (Air)plane-Math*).

The Present as a Teacher's Storage Cabinet

Spatiality and matter turn into 'teachers' in capricious presents. A non/material codependence where a child's question, door, supervisor response, or paper airplane becomes someone/thing 'to do with'. But the teachers of the present are also found in virtual pasts, like the State Teacher kept alive through WITE-program courses and employer-employee agreements, through generational stories and memories of schooling, in the expectations of children, schedules, and colleagues. Whilst the past coexists with the present, the latter is nevertheless where the past can be re-formed and new future pasts be created. The present is thus the time for *becomings*.

Prospective teachers and teaching materials are consequently everywhere, in bodies encountered in corridors, assignment sheets (go to mosaic *The Music of (Air)plane-Math*), space layouts (go to mosaic *Doorway Peekaboo*), newspapers on kitchen counters (go to mosaic *Quizzing*), interests in sports (go to mosaic *Park of Silence*), knowledge in various subject areas (go to mosaic *Blank Maps*). However, not all bodies encountered *are* selected. Rich and chaotic school spaces, impossible to distinguish as work *or* education, distraction or potential, must continuously be carved out and actualized as 'school assemblages'. A simple coffee in the staffroom is labor that requires actualization of the 'teacher colleague' through banter and topics affirmed as 'teacher-talk'.

Accidental encounters therefore come to *in*-form the actualization of a teacher-function through relational architecting. Teacher becoming is for this reason a volatile project that builds on experimentation with the virtual/actual proximities in capricious presents. The capricious present is accordingly actualized as a teacher's storage cabinet, wherein becoming-teacher through a process of selection and exclusion territorializes the teacher-function through relational architecting. But territorialization is a fragile project, too experimental and the actualization risks rejection – no one may want to twerk along with a reindeer (go to mosaic *The Music of (Air)plane-Math*).

Although all becoming-teachers demonstrate the capacity to engage in relational architecting, this does not mean that all molecular alliances become joyous encounters:

> When a body "encounters" another body, or an idea another idea, it happens that the two relations sometimes combine to form a more powerful whole, and sometimes one decomposes the other, destroying the cohesion of its parts. (Deleuze, [1981]1988, p. 19)

Formal education and lesson plans play a part in the actualization of education, but neither can prepare becoming-teacher for the encounters with intensive affects. The intensity of a classroom full of rhythm bodies to ally with and with limited time to architect (go to mosaic *Holy Grailing*), make each encounter a chance/risk. Making alliances that form 'more powerful wholes', is after all an exhausting process that entails making inclusions and exclusions whose effects no one can know in advance.

The Present and Ethics

Teacher becoming and the actualization of school presents are *ethical* projects. Becoming-teacher can quit the program and quit teaching if things become unbearable, and a school unit can fire a becoming-teacher. Children, meanwhile, are legally bound to be in school. A teacher's capacity to create more 'powerful wholes' will therefore become the collective responsibility of (teacher) education and society (at large). The guiding question for all institutional work is therefore, "[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, p. 126).

"Six children sit quietly" is an easily missed phrase in the mosaic *Two Hours before Fucking Whore*. Six children in a classroom with a becoming-teacher and two classroom assistants. Six children waiting in silence enduring raw exchanges involving derogatory language and classmates running around doing errands, all in the presence of three adults in the room[1]. Becoming-teacher desperately tries to organize the space, but instructions take too long, and children not sure what to do begin talking, fetching glasses of water, or simply call out random things into the room. All the while two more education representatives make targeted attempts to keep things calm. Relations decompose one another. Not just during this lesson, perhaps not just during this day.

Having prior experience of teaching might increase a body's capacity to create more powerful wholes (see for example mosaics *Blank Maps* and *Park of Silence*), but when introducing a new assignment in an encounter with thirteen children and two classroom assistants it is not a guarantee. The crescendo that comes to climax in chaos while 'six children sit quietly', involves an assignment that has children grouped to either write about history, *or* draw a historical event, *or* draw a straight timeline for the ensuing one-hundred-and-five minutes. In the staffroom an hour earlier, becoming-teacher has tried to get feedback on the proposed design.

Despite what the 'what works'-strand contends, one seems to never know beforehand what might work and how. But

> [i]t is not that we have to abandon regularity, patterns, statistical rules or probabilities. It is that these are only ever a partial representation of real processes and, if they are taken as the best or only way of relating to future events, they lead to a

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[1] Plus one inquiry-machine.

fundamental misunderstanding of the open nature of the future. (Williams, 2011, p. 117)

So, if we think of the past and future as part of capricious presents, then all experiences – even sad encounters and a *fucking whore* – might become resources to pull from in future capricious presents to augment one's power to act and effectuate new *becomings*. However, so might a discussion about a lesson plan with a teacher colleague. This inquiry has observed a lack of these conversations, but it was never a question about unwillingness on either part. There was just no time to sit down together. Feedback was provided between sips of coffee based on fragmented lesson ideas. What becoming-teacher failed to mention or anticipate was the thirty-minute instruction, or that the design of the thematic project in its execution divided tasks according to subject. That is, the thematic project was undone through design error. Relational architecting, therefore, also entails the capacity to make molecular alliances with subject content and lesson plans. And if you do not know the subjects, then alliance-making turns into Meno's paradox.

More adults in school assemblages may therefore not necessarily solve the problems of education. More adults can result in two more school representatives that children see bearing witness to chaos without having the tools to secure children's rights as learners. And what about becoming-teacher's rights as a learner? Perhaps more adults in school are the solution to a false problem? Or perhaps the problem is how education is organized in the first place? For children to have more adults in their lives seems a promising alliance for both children and adults in the making of futures of difference.

References:

Deleuze, G. ([1981]1988). *Spinoza, practical philosophy*. City Lights Books.

Williams, J. (2011). *Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of time: a critical introduction and guide*. Edinburgh University Press.