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# Political Love and SpaceTime Disturbances: Reimagining Parenting and Disabled Childhoods Beyond Neoliberal and Developmental Discourses

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## Abstract

This thesis makes trouble for the ways in which the dominant discourses of neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism shape the lives of four parents of disabled children. These discourses are critiqued in the context of the ongoing social injustices that they relationally produce by virtue of Othering against an idealised neoliberal-ableist 'self'. Unilinear developmental trajectories and expectations are troubled for the ways in which they deny the lively non-linear temporalities disabled children intra-actively produce.

Through engagement with an agential realist framework and dishuman theorising a theoretical space is opened from which new generative stories of possibilities beyond dominant discourses can enfold dynamically with the world. Agential realism entangles as a framework to understanding knowing from within, as an ongoing part of the world. Dishuman theorising entangles to disrupt the binary separations of idealised human identity and open to non-binary understandings of differencing as an ongoing relational process of identity production. Picture mappings created by the parents and intra-actively produced re-searching conversations entangled as human and non-human data companions.

Together with data-companions an analytical process of generatively *making-with* data unfolded through the chasing and tracing of moments of intensity that made themselves matter. These moments connected to produce generative stories across the data that return parental love as a political concept from which new and deeply ethical stories of collective parenting can be told. A second connective web of stories re-turned temporalities to open to stories of disabled childhoods beyond the rigid and pre-determined linear temporalities of psy-developmentalism. This thesis enfolds new stories and possibilities for understanding parenting and disabled childhoods beyond the current dominant discourses through which these identities are currently understood.

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## Declaration

I, Martina Smith, confirm that this thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means ([www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means)). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

## Plateau 1... Becoming (A) Thesis

Signify both the woven material and the spoken word.  
Life is a perpetual to and fro,  
A dis/continuous releasing and absorbing of the self.  
Let her weave her story within their stories,  
Her life amidst their lives.  
And while she weaves,  
Let her whip, spur, and set them on fire.  
Thus making them sing again.  
Very softly, a-new a-gain.

Trinh, 1989, p.128

### 1.1 An Invitation to Entangle

This thesis is becoming an ongoing trouble-maker for the inseparable material and discursive worlds that (re)configure parents with disabled children. Making trouble has become an ongoing academic practice of ethical collective response-ability. A practice of theoretically disturbing and disrupting dominant humanist discourses that (re)produce persisting patterns of injustices through these worlds (Haraway, 2016a). The need for re-configuring beyond these patterns of injustice is urgent; disabled children and their parents frequently encounter “multiple discrimination, low expectations and many physical and social barriers to full participation in society” (Read, Clements and Ruebain, 2006, p.18). Injustices are perpetuated by the ongoing discursive practices of neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism that are held to account throughout this thesis for their unjust and exclusionary material consequences (Barad, 2007).

Neoliberal-ableism entangles as a discursive-materialization of neoliberal capitalism’s relentless productions of ableist demands and discriminatory naturalisation of hyper-normative citizenships (Goodley, 2014). Psy-developmentalism entangles as prescriptive discourse that materializes normative and universalised trajectories of becoming-child (Klein and Mills, 2017) that inextricably intersect with cultural and economic developmental policies and practices (Burman, 2008).

These dominant discursive practices are not considered through the habitual lens of representationalism that misappropriates power to language denying human and non-human matter its agency in becoming (Barad, 2007). Representationalism misses the

“truths we don’t suspect” (Fulton, 2001, p1) as it is epistemologically pre-occupied with truths born of ‘correct’ and fixed language-thing correspondence (Barad, 2007). Discursive-material practices are rather understood as “that which constrains and enables” what is knowable-in-being from *within* (Barad, 2007). There are material consequences inextricably bound to the discursive articulations that are made to matter and those which are excluded from mattering (Barad, 2007). Re-patterning beyond the injustices perpetuated by the limits of what is knowable as truth demands an ongoing response-ability to the ways in which “representationalism, metaphysical individualism, and humanism work hand in hand, holding this worldview in place” (Barad, 2007, p.134). Making trouble, this thesis disrupts the forces maintaining this worldview to open to (im)possibilities for new stories to be told that undo these intra-acting components (Barad, 2007).

This humanist worldview perpetuates a dominant ideologized identity against which difference is condemned to the realm of inequitable Other (Trinh, 1988). Othering and differencing are understood throughout this thesis as inter-sectional practices of marginalization of all those medicalised, pathologized “sexualised, racialised and naturalised” (Braidotti, 2013, p.15) identities to whom humanism responds with “not-I” (Trinh, 1988, p.1). The self of humanism (I) imposes a divisive binary of Other (not-I) that persist as the representational mode of understanding and enacting difference and identity (Barad, 2014). This thesis makes trouble for the humanist forces that perpetuate this mode of differencing. There are other ways to understand differencing but to do so means creatively opening to (im)possible new stories that do not orbit huMan as “the centre around which the world turns” (Barad, 2007, p.134).

Decentring the huMan does not seek a new centre for new orbits, for orbiting risks perpetuating cycles of more and more of the same. Critically, decentring human is not to abandon categories of human either but insists on a framework that attends to the ongoingness and indeterminate nature of human identities as an inextricable part of the non-human matter and practices through which they are produced (Barad, 2007). Barad’s agential realism is theorised as a deeply ethical framework through which this theorising is taken up throughout this thesis (Barad, 2007); ethics, ontology and epistemology are inseparable thus moving beyond the “well-worn debates that pit

constructivism against realism, agency against structure and idealism against materialism” (Barad, 2007, p.26). It is through this framework that theorising beyond humanism and its entangled hyper-individualism and normative ideologies is re-turned, re-patterning a Baradian agential humanism that diffractively entangles with Goodley and Runswick-Cole’s (2016) dis/human theorising.

Agential humanism theorises the differential materializations of bodies as a part of the world, produced by and as a part of ongoing agential intra-actions (Barad, 2007).

Barad’s ‘intra’-action is a neologism that “signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies” (Barad, 2007, p.33). Intra-actions as mutually relational entanglements undo the fixed individualism of representational humanism (Barad, 2007). There is no pre-determined inter-acting of separate individuals only ongoing emerging distinctions of differencing that are never entirely separated (Barad, 2007). I theorise the agential human as a site for diffractively entangling Goodley and Runswick-Cole’s *dis*/human (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). The ‘dis’ is situated inextricably with the human category to assert disability as an ongoing differencing of *complete* and equitable humanness (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). It explicitly values and affirms the ways in which disabled children re-turn the ongoing meaning of becoming human (Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016).

Entangling an agential dishumanism opens to new possibilities for mutually dependent, emerging bodily productions that assert differencing in other ways beyond the binary separations of pre-determined individualism (Barad, 2014). Agential dishumanism entangles with posthuman theorising of nomadic subjectivity that is mutually and relationally becoming (Braidotti, 2013). Taking heed of Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard and Runswick-Cole’s (2020) concerns that posthumanism “is being fervently adopted without a recognition of race, class, sexuality, gender and disability” (p.8), it is an agential dishumanism that is taken forward and enfolded into the world theoretically to explicitly maintain engagement with ongoing and persisting humanist discourses and their material consequences (Goodley *et al*, 2020).

I entangled with the discourses that run through this thesis years before I entangled with the discursive-material practices of doctoral research. These discourses materialised my identity as a parent to a child with disability, materially produced with

and by multiple labels of special educational needs (hereafter SEND). This position within is not understood as a traditional 'insider' researcher position that assumes there is an oppositional position of absolute exteriority (Barad, 2007). It is rather an ethico-ontoepistemological shift away from absolute separations of human and non-human matter, space and time towards "practices of knowing-in-being" (Barad, 2007, p.185). My entanglement is understood as agential; becoming parent-researcher with and through the parents who have become research companions, among the many other human and non-human companions who entangle and re-pattern the thinking-writing-theorising-practices that are woven throughout this inquiry.

I offer an invitation to intimately entangle with lively theory, chasing its momentary pauses, breathing in that which has been made to matter before the world (re)configures a-gain (Barad,2012). There is no other way but to get close, to touch and breathe in the "synesthetic force" (Barad, 2012, p.1) of theory. To set world's on fire to be discursively-remattered again and again and again. Keeping "theories alive and lively is being responsible and responsive to the world's patterning and murmurings" (Barad, 2012, p.1) and is an ongoing task to which I entangle Goodley *et al's* (2020) assertion that "community is everything" (p. 16). I am becoming guide for companions entangling with and through this thesis but I feel, sense and know-from-within that this thesis has never only been mine.

### **1.1.1 Research Aims**

The task of this thesis is to disrupt and make trouble for the ways in which dominant discourses of neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism materially produce injustices in the lives of parents as entanglements with their disabled children. These representational humanist discourses are challenged by theoretically re-turning the experiences of parents of disabled children within an agential realist framework (Barad, 2007). Theoretical engagement with agential dishumanisms disrupts binaries of individualism to open to new possibilities for affirmative and equitable ways of understanding differencing in the stories of parenting and disabled childhoods.

The ethico-ontoepistemological framework that situates this research does not seek definitive answers to fixed questions but takes up the following points from which to

depart and re-turn, becoming ongoing and (a)lively re-searching entanglement (Barad, 2012).

The departure points for this inquiry are:

- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring disabled childhoods beyond neoliberal-ableist developmental expectations.
- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring neoliberal parenting beyond individualism towards possibilities for relational agential dishuman commoning.

To depart and re-turn with these points, four parents with young children identified as having special educational needs and disabilities entangled with this re-search. With and through an agential realist framework I signal to the indeterminate and intra-relational nature of identity production, recognising the parents as human companions playing an agential part in the discursive-materializations of this thesis (Barad, 2007). Barad's concept of intra-action is crucial to the understanding of the way in which this thesis entangles human and non-human companion identities (Barad, 2007); articulating the "mutual constitution of entangled agencies" (Barad, 2007, p.33). Identities, indeed the differentiation between human and non-human categories, are neither fixed nor pre-determinable (Barad, 2007). They are always considered as relational enactments together with the disabled children who shape the stories shared in this thesis, the researcher, theories, data and other human and non-human elements that makes themselves matter (Mazzei, 2013).

## **1.2 Entangling Dominant Discourses**

Moss (2019) defines representational dominant discourses as those which "have a decisive influence on a particular subject...by insisting that they are the only way to think, talk and behave, and that they are the only reality" (p.5). These discourses impose powerful claims to truth that eclipse other possibilities for other truths to be enfolded into the world (Moss, 2019). They do not present as a perspective or opinion but as unchallengeable assertions of 'fact' and 'common-sense' (Harvey, 2005). I entangle these discourses and an overview of the stories they tell to contextualise the thesis and the research aims. I am tentatively comforted by Moss (2019) that dominant discourses

do not entirely eclipse contestation. If serious challenge is to be made to these discourses, it is through collective resistance (Harvey, 2005). Beyond individualism, the response-ability “is not ours alone. And yet our responsibility is greater than it would be if it were ours alone” (Barad, 2007, p.394). Our collective discursive-materialisations, our intra-actions matter as we play a part in (re)configuring the world at each moment of its possible re-turning (Barad, 2007). These then are outlines of the discourses that this thesis confronts; becoming a part of an ongoing collective resistance to narratives that shape the lives of disabled children and their parents. Intra-active connections growing through the ongoing murmurings of revolutionary thinking-practices that insist that there are other stories to be told, other worlds to be made possible (Moss, 2019). Kinder worlds to come than those produced and defined by the discourses outlined below.

### **1.2.1 Dominant Discourse ↔ Neoliberal-Ableism**

Goodley (2014) coined the neologism *neoliberal-ableism* as “a logic that pursues the (hyper) normal” (p.21). As a dominant discourse it situates ableism as entanglement intra-actively produced with and by the political-economic ideologies of the neoliberal project (Harvey, 2005). I first attend to outlining the “ableist project” (Campbell, 2009, p.3) that co-constitutes this discourse before situating it intra-actively as entanglement with neoliberalism’s project and the children and parents produced and desired in these contexts.

#### ***Discursive-Materializations of Ableism***

Ableism- a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produce a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore essential and fully human. Disability, then, is cast as a diminished state of being human.

Campbell, 2001, p.44

It is through this network of beliefs that ableism materially produces individualised disabled identities as de-valued against an idealised able-bodied normative subjectivity (Campbell, 2009). Wolbring, Deloria, Lillywhite and Villamil (2019) articulate this network succinctly as an ongoing site of “conflict between the ‘ability haves’ and the ‘ability-have-nots’” (p.450). Humanism’s meta-individualism is set to work through this

project, attributing high value and desire for the able-bodied 'I' that differences itself from a devalued, undesired 'not-I' disabled body (Campbell, 2009). This differencing materialises the enactment of exclusion from the 'full' category of idealised able-bodied humanness rendering the disabled identity as "quasi-human hybrid and therefore non-human" (Campbell, 2009, p. 7).

Ableism is not understood inter-changeably with *disablism* (Campbell, 2009) but is situated within Goodley's (2014) dis/ability context that "requires us to think simultaneously about the processes of disablism and ableism, and how each nurtures the other" (Goodley and Lawthom, 2019). Disablism attends to the inequitable treatments and Othering of people identified or assumed to be disabled (Campbell, 2009). Disablism focuses on the not-I as devalued against the binary 'I' of non-disabled, idealised and dominant self (Goodley and Lawthom, 2019). Disablism, sexism, racism, ageism, homophobia, transphobia are all subjugated to the Otherised space of the 'not-I' (Goodley and Lawthom, 2019); exteriorised against a dominant 'full' human ideal. Ableism shifts the focus from disablism and the Other to trouble the "production, operation and maintenance" (Campbell, 2009, p.4) of the dominant 'I'. Ableism is something that entangles with us all through our ongoing intra-active entanglements with the socio-economic practices that shape and advocate an increasingly prescriptive individualistic ideal (Goodley and Lawthom, 2019). I now turn to outline the neoliberal socio-political context through which ableism is naturalised and permitted to flourish.

### *The Neoliberal-Ableist Context*

Neoliberalization has enfolded as an increasingly intense political economic globalization project stemming from the late 1970s (Harvey, 2005). Subsequent decades have witnessed "intensified global flows of people, capital, commodities, technology, and ideas over and across the borders of nation states" (Ranta, 2018, p.3). As a model of economic thought and practice, neoliberalism asserts its truth that the well-being of humans is best attained through the retraction of the state in provisions of welfare whilst simultaneously increasing privatisation and deregulating markets (Harvey, 2005). For a dominant discourse to flourish and embed as 'common sense' truth it must convincingly appeal to the values and desires of citizens (Harvey, 2005). Neoliberalism cavorts as an alluring alternative of individual dignities and freedoms



against the regimes of communist dictators and fascist rule (Harvey, 2005). What has happened however is an increasingly skewed accumulation of wealth and restoration of power for elites in an intensely palpable class system (Harvey, 2005). The dreams of individual freedoms have essentially legitimized the restoration and growth of wealth and power for an elite whilst exacerbating inequalities for the majority (Harvey, 2005).

Thatcher's well-known declaration that "they are casting their problems on society and who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families...it is our duty to look after ourselves" (Thatcher, 1987, p. 28) is a moment that conveys succinctly the withdrawal of social and community unanimity via neoliberalization in England (Harvey, 2005). This disbanding of social state responsibility and increasing privatisation has shifted the social projects of state welfare into a neoliberal project more aptly understood as the "workfare state" (Soldatic and Chapman, 2010, p.141). The workfare state demands and values work-ready, adaptable and productive individuals (Goodley, 2014). The market is now intra-actively producing citizenship identities and shaping the ways in which humans are valued and understand their own isolated, individual value (Goodley, 2014). The neoliberal-self entangles and shapes the dominant ableist ideal of the 'I'; constructing market productivity and value on a basis of able-bodiedness and psy-defined, naturalised notions of cognitive ability (Soldatic and Chapman, 2010).

Against this dominant neoliberal self all else is measured. Those with disability and caring needs or those entangled lives engaging in unpaid caring duties are "the quintessential Other of neoliberal-ableist society" (Goodley, 2014). This succinctly captures the ways in which the parents entangling through this thesis risk exclusion from valued citizenship. I am shaken as I re-turn with this sentence and battle to fight the intensity of the neoliberally shaped thoughts that cruelly whisper that the decade I have spent caring is 'lost'. What I might have 'lost' economically in both production and consumer-ability must not eclipse that which I have gained as a parent-carer in ways that neoliberalism misses, eclipses and fails to value.

For children, this compulsory neoliberal-able-bodiedness entangles early on in early educational settings as they are positioned as:

A stable subject and fixed entity, with an essence that can be known, represented and predicted; a reproducer of knowledges and values, whose task it is to acquire what we, in the adult world, have designated as normal and necessary.

Moss, 2014, p.45

For young disabled children this pursuit is the beginning of ableist redemptive interventions based on normative ableist ideals that promise measurable economic returns; a story Moss (2019) has articulated as the “the story of quality and high returns” (p.19). This story is one of neoliberal allure; promising early education and interventions as a ‘fix’ for much wider socio-economic inequalities (Moss, 2014). This story is saturated with individualism and embeds the ableist ‘I’ from the get-go as children are measured and sorted by virtue of conformity to universalised developmental expectations and “mandated learning goals” (Moss, 2014, p.41). Later failures to achieve an economically valued neoliberal citizenship are attributed to the individual; a neoliberal blame-game that eclipses the need for “redistributive policies and strong welfare states” (Moss, 2014, p.40). The neoliberal-ableist ‘I’ purports as a site against which the complexity and diversity of intra-active becomings are rendered less than. Yet when the intra-actively produced stories of neoliberalism and ableism are held to account, the Othered sites become sites of possibility for new stories. Stories of resistance to the economization of human identities (Tan, 2014) and stories of re-claiming the ‘I’ that has been captured and misappropriated by neoliberal-ableism for too long.

### ***1.2.2 Dominant Discourse ↔ Psy-Developmentalism***

The second dominant discourse with which this thesis re-turns and becomes trouble-maker is the naturalised and universalised discourse of developmental psychology (Burman, 2017a). Developmental psychology is critiqued for its pervasive influence in the ongoing productions of a pre-determined, normative child through linear and evenly-spaced stages in time (Sellers, 2013). Time as unchallenged, as an absolute and uniform background through which the child travels and ‘develops’ is un/done in plateau 8 of this thesis. Development in this context is always pre-occupied with goals and children that do not yet exist. Through psy-developmental practices “we start with the end” (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p.16) and manage to miss the richness of the world’s

children and specifically in the context of this thesis, the rich lives of disabled children that are intra-actively produced with the humans and non-humans entangled with them (Barad, 2007).

A psy-conceptualisation of child development positions all children as “quasi-human” (Sonu and Benson, 2016) as a means of de-valuing the child by virtue of not yet having acquired the psychological attributes that define adulthood as a state of complete humanness (Sonu and Benson, 2016). This becomes a site of inter-sectional marginalisation as children are further de-valued by developmental disabilities and fixed differences. This linear process that assumes ‘natural’ and normative developmental progress is understood as *developmentalism* (Murriss, 2016). I utilise the terms *psy-developmentalism* to explicitly situate the increasing “mobilisation of psy-expertise” (Klein and Mills, 2017, p.1990) in developmental discourses. Psy-developmental discourses are understood throughout this thesis as inextricably linked to other modes of developmentalism, entangling socio-economic national and global projects that contextualise and shape the psy-development of the individualised child (Burman, 2008). These entanglements unfold explicitly in Plateau 4 where trouble is made for the literature shaping dominant conceptions of developmentalism’s child. As introductory contextualisation in this chapter, I briefly outline the modes through which psy-developmental discourses produce a representational figuration of the psy-scientific child and begin to open towards departure points for critiquing this configuration (Murriss, 2016). I then contextualise parents as representationally produced by this discourse.

### ***Beyond the Representational Psy-Developmental Child***

Developmental psychology is the primary discipline through which children’s development is theorised and early childhood educational and healthcare practices and policies based (Murriss, 2016). Psy-developmentalism is articulated as an innate, universal process of growth and maturation through a pre-determined unilinear set of stages (Burman, 2017a). The figuration of a biologically-determined child-through-stages has been aptly termed “Piaget’s child” (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999/2013, p.49) as a nod to the profound influence of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development (Burman, 2017a). Although subject to contestation and rigorous debate, Piaget’s theory

nevertheless remains an ongoing fixture in the teachings of child development (Burman, 2017a). This biological figuration of maturation and acquisition of skills has a host of popular visual metaphorical associations, such as acorn to mighty tree and bud to full bloom; all cementing the naturalisation of something 'not-yet' finished and a highly-desirable end-state of completion (Burman, 2017a).

Despite recent shifts towards explicitly exploring and celebrating very young children's expertise and competencies (Burman, 2017b), developmental psychology's entanglements with disabled children are still dominated by processes and assessments to ascertain that which is 'lacking' and that which resists normative pre-determined developmental expectations (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 1999/2013). Barker and Mills (2017) highlight the growing mobilisation of developmental psychology within educational settings to not just underpin pedagogical philosophies and policies but as an ongoing and responsive-mode of problematising and pathologizing children. For children who are problematised and pathologized, failure to progress through stages or meet the maturational goals of "autonomous, self-regulating and responsible citizens" (Greenstein, 2016, p.49), the material consequences can be profound. The child who develops Otherwise to prescriptive linear stages and fails to meet age-defined goals risks being denied the rights, the response-abilities and aspirations afforded to 'fully' matured adults (Greenstein, 2016). There is essentially no getting off the developmental trajectory before the completion of a fixed and final 'adult-state' goal and for disabled children that means life-long exclusion from developmentalism's 'fully human' adulthood (Greenstein, 2016).

### *The Representational Psy-Developmental Parent*

Psy-developmentalism inextricably entangles with parents as a figure for providing and supporting their child's development (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2011). Whilst a neoliberal government increasingly withdraws from state social provisions and welfare, paradoxically, parenting is increasingly considered as an individualised site of governance and surveillance (MHCLG, 2018). The child as biologized developmental site for intensive parental nurturing reaches an intense crescendo in policy in relation to the earliest years of life (Allen, 2008). The foundations are, according to parliamentary research, simple:

Many of the costly damaging social problems in society are created because we are not giving children the right type of support in their earliest years, when they should achieve their most rapid development

Allen, 2008, p. xiii

The universalised developmental articulation of a critical period of development is troubled through this thesis as reductionist and ableist. The disabled child is positioned to face the spectre of the Other directly in their formative years by virtue of contestable developmentalist discourse. Along the same foundations, “inadequate parenting” (Allen and Duncan Smith, 2008, p. 16) is separated and held in isolation from intra-acting socio-economic entanglements that intra-actively produce children and their parents. I am not questioning the criticality of intervention for children at risk of harm and neglect but am critical of the developmentalism that underpins notions of ‘good parenting’ in England in relation to normative child developmental expectations.

For parents of children with disabilities, becoming “both producer and consumer of psychoknowledges” (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018, p.235) is an ever-naturalising expectation in neoliberal times (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018) and a site of increasing precarity through unduly individualised parenting discourses (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). This thesis sets to work to make trouble for the discursive universalisation, naturalisation and pre-determinate foundations of psychodevelopmentalism through troubling the power afforded to both the scientism and language that sustain this dominant discourse (Barad, 2007).

### 1.3 Meeting This Thesis Halfway

Not even a moment exists on its own.  
“This” and “that”, “here” and “now”,  
Don’t pre-exist what happens  
but come alive with each meeting.

The world and its possibilities for becoming are re-made with each moment.

Barad, 2007, p.396

Meeting this thesis halfway is an invitation to become aware for the part you play in re-configuring this research-writing-thinking entanglement into the world through your intra-actions with and through it. The task is not simply to read and reflect back more of the same (Barad, 2007) but to (re)configure this thinking-writing-researching inquiry anew, opening to re-patterning (im)possibilities as this thesis is enfolded again into the

next moment of the world's becoming (Barad, 2007). In this section I outline the agential realist framework through which this thesis is onto-epistemologically contextualised. I then convey how this thesis is intra-actively assembled as rhizome and discursively (re)-produced through entangled encounters.

### ***1.3.1 An Agential Realist Framework***

This inquiry set to work to seek new possibilities for new stories of parenting and disabled childhoods beyond the dominant discourses outlined above. The task became entangled with Haraway's (2016a) invitation to participate in in other genres of writing-in-thought that are "committed to strengthening ways to propose near futures, possible futures, and implausible but real nows" (Haraway, 2016a). This re-searching genre is one that un/does the theory/practice divides that persist in the habitual modes and myriad of intra-active contexts through which parents and their disabled children are understood (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). This genre of writing is not neutral or exterior but an intra-active discursive-material commitment to seeking other possibilities and enfolding them into the world(s) that are re-made at every moment and of which this thesis is a part (Barad, 2007). Meaning is not representational but is materialised through each intra-active encounter (Lenz Taguchi, 2010). For a genre of ongoing intra-actively produced material-discursive stories that are fundamentally inseparable from the worlds with and through which they are (re)produced, new ways of inseparable knowing-in-being(becoming) with the world are required.

Barad's (2007) agential realist framework provides the theoretical tools through which to intra-actively engage in thinking-writing "beyond the well-worn debates that pit constructivism against realism, agency against structure, and idealism against materialism" (Barad, 2007, p.26). Ontology, epistemology and ethical practices are inextricably bound in an agential realist framework, producing an ethico-onto-epistemological mode of engagement through which to re-search (Barad, 2007). Agential realism draws on quantum theoretical foundations to assert that humans are a part of the entangled multi-species, non-human, material, space and time with which knowledge is produced (Barad, 2007). The diffractive patterning of the quantum world offer new ways to understand difference-production beyond the binaries upheld by humanism and Newtonian physics (Barad, 2007). What lies beyond the easy-gaze of the

human in the micro-quantum world offers a far more complex patterning of differencing as something ongoing that resist the human habits of absolute separations and divisions (Barad, 2012).

### *1.3.2 Lively Rhizomatic Writing(s) and Constellations*

In seeking new stories through this agential-realist framework and opening to new possibilities for knowing-in-becoming with parents and disabled children, this thesis and I intra-actively re-configured with and through many places; never alone. Staying in the middle, for this inquiry is always re-configuring from *a* middle (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), I learnt how to write-think-practice-research beyond the confines of what Daly (1973) terms “methodolatry” (p.11). Beyond methodolatry, re-searching un/does the pre-determined fixed modes of inquiry that dictate the limits of what can be done and what can be known (Daly, 1973). I theoretically dance with the post-qualitative (St. Pierre, 2018) but do not settle as Barad’s quantum entanglements un/do the temporalities through which post-qualitative inquiry is understood. This is not the “always new” (St. Pierre, 2018, p.7) of the post-qualitative as that implies a linear temporality that dis/connects from the past. This is about writing in Haraway’s (2016a) thick present and Barad’s dis/continuous enfoldings of spacetime (Barad, 2010). Time is troubled to “undo pervasive conceptions of temporality that take progress as inevitable and the past as something that has passed” (Barad, 2018, p.57). Time and writing are becoming entangled with an ongoing project of re-turning “the entangled violences of colonialism, racism, nationalism dispersed across spacetime” (Barad, 2018, p.86). To this task of re-membling, I add the violences of ableism as endured by all its subjugated Others.

I write, edit, delete. Save drafts that have entangled but are no longer in this thesis body with which I have settled, momentarily - long enough to share. I have written before. Notes and drafts have come and gone, each written from a slightly different middle place, but never an isolated beginning point (Guttorm, 2012). This is not a thesis but a nomadic becoming-thesis (Guttorm, 2012). It is a writing that does not purport to signify; to stop and signify cannot be productive if productivity is held as the constant nomadic flow of thought (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984). This is an engagement with what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe as “nomadic and rhizomatic writing”

(Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.25). This becoming-thesis does not follow the traditional metaphorical 'tree writing' structure in which firm roots are planted from which linear knowledge grows from point to point, chapter to chapter, beginning to end (Dickmann, 2015). Becoming-thesis is becoming rhizome. I have lost the beginning and I find no end, preferring to dance with the middle and make my trouble there. The rhizome is metaphorically likened to a botanical tuber (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), from this tuber, offshoots sprout and grow unpredictably and in every direction. Composing a rhizomatic thesis is not without challenge. It must satisfy stipulated institutional expectations and guidelines born of linear logic roots whilst simultaneously negotiating the unpredictable movement and growth of lateral rhizomatic logic (Honan, 2007).

This becoming-thesis resists the linear and the binary in favour of enfolding indeterminate anti-structure. Whilst the actual construction can be likened to a more traditional thesis (satisfying institutional demands) with an introductory chapter right through to the (exit) conclusion, the rhizome's tubers nevertheless begin to squirm (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Becoming tentacles, the rhizome asserts its non-human liveliness (Barad, 2012). Alive. My thinking and writing squirms, tentacles becoming my "many-armed allies" (Haraway, 2016c) as I chase the (im)possibilities for knowing anew. Tentacles reach from the middle place, reaching, feeling and tickling (im)possibilities. The tentacular rhizome is becoming a lively re-searching apparatus. "Apparatuses are *not* assemblages of pre-existing separately determinate individuals of one kind or another" (Barad, 2007, p.451) but ongoing productions of intra-actively constituted components (Barad, 2007). The components of the apparatus are considered by virtue of the *multiplicities* that dynamically form them (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Multiplicities are not simply multiple characteristics; to be multiple, one must be able to divide subject and object. Multiplicities remove the unique and treat the multiple as intra-acting relational entirety (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Points of particular intensity *within* these multiplicities are considered to be intensive states of plateau rather than any climatic finale (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The focus has shifted from the verb 'to be' and momentum achieved through moving, writing and reading always with "the conjunction, "and...and...and..." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.26). Chapters are produced through this ongoingness as connecting plateaus and



Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) and...and...and... marked by '...' as a means of entry to a plateau that is always relationally (re)configured (Barad, 2007). To mark states of intensity connecting across and within plateaus, I am inspired by Clarke's (2018) use of asterisks \*\* as "a device to demonstrate a change of scene" (Clarke, 2018, p.15). This group of stars indicates a transitional shift in discursive-materialisation, temporality or intensity (Hudson, 2010). I am also drawn to the entanglement of asterisks as a discursively-materialising constellation of stars connected through this thesis; a reminder of the universe that is far greater than human exceptionalism and the stories it tells (Barad, 2007). I like the humility that comes with re-membering that humans share nearly all the quantum elements from which our fleshy bodies are constituted with the stars (Howell, 2017).

#### **1.4 Invitation(s) to Dis/Continuous Entanglements**

The plateaus that entangle as intra-active components constituting this research apparatus are not absolutely separable as the digital or paper copy of this thesis might imply (Barad, 2007). As agential re-search apparatus, how this thesis makes itself known beyond my thinking-reading-writing is not pre-determined. Moments of intensity, (re)connections and new possibilities for knowing-in-becoming with the thesis are unpredictable and relationally constituted with each reader (Barad, 2007). Coleman and Ringrose (2013) encourage nomadic engagement as a mode of allowing connections to be re-made and un/done as the phenomena in this thesis make themselves known. A nomadic reading invites re-configurations towards ongoing (im)possibilities with your own thinking and theorising and knowing as a part of this thesis. It is in this spirit that I proceed to open the plateaus that constitute this thesis-research-apparatus and suggest what they might offer before offering alternative entanglements chasing the tentacles of particular phenomena (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013).

##### **1.4.1 Dis/Continuous Plateaus**

*Plateaus Two, Three and Four* entangle with the discursive-materialisations produced through critical engagement with literature, constituting a literature review. Plateau Two makes trouble for discourses of humanism and engages theoretically with posthumanisms (Braidotti, 2013), dishumanism (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016)

and opens towards possibilities through theorising with agential dishumans. The timespaces through which matter is discursively materialised are troubled. The human-centric Anthropocene (Baer, 2017) is re-turned towards a timespace that decentres the human. Haraway's (2016a) Chthulucene is articulated as a relationally constituted epoch of intra-active agential dishumans, multi-species and non-humans. The temporalities of the Chthulucene are also disrupted as they become inseparable from space and matter (Barad, 2007).

Plateau three returns with parent-identities as persistently gendered and overly-individualised neoliberal institutions (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). Parenting is contextualised within the neoliberal-ableist timespaces of austerity (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018) and a growing influences of neuroscientific parenting practices (Tallis, 2016). The plateau enfolds an affirmative opening to possibilities for a feminist disparenting commons of relationality and collective response-ability (Runswick-Cole and Ryan, 2019). Plateau four re-turns with the psy-developmental and neoliberal discourses that shape Western constructions of the child and childhood. I theoretically engage with possibilities beyond these constructions with Haraway's (2016a) articulations of worlding kin as *kinder* possibilities for relationally intra-acting with young children. Agential dishuman kin are re-turned beyond binaries of child/adult and the normative developmental discourses and pre-determined temporalities that deny children's agency in their own becomings (Murriss, 2016) and marginalise those who make trouble for prescriptive developmental trajectories (Burman, 2008).

*Plateaus Five (Methodicide) and Six (Becoming Agential Research Apparatus)* situate the theoretical framework beyond methodology with and through which the research has intra-actively enfolded and data intra-actively produced. In Plateau Five I expand on Daly's (1973) articulation of methodolatry and invoke Daly's 'methodicide' (p.12) as a means to move beyond the confines of pre-determined method. I expand on Barad's (2007) articulations of diffraction as a means for re-patterning with data and outline other modes of differencing using the Baradian concept of agential "cutting-together-apart" (Barad, 2014, p.168). Haraway's Chthulucene is further explored as an alternative epoch through which to theorize beyond the Anthropocene (Haraway, 2016a). Plateau six explores how the research apparatus intra-actively assembled visual and audio data, parent (human) companions and non-human companions. It re-turns

ethics as intra-actively entangled with onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2007). Analytical practices are conceptualised as a process of “sympoiesis” (Haraway, 2016a, p. 58) that resist pre-determination and trust in the generative process of creating with data in the thick and ongoing present (Haraway, 2016a).

*Plateaus Seven and Eight* trace and unfold sympoiesis with data-theory-thinking (Haraway, 2016a). This nomadic process is engaged with as a means of generative re-searching, re-membling and re-making material-discursive practice (Haraway, 2016a). Sympoiesis is a deeply relational practice of materializations that are becoming response-able to agential dishuman and non-human worlds-to-come (Haraway, 2016a). Plateau seven traces the enfolding of love as a political parenting practice, re-turning the politics of the personal. A concept of DisPolitical love is opened as generative phenomena (Zembylas, 2017). Plateau eight traces the dis/continuation of time as produced by dishuman children and engages with the quantum world to dis/rupt humanist ontologies of time (Barad, 2018). New stories are sought with and through DisTemporalities.

*Plateau Nine* re-turns what this research-thesis-researcher have become/are becoming as my intra-active agency in re-turning this thesis slows (Barad, 2007). I offer an exploration through the diffractive patterns of parenting and childhoods that have rippled through this thesis, intra-acting with data (re)configurations that enfolded theory and dis/rupted dominant discourses. The contribution to knowing-from-within is critically articulated as are the ongoing challenges of doing agential realist research that have entangled though the entirety of this thesis (Barad, 2007).

#### *1.4.2 Alternative Entanglements With (A) Thesis*

I am becoming aware that as this thesis challenges the unilinear trajectories of neoliberal-ableist and developmentalist notions of progress, so too does it trouble the unilinear unfolding of stories, methodologies and analyses as if they are sedimented, existing in exteriority to the world(s) (Barad, 2012). Thinking with Massumi (1987) and Coleman and Ringrose (2013), this thesis opens as a part of the “world’s aliveness” (Barad, 2012, p.2) with and through the reader. I wonder and become curious as to other lively engagements with this thesis beyond the unilinear journey through plateaus and invite the reader to re-read, to skip back and forth and follow the moments of

intrigue (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013). This thesis is opening and alive to re-configuring itself, finding other companions to re-make it (and be re-made with it); new companion trouble makers (Barad, 2012). To tangle and re-tangle then asks the reader to become curious as to what this thesis can (re)do, rather than search for definitive answers as to what it is. With a lively curiosity to the (im)possibilities of entangling, this thesis becomes infinitely more hospitable to the curious stranger who through entangling as reader-thinker is becoming response-able with and for the indeterminate world(s) that are yet to be done with this thesis-rhizome (Barad, 2012).



## Plateau 2...

### Literature Entanglement#1: Becoming Agential-DisHuman in the Cthulucene

#### 2.1 Entangling Humans ↔ Disability ↔ SpaceTime

This plateau re-turns with, through and beyond ongoing (re)configurations of the human. It chases other ways of knowing what it means to become human as a part of indeterminate world(s) (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). As theoretical provocation, this plateau invites a re-making of an indeterminate human category as *a part of* the ongoing world, rather than as a centre around which theory and knowledge about parenting and disabled childhoods can orbit (Barad, 2007). This experimental theoretical shift is an ethical one, opening to (im)possibilities for celebrating the lives of parents and their dis/abled child beyond the precarity of neoliberalism's ableist human and the pathologized children who resist the unilinear trajectory of developmentalism. The discursive-materialization of 'human' is theorised beyond that which is taken for granted, that which idealises and marginalises by means of "divide and rule" (Goodley, 2021, p.xvi). Nothing is taken for granted and "all theorizing, all materializing, and all mattering is political" (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.19). This plateau is becoming an invitation to discursively re-matter indeterminate parents and disabled children as always fully human, un/doing the binaries of idealised human and excluded Other. This plateau stirs up the sedimented and precarious identities that are reproduced with and through neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism, chasing instead (a)lively human identities that refuse to settle.

#### 2.2 Gathering Speed from a Middle Place Beyond Humanism

Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that...And yet the term enjoys widespread consensus and it maintains the re-assuring familiarity of common sense.

Braidotti, 2013, p.1

Re-assuring familiarity is becoming un/settled as this plateau sets to work to make trouble for the familiar and disrupts the taken for granted (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).

I have not wanted to linger in the familiar for long enough and I do not find it to be a source of reassurance when theorising humanisms beyond current dominating discourses. I entangle with Snir's (2018) discursive re-mattering of Deleuzian 'sense' to un/do the dogmatic from 'common' sense and dynamically intra-act with an ongoing (re)configurations of *making sense* (Snir, 2018). This plateau is therefore more concerned with (re)making and re/marking sense of human becomings than it is with repeating common-sense sedimented understandings of human beings (Barad, 2018). It is extremely challenging to address the issue of the human and humanity with no presuppositions, for so surely are they held and transferred from generation to generation within the English society in which I have lived and been educated. I feel the agential realist knowing-in-being gathering speed as I entangle with Snir's (2018) argument that even when educated to think critically, thoughts still have a tendency to be founded upon linear, binary and sedentary common-sense assumptions. Nevertheless, I am curious, wondering what (im)possibilities might rupture from sedentary and familiar knowledge about becoming human as I think/write/theorise with an openness to possibilities beyond dominant truths and with a hunger for not-yet ways of knowing.

I have chosen to abandon the common-sense linear journey starting with the humanist human and terminating with the posthuman, in favour of an experimental rhizomatic journey unfurling from a middle place that gathers speed with a "desire for new humanisms" (Goodley *et al*, 2020, p.1). New humanisms in this thesis are articulated as a desire to stay with the troubles shaping parents and their disabled children's lives in the thick present (Goodley *et al*, 2020). New humanisms entangle the potentials of posthumanism without abandoning the ongoing injustices of sedimented inequalities at the inter-sections of (de)humanising-identity (re)production (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). My repositioning of new humanisms as a middle place of im/possibilities as a preferable starting place (not a beginning though) to the common-sense logics of humanism's human is purposeful as it allows me to de-centre humanism's human without abandoning the ongoing trouble this category makes for parents and disabled children's lives (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).

The desire for new humanisms entangles the theoretical posthuman disruption to humanism's common-sense boundaries that have sedimented epidermically around an organism and consciously around the self (Pyyhtinen, 2016). This self-conscious and distinct human being is no longer understood in these terms and is thrown into a new logic of entanglement within a mutually-dependent world (Pyyhtinen, 2016). The material world is understood beyond any common-sense thought of dormant matter, beyond the abrupt 'there-ness' of the physical and pushed into an ontoepistemological realm that positions *all* matter as becoming with indeterminate and transformational potential (Coole and Frost, 2010). The human body in this ontoepistemology is valued politically "as a visceral protagonist" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p.19) but unlike humanism this embodiment does not privilege the human body hierarchically from other species or cybernetic and machinic matter (Coole and Frost, 2010).

All these becoming-embodiments of matter are considered as relational process-agents, dislocating the human species from the throne of governance previously upheld by truths of distinction as a self-regulating, rational and self-conscious being (Coole and Frost, 2010). This decentred posthuman is *becoming* as a multiplicity with other species, machines and space (Haraway, 2016a). Space in this context is considered as relationally produced cyber and environmental space (Siegel, 2016). From a critical disability perspective, this ontologically disrupts dominating normative values of the human born of a Western bourgeois assemblage (Wynter, 2003). Binary normal/abnormal values reconfigure as incidental becoming-processes of an "ethnaclass...which overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself" (Wynter, 2003, p.260). The dualism that privileges European, imperial human logic and rationale against an inferior less-than-human 'other' is shattered (Braidotti, 2013); it cannot exist when the very concept of an ego-centric conscious self, born of Western rationale is reimagined (Hayles, 1999). Eurocentric humanism is reimagined by both demoting (not exiling) the role of consciousness in human identity and in consideration of a discrete dualistic impossibility of self/other consciousness within this paradigm (Hayles, 1999). The European, white, able-bodied man cannot maintain a preferential position when indeterminate and rhizomatic logic replaces that which is pre-determined and linear. There is no preferred self of 'I' and there can be no inferior 'other' or 'not-I' (Barad, 2014) as this is not a logic that comprehends dualisms or static beings. The posthuman

subject is emancipated from prejudicial Othering as it re-patterns towards entangled relational becoming “critically distanced from humanist individualism” (Braidotti, 2013, p.39).

This agential realist ontoepistemology is not violently anti-anything in the sense that it never absolutely separates from that which has gone before but rather engages in an ongoing generation and destruction that are inseparable dynamic modes of reconfiguration (Barad, 2014). It is becoming im/possible to be overtly negative/anti/post in a theoretical framework that un/does dualistic negative/positive positions (Barad, 2014). An ontoepistemology declines an absolute “break between sentient and nonsentient entities or between material and spiritual phenomena” (Coole and Frost, 2010, p.10) and is focused upon transformational becomings as matter-in-flux. Through my engagement with a tentacular rhizomatic writing practice, I am tracing and chasing map the dynamic amalgam of posthuman multiplicities and the echoes of other humanisms within a transformational space of possibilities (Haraway, 2016c).

Posthumanism is not just a repositioning of consciousness and the self. Posthumanism considers embodied matter “as the original prosthesis” (Hayles, 1999, p.3). It is an embodied becoming that can be discursively and intra-actively re-mattered; resisting any presuppositions of ableist end goals of body manipulation or transformation such as walking unaided within the confines of a normalised gait. The posthuman position blurs taken for granted divisions (Braidotti, 2013), becoming intra-actively entangled with increasingly technologized material world(s). These techno-worlds-to-come unpredictably and rapidly unfurl simultaneously towards realms of unimaginable prosperity/ catastrophic destruction (Russell, 2017) or something else entirely unknown. Capturing the human as biological animal, as cybernetic, as robotic, as a neoliberal-capitalist machine becomes an impossible task for the subject-in-flux intra-actively producing world(s)-in-flux (Hayles, 1999). The humanist principal of ‘free will’ and our measures of acceptable self-regulation cannot be upheld if “the very illusion of (human)control bespeaks a fundamental ignorance about the nature of the emergent processes through which consciousness, the organism, and the environment are constituted” (Hayles, 1999, p.288).





## 2.3 The Chthulucene

Theorising dynamic new humanisms with and through a posthuman entanglement requires a re-consideration of how becoming-posthuman(s) might be situated in relation to the timespaces with which they are agentially entangled (Barad, 2007). This is a necessary consideration within this thesis as relational posthuman becomings are not dynamic matter making theatre upon an exteriorised stage of a sedentary world (Barad, 2019). The timescapes (re)made with posthumans are as dynamically transformational as the embodied becomings with which they are produced (Pyyhtinen, 2016). An engagement with inseparable and mutually dependent spacetime matter requires something beyond sedentary references to definitively bound epochs presented as master narratives (Barad, 2007). As Haraway (2016a) observes, accounting for only ‘human’ effects upon the environment is to deny the relational agency of the intra-species and intra-material apparatuses. Staying true to an ethico-ontoepistemology of ongoing entanglements, the Anthropocene as an epoch situating humanity as central in shaping the Earth’s geology, arguably since the industrialised era (Baer, 2017), is not entirely exiled. Neither is the more recent Capitalocene that captures the global capitalist force of the state and subsequent effects of this upon the Earth’s environment (Baer, 2017). These epochs are rather re-turning, opening to another name for an epoch of new possibilities that do not erase anthropocentric histories, hauntings and injustices: “the Chthulucene” (Haraway, 2016a, p.101).

The word ‘Chthulucene’ is Haraway’s (2016a) dynamic re-mattering beyond the confines of Anthropocene and Capitalocene. The Chthulucene is a way of “learning to stay with the trouble of living...on a damaged Earth” (Haraway, 2016a, p.2). It is a dynamic timespace that does not dismiss what has gone before, what is present or what is still to come in possible futures (Haraway, 2016a). The Chthulucene offers a provocation to respond to everything as still-possible. It does not succumb to the defeatist cynicism noted in both the Anthropocene and Capitalocene. Other ways of multi-species inhabiting Earth are possible in the Chthulucene. The word itself is a re-patterning of the Greek words “*khthôn and Kainos*” (Haraway, 2016a, p.2) that entangle

together to mean *now* as a timespace for ongoing beginnings (Haraway, 2016a). Whilst Haraway (2016a) goes beyond posthumanism, preferring to situate all species including homo-sapiens as 'compost', a term that for me disentangles too far from persisting humanist injustices (Goodley *et al*, 2020), the ongoingness of new beginnings of which she speaks with and through the Chthulucene tickles my curiosity. Haraway's (2016a) Chthulucene invites exploration with and through an exciting and curious experimental timespace with scope for the im/possible re-situating of agential realist disability research inquiry.

The Chthulucene is a dynamic timespace, reimagined as an epoch intra-actively re-making world(s) beyond capitalism's violent arrogance that asserts it can act as it pleases with nature and marginalise and expel lives by virtue of their value in relation to the capitalist project of economic growth (Moore, 2017). Becoming posthuman in the Chthulucene shifts the focus from *self* towards always becoming *with* (complimenting the rhizomatic *and*) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). It is an epoch that entails ongoing becomings with and not against each other (Haraway, 2016b). It is a multi-species survival pursuit focused upon living together and learning to do this without destroying, exiling or segregating posthuman becomings and the material world(s) with which they re-turn (Haraway, 2016b). Without exile and segregation there might be hope for reconfiguring the inclusion we currently understand in the Anthropocene and Capitalocene. There is no requirement to purposefully include what is not at risk of exclusion or marginalisation in the first place. This is an example pertaining that "it matters what knowledges know knowledge" (Haraway, 2016b, p.35). Linear logic knows neoliberal-ableist and psy-developmentally defined idealised humans and struggles to seamlessly include those on the other side of this binary in a neoliberal society. Indeterminate nomadic chasing of possibilities as lines of flight depart from unexpected and unknown places and open to possibilities for the unthinkable: a world in which inclusion is a relational response-ability for every embodied posthuman becoming in the Chthulucene.

I am mindful that theorizing such a utopian timespace runs the risk of entering realms of fairy-tale academic fiction masquerading as a critical study in childhood disability (Moss, 2014). Desirability and achievability may appear in this context to have a flimsy

line of flight between them at best. I am drawn repeatedly to Moss' writing on transformational change to affirm my belief that desirability can be re-patterned and opened up to achievability by the growing body of writers and activists who dare to tell new stories (Moss, 2014). These stories brazenly challenge the domineering narrative of neoliberalism and disrupt the arrogance with which it presents itself as an unyielding and inescapable truth (Moss, 2014). These stories then go beyond a fiction, beyond a writing for writing's sake and shine a light forward to realms yet unknown but infinitely possible. It is a belief that neoliberalism "is not a true and final account of how we are and how we must be for ever and ever" (Moss, 2014, p.202) that fuels this political commitment to seek out new stories. It is a commitment entangled throughout this rhizomatic becoming-thesis of which I am a response-able part (Barad, 2007).



## 2.4 The Post-Dishuman

The Chthulucene as a theoretical timescape in critical disability studies is one that provokes im/possibilities for Goodley and Runswick-Cole's dis/human (2016) to flourish. The 'dis' in the dishuman as offered by Goodley and Runswick-Cole (2016) is understood as the means by which disability can assertively open and re-turn fixed assemblages of the Eurocentric, ableist human towards agential apparatuses of dishumanism that can be claimed by all (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). The ways in which becomings can be theorised beyond humanism must consider the 'dis' in relation to the theoretical posthuman and the persisting entanglements of humanism's human in order to disrupt the imperious hold of normalising and exclusionary Western concepts of human. The 'dis' isn't particularly anti-anything, in keeping with the ethicoontoepistemology shaping this thesis. It explicitly isn't anti-ability (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). The 'dis' within this dishuman context is a reconfiguring of the power balance ability and disability wield in sedentary human identity logic. It aligns with Haraway's (2016b) engaging with troubling, with *making* trouble. Goodley and Runswick-Cole's (2016) 'dis' ultimately makes ongoing trouble for the dynamic concepts of disability, the posthuman and the humanist human and their shifting relationality (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). In this context, dishuman trouble

makers are more than norm-breakers; they are power-shifters and can be norm-re-creators.

The dishuman I engage with is one in which any divisive ‘/’ separating the dis from the human is removed as “a new type of unity triumphs in the subject” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.5). This dynamic dis/unity of disability and human provides a lens through which the “theoretical, political and practical” (Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016, p.775) influence of disability are *always* considered relationally when theorising the political and practical dynamic embodiments of post-dishuman becomings (Goodley *et al*, 2016). Disability in this context is afforded a power to rupture the absolute binary of the idealised human and the Other, opening the assemblage up to an intra-actively and dynamically co-constituting apparatus of post-dishuman (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Whilst the becoming-subject in this context evades capture in any sedentary cage, the ways in which it can be understood in flux are theoretically imaginable if you are willing to let it go again to be infinitely re-imagined.

The post-dishuman steps off the throne of human-as-governing-species (Braidotti, 2013). The Chthulucene as a timespace un/does traditional human-animal hierarchical existences, re-configuring in pursuit of more egalitarian multi-species existences. Rupturing boundaries that divide and order multi-species hierarchically simultaneously overthrows a humanist inter-species governance that has operated and imposed divisive boundaries that persist in Westernised understanding of the human (Braidotti, 2013). Any negative species-hierarchy of difference is no longer identifiable in the Chthulucene. Boundaries blur and the dynamic characteristics of post-dishumans are able to flourish, emancipated from humanism’s meta-narrative. There exists a solidarity within and across species as allies of the Earth (Haraway 2016a). This supports an understanding of how the post-dishuman identity-in-flux is actively enabled and embedded within a dynamic understanding of species living cooperatively on a post-anthropocentric and post-capital centric Earth. Disability is no longer bound in the realm of the Other against an idealised ableist colonial huMan (Braidotti, 2013). Colonial huMan himself has been “toppled off the throne of self” (Goudge, 1958, p.138) with not only the rest of his species but towards an existence as becoming-with multi-species inhabitants upon this Earth (Braidotti, 2013).



## 2.5 Post-Dishuman Cyborgs and Troubling Machinic Matter

The trouble does not end with organic multi-species. The post-dishuman is more than just a becoming-living matter in a multi-species world (Haraway, 2016a); it is becoming-living matter within a rapidly advancing cybernetic world (Park, 2014). Boundaries between becoming-organic/living and machine are blurring at a rapid rate (Park, 2014). It is machine that is producing this thesis with my organic mind-fingers-matter and it is machine that will re-produce this thesis to be read and allow it to unfold itself further into the world (Park, 2014). Haraway's Cyborg (2016b) provides a useful dynamic apparatus with which I can consider the potentials and pitfalls of this organic-machinic becoming. The word cyborg is born from the amalgamation of the words **cy**bernetic and **org**anism (Haraway, 2016b). I am a parent to a child who may or may not identify with the cyborg that becomes with theory; yet I know with and through my own becoming-child-technology-son-assemblage that the irreversibly implanted device that stimulates my child's brain has forced an opening of his body as organic-machinic assemblage toward the realms of the cyborg forever from my theoretical perspective. I share this personal insight as an explicit moment of Barad's knowing-in-being, typing as I await my son's device-replacement surgery as his battery runs low (Barad, 2007). It is a moment that pulls me before my 'human' conscious intent, demanding my responsibility to engage theoretically with the potentiality of this merging of organism and machine. This blurring of boundaries takes the post-dishuman into agential intra-acting material realms that rupture the epidermis that functions so neatly in Western logic as the human boundary set apart from the world around it (Barad, 2007). The rhizomatic rupture extends to the hard edges of machines, puncturing their techno-boundaries that purport to hold technologies as separate and exterior to the human category.

The cyborg is understood not only from the perspective of technological advancement becoming with flesh but also the re-positioning of organisms as "biological machines" (Park, 2014, p.303) that can be reconfigured through genetic editing and biotechnological advancements (De Lecuona, Casado, Marfany I Nadal, Lopez-Baroni and Escarrabill, 2017). The cyborg with and through which I write is an ongoing and disruptive becoming-identity, not one of essentialised individualism or dualism. Neither

is the cyborg akin to the fixed characterisations in popular culture of robots and spectacular (albeit often spectacularly violent) hybrid machines (Kafer, 2013). Although the post-dishuman cyborgs are considered for their potential to disrupt, this is storying beyond the ways in which the cyborg currently operates. Rather than disrupting and becoming a part of ongoing identity production (Barad, 2007), the cyborg has been exposed as perpetuating an able-bodied (normative)/disabled (Other) binary (Kafer, 2013). This has been evidenced in the ways in which cyborg technologies are discussed for their 'normalising' or 'restorative' intervention potential where able-bodiedness is a naturalised goal (Kafer, 2013). The potential for cyborg technologies to intervene with able-bodied identities is held separate; the Western pre-occupation with 'super-soldier' creation (Bickford, 2020) and futuristic technologies that might offer extra-ordinary capacity to the able-bodied human reinforces the problematic binary of 'extra' to the 'ordinary' where 'ordinary' is able-bodied (Kafer, 2013).

The Cyborg has further cemented binaries of normal/Other in its repeated application through ontologically fixed identities of cyborg/non-cyborg. Kafer (2013) highlights the im/possible place between the 'less-than human' marginalization of disabled identities or the counter-marginalization via the creation of a "more cyborg than human" identity (Kafer, 2013, p.110). Reeve (2012) exposes the economic (in)accessibility of the highest quality and most technologically advanced cyborg technologies, thus entangling the cyborg as a perpetuator of social and economic marginalization. As I know-in-becoming, I am becoming aware of the demand to ethically engage with the reality-in-becoming-with cyborg technologies (Reeve, 2012). There was no glamorous science fiction moment watching my son's panic and terror when his device was switched on and simultaneously rendered his audible voice inaccessible, a voice which was only freed again by tampering with electronic settings. The processes of becoming-son-cyborg-mother entangled pain, fear and momentary loss of vocal autonomy (Reeve, 2012). Cyborg technologies also unfold new dependencies not only upon the technology but also upon the services required to maintain it (Reeve, 2012).

The potential the cyborg affords disability studies may be ethically and response-ably realised when the cyborg as becoming is realised for its disruptive potential, not as a corrective, normalising or fixed identity. The cyborg is rather Haraway's

transformational becoming-identity with a potential for “seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (Haraway, 2016b, p.55). The cyborg can empower creation, empower *becoming* (Reeve, 2012). It can open to im/possible post-dishuman identities that do not eclipse disability by reason of seeking the normal. There is no normal in the post-dishuman as it cannot find an abnormal to set itself against. This is rather a post-dishuman world that considers the dynamic intra-active entanglement of disability/posthuman/cybernetics in relation to what they offer infinitely dynamic becomings. These components are intra-dependent and unknowable from any exterior position that perpetuates hierarchy.

Rather than seeing technology as ‘fixing’ impaired people in normative ways (and therefore to be rejected), it is more productive to see the new ways of being in the world that emerge from living as cyborg.

Reeve, 2012, p.107

I take this stance not only in consideration of the positive ontology that I adopt but in consideration of the rapid cybernetic advancements sharing the world with humans. These advancements seem unlikely to pause, let alone stop and it is not befitting of this thesis to look backwards but to move forward with everything becoming around it. As cybernetic advancements continue to push the boundaries of what we understand as being technologically (im)possible (Bickford, 2020), the task is not to halt or disengage with the cyber-material enfoldings but to explore and hold to account the neoliberal and ableist pursuits that underpin cybernetic utilisation and technology application and distribution. This task also involves opening creatively and innovatively to the not-yet-knowable, “lurking just outside what we think is real and possible, moral and ethical” (Bickford, 2020, p.14) because technological advancement is becoming an inextricable entanglement whether we critically engage or not.

The post-dishuman as cyborg blurs boundaries not only with cybernetic technology that is visible or implantable but with the cyberspace that Siegel (2016) suggests is becoming increasingly indistinguishable from a physical environmental space. As these spaces merge a shift in how social ontology is situated is required to accommodate the increasing presence of the Internet and online cultures in the lives of the post-dishuman (Siegel, 2016). Addressing marginalization, identity productions and perpetuating

socio-political and educational injustices as though they exist in natural/physical spaces and separate cyber spaces is becoming unthinkable as they increasingly intra-actively constitute the Chthulucene. Cy-worlds producing cyborg identities and cyber spaces are becoming inextricable from exploration of post-dishuman Chthonic worlds-to-come. Troubling what those worlds will look like and how cyborgs might be re-imagined intra- relationally with disability is an ongoing task for the thick present and demands an ongoing openness to generative im/possibilities (Haraway, 2016a).



## 2.6 Agential Dishuman Phenomena in a Multi-Species Chthulucene

As human, post-human and dishuman categories re-turns with and through this plateau, Goodley *et al's* (2020) caution enfolds and intra-acts with my thinking. Rightly, my theorising with post-humanism is re-turning as I heed Goodley *et al's* concerns that posthuman theorising risks eclipsing the persisting “dangerous tropes of humanism” (Goodley *et al*, 2020, p.8). In the context of this thesis-entanglement and its discursive-re-materializations with (im)possible ways of knowing parents and disabled children, the “increasing psychiatrisation, medicalisation and psychologisation” (Barker and Mills, 2018, p.638) that is founded upon humanism and its ableist, narrow, normalisation pursuit cannot simply be put to one side. Neither can the dominant neoliberal-ableist discourse, enfolded in plateau 1 of this thesis-apparatus. As such I re-turn the dishuman towards something becoming agential that is implicated in an ongoing “temporal dis/junction” (Barad, 2018, p.56): agential dishumanism

An agential dishumanism displaces individualised “ontological units” (Barad, 2007, p.33) with inseparable phenomena as intra-acting constituents of reality (Barad, 2007). Shifting from inter-action to intra-action makes explicit the entangled and mutually constituted means by which identities emerge only *in relation*, never in isolation. This intra-action enfolds other species and non-human intra-acting elements (Barad, 2007). An agential dishumanism is becoming an increasingly lively and emerging phenomena but crucially does not separate from historical injustices, ongoing marginalizations or horrors to come (Barad, 2018). An agential dishumanism intra-actively enfolds beyond



humanism's linear temporalities. These temporalities insist that the past is distant and disconnected and offer false promise for equally disconnected utopian futures to come and deny the humanist narratives intra-actively producing the thick present (Barad, 2018). An agential post-dishumanism intra-acts with and through a Chthonic timespace that is far more complex than humanist stories would tell. Time is not only ours for the telling but is collectively ours; those who have lived and already died and those awaiting birth (Barad, 2018). An agential dishuman apparatus opens to possibilities for "disassembling the allegedly determinate distinction between individual and collective, memory and history" (Barad, 2018, p.74). Time dis/rupting re-turns again and again in Plateau 8.

The intra-actions of agential dishumanism are never complete separations but Baradian agential cuts (Barad, 2007). These cuts are "contingent separations – *within* phenomena" (Barad, 2014, p. 175). Difference becoming differencing as the cuts create an im/possible place between self/Other, disabled/able-bodied and human/non-human (Barad, 2014). It is through this place between, agentially cut, that the assertions of sameness and difference are simultaneous and inseparable. Differences are not erased or ignored but are a part of the sameness (Barad, 2014). It is this im/possible agential differencing from within that I see possibility and potentiality for something new (Barad, 2014). An agential dishumanism that does not deny humanism and may, through ongoing re-working and re-turning, assert its story of differencing as a far greater story told as a part of collectively-dependent world(s) than any humanist story of difference via othering that is still being told in the Anthropocene.

## **2.7 Re-membering Agential Humans ↔ Parenting ↔ Disabled Childhoods,**

I have re-turned throughout this plateau with and through the separable times/spaces/matterings of humanism's humans towards agential dishumanism and its inseparable (im)possibilities for relationally becoming human *otherwise* (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Attuned to Goodley *et al's* (2020) new humanisms, my entanglement with re-turning has become something akin to Barad's notion of re-membering (Barad, 2018). Re-membering, I have not left the ongoing injustices of humanism but re-turned with them: "she must place her body on this wounded ground to hear its murmuring

silences and muted cries, to re-member and reconfigure the spacetime-matterings of *all*" (Barad, 2018, p.84) parents and disabled children. The human-category of humanism that exiles disabled children into the realm of Other and makes parents of disabled children precarious is sedimented but not unchallengeable. We are all mutually-dependent agential dishumans and differencing can be re-configured as an ongoing matter for all us humans, non-humans and the timespaces we intra-actively produce (Barad, 2018).



### Plateau 3

## Literature Entanglement #2: Becoming Feminist DisParent

### 3.1 Entangling Parenting ↔ Disability ↔ Feminism ↔ Commoning

This plateau makes trouble and provokes ongoing re-configuring for the ways in which parents of disabled children are produced, understood and made precarious through unduly individualised discourses of neoliberal-ableism (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019). The gendered inter-sections of disability and parenting are re-turned so that persisting gender inequalities in parenting practices can be opened towards feminist practices of relational and collective response-ability (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019). As the category of humanism's human re-turned towards indeterminate agential dishumanism in Plateau 1, so too does parenthood as neoliberal institution re-matter collective response-ability for children through indeterminate commoning practices through which we are all relationally entangled.

### 3.2 Fleeing Institutions, Becoming-Outlaws

We had broken together all the rules...We were conspirators, outlaws from the institution of motherhood; I felt enormously in charge of my life.

Rich, 1976, pp.194-195

This may have been but a fleeting moment, a personal example of breaking the patriarchal institutional rules of motherhood. This poignant moment however, shared by Adrienne Rich in her ground-breaking feminist writing *Of Woman Born* (1976) touched this woman writing, not even born when it published, decades later. Rich's legacy opened motherhood up as a site for powerful critique although it remains a site of "unfinished business" (O'Reilly, 2016, p.2) within feminist studies (O'Reilly, 2016). The notion that there is still work to be done for feminist mothering is drawn largely from the dual identity of oppression that works simultaneously on 'woman' and on 'mother' (O'Reilly, 2016). Troubling the oppression facing both sides of the binary woman/mother it is important to centralize Rich's disentanglement of institutionalised

motherhood and re-territorialize away from motherhood as noun towards practices of mothering as verb (O'Reilly, 2016).

Together with Sara Ruddick's monumental *Maternal Thinking* (1989) that defined for the first time the intellectual aspects of mothering, it is the work of mothering rather than an acquired institutionalised and stable identity of *mother* that becomes centralized as my thoughts gather speed. This work is valued for what it is, not against any patriarchal diktat of what it should look like or who it who it should be carried out by (O'Reilly, 2016). This is not a plateau for essentialising biological motherhood, or parenting 'experts'. This is not a place in which motherwork demands a certain economic capability or constant high level of parenting energy (O'Reilly, 2016).

This is a theoretical writing that entangles and unfurls with and as a part of a collective of academic mothers of disabled children (Runswick-Cole and Ryan, 2019). This is a troubling of "the conjunction of power and powerlessness" (Ruddick, 1980, p.343) that situates highly individualised responsibility upon mothers for their children but renders them silently powerless to shape their own practices (O'Reilly, 2016). Without the bold thinking and resistance of motherwriters and motherworkers from a time before, the new writers expanding this collective scholarship would not have the articulation of thought around motherwork that provokes and inspires discussions of mothering practices today (O'Reilly, 2009a). An essentialized institution of motherhood, denoting an inevitable, natural and devalued role of women as biological mothers, collides with feminist practices of mothering as verb and non-essentialised role (O'Reilly, 2009a). This collision troubles the patriarchal powers of imposed institutionalism that threaten to undermine the value, the power and the demanding intellectual practices of mothering (Ruddick, 1980).

This collision sparks a line of flight to flee with mothering as rhizomatic practice, offering potential for the liberation for mother voices from their silenced domain, for the reclamation of agential power (O'Reilly, 2009b). Liberating mothering practices and experiences from institutionalisation is not an isolated feminist liberation. In these austere neoliberal times of writing, motherhood has been absorbed into a policy discourse that not only masks persisting gender inequalities in England via its gender

neutrality (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018) but also silently reproduces a multiplicity of complex inter-sectionalities of oppression. As this line of flight flees gendered hierarchies and complex intersectional conjunctures of oppression it takes with it values “of non-oppression and non-domination” (Bartlett, 2016, p.23). The middle place from which this speed gathers is one of becoming-feminist parent. This middle place does not ignore or cloak the gendered inequalities that persist in England but neither will it rest there in the pursuit for a reimagining of a feminist parenting practice beyond normative patriarchal parenthood-as-institution (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

Feminist-parenting as verb un/does the institution of *good parenting* that has been increasingly centralised in government policy. Good parenthood has shaped neoliberal parenting practice as an overly simplistic and normative institution. It is through this institution that a prescribed and idealised good parent enacts good neoliberal citizenship and reproduces idealised good (read: economically valuable) neoliberal citizens of the future (De Benedictis, 2012). Parents are thus centrally situated in policy discourse as the site upon which to disproportionately lay responsibility for social and economic futurity (De Benedictis, 2012) and improving social mobility in England (SMC, 2017). Creating a parenthood through which to carry out the “story of markets” (Moss, 2014, p.56) reduces the complex practices within it to something not only overly-individualised but to something calculable as human value to the market and future market (Moss, 2014). It also diverts attention from the injustices and oppressions that persist in national socio-economic structures and the under-playing of their role in the ongoing re-creation of socio-economic injustices (Moss, 2014).

Opening the institution of *good parenting* up to a rhizomatic practice of becoming-parent offers possibility and space for the becoming-parent to be understood as a multiplicity of overlapping intersections that may include, but are not limited to: disability, race, sexuality, gender, age and class (Evans, 2016). An intersectional lens through which to rhizomatically explore the complexity of becoming-parent is an engagement “in concert with contemporary lives, the complexities of alienation and rich hopes of resistance” (Goodley, 2013, p. 641). Such inter-sectional engagement directly

contests the injustices of an austere neoliberal governmentality that lead to individualised blame at every juncture of intersectional oppression.

To counter the political rhetoric of neoliberalism: there *is* such a thing as society (Harvey, 2005). It is social economics, not individual women and men (Harvey, 2005) that needs to be centrally positioned in any discourse of primary accountability for the social injustices and inequalities impacting parenting and children's outcomes in England in these austere times (Jensen, 2012). If becoming-feminist parent means following a line of flight that in its fleeing is becoming-outlaw from the neoliberal institution of good parent then it is here that it begins to disentangle from the economic and scientific good parents' rule book.



### **3.3 Neoliberal Neuro-Parenting in Austerity**

Austerity has woven into the very fabric of modern parenting-as-neoliberal-institution (Doherty and Dooley, 2018). The reckless capitalist pursuits that triggered the 2008 financial crash may have been an immediate debacle for the financial institutions involved (Casey, 2011) but for already precarious intersections of social citizenship in England “the economic crisis has been a slow-moving disaster” (Emejulu and Bassel, 2018, p.110). Following the financial crash, austerity politics took hold in Britain as the taxpaying and welfare receiving citizens, who had nothing to do with the “casino-capitalist” (Casey, 2011, p.5) behaviours of huge financial corporations, were socially impacted by neoliberal enterprise failure (Wilson, 2011). The financial crash led directly into the age of austerity in which I write; welfare and public service spending has been drastically cut and various taxes targeted for increase (Coates and Dickstein, 2011).

It was not the financial institutions or their high-earning executives that paid the ultimate price for deregulated neoliberal investment games but instead those already in the most economically precarious positions by virtue of intersecting identities of welfare and public service reliance. Neither has it been the bad bankers and bad

investors that have been continuously targeted or blamed for economic and social ills. It is rather 'bad parents' and their children who have become increasingly politicised as a site for securing economic and social futurity (Jensen, 2012). Conveniently in these austere times, the real baddies such as poverty, health and economic inequality are side-lined as the government aligns family policy fixation away from "*incomes* and towards *outcomes*" (Jensen, 2012, p.10). Deploying paraprofessionals to deliver parenting programmes that primarily focus upon improving parenting skills and knowledges to boost child outcomes are all well and good (Lakind and Atkins, 2018), however they are not a magical fix for wider social and economic inequalities and injustices (Moss, 2014).

The complex and intersectional structural components of oppression in a neoliberal society need to be critically addressed and challenged if the field of aspirations, outcomes and social worth is ever to be anywhere near level (Moss, 2014). To do so the idealised *good parent* residing in policy needs to be critiqued and politely asked to climb down from the neoliberal socio-political pedestal of gold-standard parenting. The parent climbing down would be white, in a hetero-sexual marriage, middle-class (Jensen, 2012) and non-disabled with a non-disabled child. As Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard and Runswick-Cole (2019) point out, it is the dominant and culturally normative socio-political imagery that monopolizes policy rhetoric and assumptions. The *good parent* is a part of the silently reproduced idealisations of class, privilege and ability to which aspirations are aligned and consequently intersections of disadvantage stigmatised (Jensen, 2012). The "cycle of advantage" (Moss, 2014, p.40) and its associated intersections of privilege and normativity also need to be critically addressed as it is these silent markers of an idealised parenthood that perpetuate, unchallenged, the neoliberal values shaping an institution of parenthood.

Parenthood as neoliberal institution has increasingly been positioned as a domain requiring acquired skills and knowledges in family policy (Jensen, 2012). This institution promotes the common neoliberal values of individualism and personal responsibility for child outcomes above any notion of "social solidarity" (Harvey, 2005, p.23). Simultaneously this shift in responsibility from the social state to the individual has increased state surveillance and 'risk management' in relation to parenting

practices and improving child outcomes via parenting interventions (Romagnoli and Wall, 2012). Within this discourse, parents who are positioned Otherwise to the idealised and normalised intersections of age, class, gender, ability and race that have shaped a neoliberal construction of *good* parenthood are increasingly identifiable as 'risk factors' to their children (Romagnoli and Wall, 2012). This construction of individualised 'high risk' parenthood is shifting this institution towards classification as "public health issue" with discourse realigning towards suggestions of normalising and universalising parenting intervention to increase parental engagement (SMC, 2017).

Parenthood as a child-outcome risk factor and parenting intervention programmes have relied heavily upon developmental neurosciences to inform, as seemingly objective evidence base, an increasingly intensive neuro-parenting ideal (Lowe, Lee and Macvarish, 2015). The universalised child's brain development is positioned at the epicentre of the good parenting discourse and subsequent intervention rhetoric (Macvarish, Lee and Lowe, 2014). The elements within this discourse create a neuro-deterministic assemblage of child-as-brain and parent as synaptic engineer, neuron sculptor and emotion manager. This assemblage is territorialized within and by the assertion that the early years of brain development are critical to the child's later social, cognitive and emotional outcomes (Allen, 2011). The urgency to pre-empt via early intervention the "tsunami of dysfunction" (Allen, 2011, p.3) attached to those 'at risk' is propelled by perceived massive long-term public spending savings and reducing "the bills from lifetimes wasted while claiming benefits" (Allen, 2011, p.xiv).

Early intervention and neuro-parent of child-as-brain operate within a silver-plated assemblage shaped to form the magic bullet that will not only fix socio-economic ills but balance national budgets and reduce national debt (Allen, 2011). Critical understanding of the developmental neurosciences from which this assemblage seeks stability and opening parenthood as institution to a becoming-parent collective practice offers hope for reterritorializing this assemblage. It also reframes the idea of a socio-economic silver bullet of early intervention as a blank round; it undoubtedly has impact and benefit (Moss, 2014) but not at the overstated and universal levels currently purported (Thompson and Nelson, 2001).



It is not my intention to critique the neurosciences in this context *per se*. It is rather to foreground the ways in which developmental neuroscience has been overly simplified and tenuously deployed as a centralised bedrock within this assemblage (Lowe *et al*, 2015). As Tallis (2016) succinctly argues, “it is not the science but the scientism” (Tallis, 2016, p.15) that is under scrutiny. Scientism refers to the erroneous assumption that the sciences and in this context the multitude of neurosciences, can provide a full descriptive account of humankind (Tallis, 2016). The neuroscience that such assertions so readily base their claims upon is highly contentious (Lowe *et al*, 2015) and symptomatic of what has been dubbed “neuro-determinism” (Tallis, 2016, p.7). Neuro-determinism refers to the far too simplistic transference of neural activity in the brain to conscious experience (Tallis, 2016). This has been taken further to not only underpin the neuro-determinism that a person is essentially a mechanised product of their brain activity but has subsequently informed social policy surrounding early intervention and parenting programmes (Tallis, 2016).

The leap from excited neurons to a full explanation of humankind and subsequent assumption that neuroscientific findings can be readily applied to shape early intervention and parenting programmes is far more tenuous than policy would imply (Lowe *et al*, 2015). The notion of a ‘critical period’ for brain development that has underpinned much focus upon the first three years of life is contentious in its absolute rigidity and life-long determinism (Thompson and Nelson, 2001). Neuroscientific evidence is far more complex with varying and ongoing hypotheses of maturational brain plasticity throughout life (Tallis, 2016). The early years of life are important (Moss, 2014) but securing early child outcomes are not the guaranteed bedrock of futurity as currently portrayed (Thompson and Nelson, 2001).

Parenthood as trainable institution that, through “early intervention can give Britain a more productive labour force” (Allen, 2011, p.6) appears to make strange bedfellows of austerity-economics and over-stated neuro-politics (Tallis, 2016). The over-stated neurological claims and subsequent economic predictions over-simplify and isolate parenthood within an institutional and individualised assemblage. This assemblage ruptures with the critique of the economics, scientism and corresponding governmentality that have territorialized it. Lines of flight begin to flee as intersections

of socio-economic oppression reterritorialize and theoretically rebalance wider systemic assemblages of socio-economic power.

This reterritorialization is forever in flux as feminist-parenting becomes verb (Bartlett, 2016). The verb is picked up and carried away within the rhizome as it joins forces with the conjunction “and...and...and” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.26). It can no longer reside as individualised singular verb but seeks collectivity as a multiplicity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984). And...and...and speaks to a collective ongoing-ness in becoming-feminist-parenting as practice that does not re-organise individuals equally or hierarchically but seeks to bond the collective through a constant commitment of generative “de-individualization” (Foucault, 1984, p.xiv).



### 3.4 Becoming Parent and the Feminist Disparenting Commons

This collective response to the oppressive neoliberal institutionalised parenthood that shapes family policy and family life means thinking and vocalising a response that affirms that another way of becoming-parenting *is* possible (Chomsky, 1999). I engage with the term feminist disparent as a means to reject patriarchal representational constructs of motherhood (Comerford, Jackson and Kosior, 2016) whilst remaining attuned to the gendered imbalances that persist in England in relation to caring responsibilities in the context of disabled children. Mothers are more likely to be the primary care-giver for a disabled child and are disproportionately impacted in accessing paid employment (Contact-a-Family, 2011). The articulation of *feminist* disparenting offers an opening to theorising that includes the fathers caring for disabled children whilst simultaneously maintaining a feminist activist commitment. This activism is necessary in the persisting context of unduly individualised caring responsibilities that are inequitably placed upon mothers (Paynter, Davies and Beamish, 2018). The *dis* is inextricably articulated with the term parent to explicitly celebrate the indeterminate differencing in children and ensure disability is always a part of ongoing relational parenting theorising and practices (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019).

Affirming new and collective ways of becoming-parent means harnessing the collective de-individualizing force of the ongoing conjunction 'and'. In seeking to experimentally re-pattern neoliberal hyper-individualism for the collective resistance of *all* parents for the benefit of *all* intersecting identities of parents from parenthood as institution, a cooperative conceptual framework is required (Nightingale, 2011). To set the ripples of diffraction in motion I turn to the potential of a cooperative, collective 'commons' (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomson, 2001). The commons reimagines "communities who would take charge of and feel responsible for...areas of life" (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomason, 2001, p.1011). The sense of shared responsibility obliterates the individualised blame and shame of neoliberal parenthood as lines of flight flee this capitalist assemblage. They can no longer territorialise in the commons as the and...and...and moves to quickly to linger at the individual (Mies and Bennholdt-Thomson, 2001).

The commons offer hope for a multitude of intersectional junctures for becoming-parents, entangling with "racism, sexism, transphobia, Occidentalism, colonialism, classism, developmentalism and heterosexism" (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard and Runswick-Cole, 2019, p. 989). Of particular focus aligned with the lives of young children with disability and the institution of parenthood that surrounds them from which this thesis took flight, is what this means at the juncture of non-disabled becoming-parents to children with disabilities and labels of special educational needs. It is a response to disrupt parenthood as institution at this particular intersectional juncture.

I am inspired by the call for collective activism by Runswick-Cole and Ryan (2019) to disrupt the neoliberal creation of an idealised ego-centric and overly-individualised parent responsibility for the child (Moss, 2014). Runswick-Cole and Ryan (2019) intertwine a notion of "unmothering" (Runswick-Cole and Ryan, 2019, p.9) to further disrupt the hidden gendered imbalance silenced in this narrative. Unmothering in this context firmly shifts the isolating burden that disproportionately impacts mothers towards the shared responsibility of the collective commons. Motherwork is not devalued in this reterritorialization, the focus is upon redistribution of responsibility (Runswick-Cole and Ryan, 2019) and opens space to foreground the value of motherwork.

The commons in this context have been previously described as “the disability commons” (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018, p.241) which for the purpose of this plateau I engage with as a ‘feminist disparenting commons: a multiplicity of fleeting but “intensive stabilization” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p.23). The phrasing is purposeful, each word a warrior in this disruptive theoretical becoming-parent as commoning practice. The *feminist* repeatedly confronts the precarious gendered inequalities that persist in the institutionalised parenthood whilst valuing the complexities-in-flux of motherwork (Comerford, Jackson and Kosier, 2016). The *dis* prefixed to parenting disrupts the neoliberal ableist intersection of parenthood and disability to offer hope for a timespace where *all* marginalised intersectional identities can make claim to a reimagined way of becoming-*good-parent(ing)* (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). Simultaneously entwined with this claim, the *dis* disrupts the becoming-parent collective commons to ensure consideration is always attentive to what disability, and particularly in this context what a child with disability, does to normative and idealised notions of parenting (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). This is no place for the ghost of the idealised and institutionalised neoliberal parenthood to be resurrected as haunting individualised assemblage.

Non-disabled parenting to a disabled child finds its own juncture, “a position of liminality” (Ryan and Runswick-Cole, 2008, p. 199) that has historically positioned parents in a contentious solitary space between disabled lives and non-disabled lives. Non-disabled parents in this context have been identified “at worst, as ‘oppressors’ of their disabled children and, at best, no more than ‘allies” (Runswick-Cole, 2013, p.105). Contentious terrain indeed as my son’s plea that I ‘stop following him around’ haunts my thoughts as I write and trouble my own motherwork practice with and for my child living with disability. It is in this context that the disparenting might trouble such tensions through the disruption of a discourse that favours and prescribes value to hyper-individualised and independent lives (Power, 2008). Commoning offers potential for *all* lives, which must include the child, within the sphere of feminist becoming-parent to celebrate collectivity and reimagine inter-dependent relationships (Power, 2008).

Confined within the liminal space described above, other intersections of marginalisation becoming differentially vulnerable to magnification (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). The parent of a disabled child is more likely than a parent of a non-disabled child to be unable to engage in paid labour, to be parenting in a single-parent household and to be living on a low-income (Buckner and Yeandle, 2017). The feminist disparenting commons have trouble to make with the gender inequalities persistently reproduced and inflated within this space. In austere neoliberal times it is specifically the *good* mother who is idealised as being simultaneously present as primary carer in her children's lives, intensively nurturing the development of child-as-brain whilst sharing the burden of individual financial responsibility via paid labour (Pimlott-Wilson, 2015). Whilst employment rates for mothers continues to rise in the United Kingdom, the burden of reducing paid working hours to try and 'balance' unpaid motherwork falls disproportionately to mothers (ONS, 2019b). In the specific context of parenting a disabled child in the United Kingdom, the main caring role is more likely to be carried out by the mother who in turn, is considerably less likely to be in paid employment than mothers of children without disability (Buckner and Yeandle, 2017).

Contributing to the precarity of gendered intra-section of precarity particularly in this liminal space, particularly in the early years context of this thesis are significant disparities in both the affordability, availability and suitability of the inclusive childcare required to engage in paid labour (Buckland and Glass, 2014). Entwining this reality with the neoliberal idealised *good* mother (Pimlott-Wilson, 2015) feminist disparenting commons troubles the notion of *what* work is valued via economic market-contribution de-centralization (Jensen and Tyler, 2012). Adding to this particular juncture of precarity is the discourse mobilised through early intervention programmes and parenting programmes that situate emphasis upon parental responsibility for producing and moulding children who will be economically productive and not burdensome to the future economy (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018).

The spectre of the bad mother label looms over the mothers in this context as an increasing emphasis on neuro/psy-parenting perpetuates normative ideals of the child as desired by and for market-futurity (Blum, 2007). Parents and disproportionately mothers are at risk of blame in a culture of early intervention that is revealed under

critique as a site of “cruel optimism” (Berlant, 2010, p.94). The attachment of intervention to a neuro/psy-prescribed norm is a form of cruel optimism in as much as the “mythical status of the ‘normal’ child as an end point” (Curran and Runswick-Cole, 2014, p.1619) is a toxic discourse through which to measure, manage and intervene in disabled children’s lives. Children who fail to meet prescribed outcomes that are impossibly tied to normalised developmental stages, promised by such interventions are left in an Other space of marginalization, exclusion and failure to fulfil the productive/consumptive neoliberal citizenship demands (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2018).

In attempting to exempt themselves from this mother blame, mothers have been described as actively seeking an accepted liminal space somewhere between the poles of “Us and Them” (Runswick-Cole, 2014). The ‘us’ in this context is the idealised neoliberal citizen and the ‘them’ an undesirable economic burden (Runswick-Cole, 2014). Accepting a status of a devalued disability of deficit and labels of pathologized difference promises an exception status somewhere between the us and them that may be worthy of state welfare support (Runswick-Cole, 2014). This liminal status perpetuates inequalities in terms of the market value that is prescribed to a life and the expectations and social and economic opportunities available to the child (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2018). It also does little to reposition the mother in relation to her individualised parental accountability (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2018).

A feminist disparenting commons offers a space in which to theoretically reimagine and redistribute responsibility and accountability for a child’s care and to disrupt the complex and differential precarity that shape the experiences and practices of becoming-parent. The feminist commitment to becoming parenting as collective commoning practice seeks to disrupt the ongoing reproduction of persisting gender inequalities and the particular precarity facing mothers in this liminal space. Whilst I have focused specifically on an intersection of disparenting that draws upon Goodley and Runswick-Cole’s (2016) Dishuman theorising I remain vigilant that my focus is not a juncture that operates in isolation from other intersections of marginalization and oppression. Through a celebration of disability “for its productive potential but also normative ways of being” (Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016, p.779) the

neoliberal assemblage of the good neuro-parent can be opened to new possibilities for dynamically re-configuring kinder and relationally entangled modes of parenting (Barad, 2007).

### 3.5 Re-membering Feminist DisParenting ↔ Disabled Childhoods ↔ Commoning

Throughout this plateau neoliberal and neuro-developmental sedimented institutions of parenthoods in the context of disabled childhoods have re-turned. The feminist disparenting commons has articulated an ongoing opening towards im/possible relational inter-dependence of entangled lives beyond the dyadic parent-child relationship (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019). The indeterminacy of re-membering disparenting does not assert definitive answers to any question of what the feminist disparenting commons is, it is not articulated as yet another narrative to be sedimented, but rather invites the ongoing discursive-materialisations of what it can *do* (Barad, 2018). For the parents entangled with and through this thesis and for my own parenthood, it invites tracing and provokes asking questions about the relational entanglements of the human and non-humans that intra-actively (re)produce parenting practices (Barad, 2018). For the entangled education, social and healthcare professionals discursively materialising with parenting policies and the scientism under-pinning dominant discourses, the disparent commons provokes a re-membering at each re-configuration, every entangled encounter, that parenting practices are always multitudes of response-ability, not sedimented exteriorised dyadic sites for blame, guilt or unjust precarity (Barad, 2018).



## Plateau 4

### Literature Entanglement #3: Making Trouble with DisChildhoods

“We were now holding a squirming child who had no truck with conventional genders or with human exceptionalism. This was a child born for sympoiesis – for becoming-with and making-with a motley clutch of earth others.”

Haraway, 2016a, p.136

#### 4.1 Entangling Childhoods ↔ Disability ↔ Psy-Developmentalism

With and through this plateau (re)configurations of an indeterminate child are returned, stirring up the sedimented configurations of psy-developmentalism’s child and disabled Other child. Pre-determined developmental trajectories and their entangled expectations become murky waters whose ripples diffract again...again...again, refusing to settle (Barad, 2007). Unfolding timespaces demand attention is paid to the child’s agency in their intra-active becoming(s) (Barad, 2007). Taken for granted assumptions about what children should be, what the disabled children entangled with this thesis should be, at any pre-defined chronological age are un/done (Murriss, 2016). There is an ongoing re/configuring of celebration of childhood differencing and a re-mattering of disability as a valued way of *doing* childhood(s) as relational entanglements.

#### 4.2 Making Kin

This squirming, wriggling child-to-come is the one who I am trying to keep hold of as I write. This not-yet-child slips and squirms away from my thoughts. The child will not be held as a captive creation moulded by the conventions and dominating discourses of the society into which it is born (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984). I am letting go of the child I once knew as a natural being. The seemingly inevitable natural stage of life I used to call childhood is becoming un/settled (Nandy, 2010). If this thesis is shaking the “Cartesian bedrock of uncontested truth” (St. Pierre, 2015, p. 75), it must then shake free the young lives that have been held captive and regulated by common sense ‘truths’ and representational discourses (Maclure, 2013b). In this plateau it is the common-sense representational language of the Western humanist child from which a line of flight is escaping as I think and write, entangled with a dynamic pursuit chasing and tracing



flee(t)ing thoughts. The challenge is to not revert back to the pull of the stagnant, hierarchical and judgemental representational knowledges of the child and to try to “not know what everybody else knows” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 173). To do this I discursively-materialise thinking with *dischild(ren)* throughout this plateau. The dischild is articulated through Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard’s “DisHuman paradox” (2016, p.773) to stay with the trouble that disability makes for normative ideas and ideals about children and childhoods (Goodley *et al*, 2016). The dis makes explicit my desire throughout this thesis to value and embrace disabled childhoods without Othering or marginalizing against a separated ‘norm’ (Goodley *et al*, 2016). The dis is a discursive-materialization of a committed resistance against the habitual normative modes of conceptualising psy-developmentalism’s child and to “contest the rigidity of what counts as human” (Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016, p.782) and what counts as valued childhood(s).

This is not a plateau of philosophical musings about dischildhood for thinking’s sake nor is it concerned with any linear tracing of historical creations of dischildren through chronological time. Thinking differently about, with and for differencing is an ongoing entanglement, set in intra-active motion with a desperate need for a world in which agential-dishumans can be born, live and die as *kin*. The kin I write with and of marched from the pages of Haraway’s (2016a) ‘Staying with the Trouble’ and nestled into my thesis. They are not kin understood by familial ties but re-mattered in a far more collective and commoning sense whereby all agential-dishumans relationally produced on Earth are kin and hierarchy becomes un/done (Haraway, 2016a). Lines of flight connect kin unpredictably, intra-actively engaged in the relational re/making of other kin for better world(s) yet to come; making kin is a generative means by which to live with each other, for each other and the world(s) in *kindness* (Haraway, 2016a).

The preoccupation in this thick present timespace then is to “make kin, not babies!” (Haraway, 2016a, p.103). If Haraway’s slogan is befitting of a kinship to generate freedom for marginalised people beyond oppressive hierarchies and orders (Haraway, 2016a), then this becomes an exciting and experimental reorientation seeking to re-matter disabled children as an inseparable part of ongoing agential-dishuman kinships. The generative connectivity of intra-active kinships offers liberation from the

sedimented confines of representational language and dominant discourses that Other and marginalize disabled children against purported absolute 'truths' (Maclure, 2013b). This is a lively opening to something "wild in language: something that exceeds propositional meaning and resists the laws of representation" (Maclure, 2013b, p.658). Language is shaken with the hope that something new can fall from the void between the representational words. Experimenting with something wild beyond representation re/patterns ways of knowing and becoming with the entangled worlds intra-actively re/configured by children. These worlds are becoming with and of the Earth, freed from the captivity of representational thinking and knowing, to disrupt the tyranny of the common-sense dictator that enforces hierarchies of human value as though they are natural and inevitable (Barad, 2007).

There is nothing inevitable about the shortened life expectancy of people in England with identified learning disability (NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2019). It is neither natural nor inevitable that disabled children must be educated in segregation from their unlabelled peers or excluded from mainstream education (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard and Runswick-Cole, 2019). It need not be inevitable that children with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty than their non-disabled kin (Shaw, Bernardes, Trethaway and Menzies, 2016). From their earliest years, children with disabilities in the United Kingdom are set apart from their kin and forced to travel upon an unjust trajectory of life-long inequality (Issac, 2017). These purported inevitabilities stagnate and oppress through the unwavering nature of representationalism and its discursive-materializations of childhood disability/disabled children (Barad, 2007). It is not then theorising for theory's sake to reorient thinking about childhood disability. It is an urgent and ongoing response to disrupt and escape the seemingly inescapable representational truths that underpin the political, social and geographical landscapes that currently shape the inequality in the lives of disabled children (Allen, 2011). Living *kindly* with and for the diversity of our agential-dishuman kinship cannot happen in practice without *thinking* and knowing differently (Allen, 2011).

Thinking differently offers a means by which to attend to the injustices of ableism that discriminate against the disabled child *now*, in the thick present (Haraway, 2016a). There is an urgent need to think, to theorise and to re-turn knowing

again...again...again...in the present, for the present which is re-made at every moment of ongoingness (Haraway, 2016a). Theorising utopian futures and abstract worlds of humanist salvation or post-apocalyptic dystopias are too little, too late for the children of this time in which I write, in which these words are read and in which the children who deserve to be held as kin are living (Haraway, 2016a). It may appear impatient but to await salvation from current injustices or to simply give up does nothing to guarantee a timescape in which the agential-dishuman and other species may thrive together. A becoming towards kinship needs to be a becoming-in-the-now, in the thick present (Haraway, 2016a).



### 4.3 Performative Childhoods Beyond Representationalism

Performativity is properly understood as a contestation of the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies than they deserve.

Barad, 2007, p.133

Becoming in the thick present (Haraway, 2016a) means un/doing the developmental binaries that situate the dischild as intra-sectionally separated from the dominant category of adult that is idealised and sedimented through neoliberal-ableist and psycho-developmental discourses (Shaviro, 1997). The dischild in this context is exteriorised from the fully human category of normative adult through the intra-acting Otherised identities of disability and age (Goodley, 2014). Becoming in the thick present means refusing a unilinear psycho-developmental discourse and (re)configuring towards ongoing collective unions of kin, of “commoners...inscribed within larger wholes” (Bollier and Helfrich, 2012, p.xv). The focus of living shifts from development, linear trajectories and milestones to commoning, becoming and flourishing *kindly* and response-ably (Murriss, 2016).

The power language has to hold the fixed dischild figuration against the idealised dominant figuration of adult is contested in this plateau but it is not new language that is sought (Barad, 2007). I am not seeking to redefine a fixed or pre-determined dischild,

“since to define is to return to the logic of representation, where words ‘refer’ to entities as if they were separate and distinct from one another” (Maclure, 2013b, p.661).

Instead, this plateau plays with the squirming possibilities of a performative account of the very young, of the very new post-dishumans birthed as kin into an intra-acting world that unfolds unpredictably and rhizomatically, beyond linear trajectories.

Performativity in this context is understood to disrupt representational habits of thought and the power of language that confines thinking and knowing. What matters is the young body *as matter*, intra-acting as an “active participant” (Barad, 2007, p.136) in the ongoing becoming-agential-dishuman kinship commons.

Performativity in this account of the young agential dishumans, habitually contained within thoughts of age-constrained dischildhoods, is a commitment to dynamic becomings. Performativity dynamically entangles discursive-material practices over sedimented representational descriptors, to doings/becomings over beings (Barad, 2007). The relations between younger and older agential-dishumans are reconfiguring as dynamic and ongoing intra-actions. This is not a plateau of external observation of the dischild-as-other, it is a performative account of knowing-in-being that insists on becoming-with the world beyond the sedentary habits of thought that separate and materialise dischildren and adults apart (Barad, 2007). The binaries of language, particularly in this context the co-constituting binaries of child/adult and disabled/able are troubled as they refuse to settle and the fixed confines of language disrupted (Murriss, 2016). The habits of Othering via linguistic binaries make trouble for the ongoing “discriminatory ageist practices” (Murriss, 2016, p.45) and ableist practices that Other and marginalise children and deny their agency in their own intra-active becomings (Barad, 2007). Un/doing representation makes further trouble by explicitly un/doing assumptions of adult ‘mature’ language as *the* site of valued knowledge production (Murriss, 2016), there are other ways of discursively-materialising knowledge (Barad, 2007).

A performative agential dishuman account of the young opens intra-active and ongoing practices of becoming-as-matter to reconfigurations beyond the confinement of pre-determined time and its associated fixed developmental trajectories and categories (Barad, 2007). Agential dischildren are not contained within an exterior ‘space’ but are

intra-actively, agentially producing their inseparable spacetime from within (Barad, 2007). Becoming-agential-dishuman is becoming as an inextricable part of an intra-active *spacetime-matter* (Barad, 2007). Re-situating an agential ontoepistemology demands response-ability from within any discursive-materialization of theory/practice with dischildren, to the injustices that we participate in materializing that devalue the agency of dischildren in Haraway's ongoing thick present (Haraway, 2016a). Becoming response-able is an ongoing demand with and for the reconfiguration of possibilities, opening the invitation for knowledge production to new valued knowers and new ways of knowing (Murriss, 2016).

This invitation reimagines liberation for agential-dishumans conventionally marginalized and othered by normative neoliberal-ableist constructions that separate and organise normative childhoods, disabled childhoods and idealised adulthoods. If "the conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought" (Deleuze, 1994, p.183) then the developmentally and neoliberally-dependent status of representational 'adult' is inevitably rocked by the aftershocks of this destruction of representational thought. Through writing and thinking otherwise I try to kick the habits of deep dichotomies and linear human trajectories (Murriss, 2016). Beyond the limits of this language, reconfigurations *are* possible. An ethical way of intra-actively producing knowing-in-being is possible as ethics and ontology and epistemology become intra-actively entangled with the lives of the not-yet determinable dishuman kin (Barad, 2007).

This "ethico-onto-epistemological" (Barad, 2007, p185) practice of knowing young agential dishumans is an opening of the cage of representation in which they are held as fixed matter, differentiated from the normative category of adult by virtue of the negative; that is what they do not yet possess to attain fully human adult identity (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984). The dischild who was knowable via identifying what made it *not* an adult through this negative process is wriggling free as boundaries blur (Murriss, 2016). The inter-section (re)marking normative *and* disabled childhoods from normative adulthoods is further troubled as an indeterminate mode of differencing entangles to make trouble for the fixed dualisms of negative differencing (Barad, 2014). Dualistic differences in this context re/mark what is lacking in the identity that opposes

that signifying 'I' of adult (Barad, 2014). For the dischild held apart from the signifying normative adult by habits of thought surrounding 'natural' age identities and their associated psy-developmental competencies, negative binarized differencing simultaneously preserves and generates the 'commons sense' status quo surrounding knowledges and expectations that inter-sectionally differentiate the disabled child from the adult. The "rights, entitlements, obligations" (King, 2012, p. 111) and developmental competencies prescribed to adulthood that currently dominate Western thinking are thus preserved. Crucially in the neoliberal context, negative differencing protects neoliberal interests by re-producing economic productivity and normative citizenship as a stagnating goal for successful attainment of the full adulthood/human 'I' (King, 2012).

The neoliberal adult in this system of re-producing negative disabled-child/adult difference is articulated as the "transcendental signifier" (Colebrook, 2002, p.20), that is a subject signifying the concept of completeness and against which the child is universally understood through a humanist lens (Colebrook, 2002). The deficit child is fated in this context to function as mirror. In this context the child-as-mirror not only reflects the "figure of [adult hu-]man at twice its natural size" (Woolf, 1928, p37) but also serves to reflect back neoliberal societal values that are magnified as an inescapable "status-quo" (Chomsky, 1999, p.15). The reflection of a magnified adult maintains a superior relational subject. The adult is distinguishable by purported biological and developmental completeness and belonging of a different world, an adult world inhabited by the fully-human knowledge makers (Sonu and Benson, 2016).

In contrast, the dischild world in this context is inhabited by inferior, passive and dependent fixed-identity subjects (Murriss, 2016); all consumed with their apprenticeships for future membership in the other-world of adulthood (Sonu and Benson, 2016). As such, the dischild is positioned as "quasi-human" (Sonu and Benson, 2016, p. 231) by virtue of its lingering as not quite fully-human in a demarked phase set aside and apart afore adulthood (Sonu and Benson, 2016). For disabled children this is felt deeply through the inter-sections of both age and disability. The *quasi-* prefix is a reminder of the fully human qualities purported to be lacking in the dischild-as-nearly-human but not quite (Sonu and Benson, 2016). This positioning of the dischild justifies

educational and socio-political practices that work *on* dischildren rather than *with* dischildren (Sonu and Benson, 2016) as fellow commoners, as intra-acting agential kin (Barad, 2007). The quasi-human demarcation of dischildhood risks eternal captivity as not-quite human for the disabled children who may never fulfil the normative demands of fully-human neoliberal adulthood.

The right to full citizenship and associated equal value within the commons of kinship is a right for all. This is a demand that disrupts thinking in the context of educational and social practices that currently Other and perpetuate the quasi-human status of marginalised intersections of life against universalised and normative trajectory and age-bound life phases. Ageism as intersection of marginalisation is often associated with discriminatory social and economic practices that negatively impact older humans (Barber and Tan, 2018). In this plateau however, it is opened as a site of discursively-materialising marginalising practices and “power differentials” (Murriss, 2016, p.88) that position humans as other to normative and completes human status by virtue of excessively normalised and naturalised age identities and expectations (Murriss, 2016). Ethico-ontoepistemological practice of knowing children through intra-actions with them, only ever as agential kin, forces an intensity in this plateau that I articulate (for now) as : worlding with agential dishuman childhoods (Barad, 2007).



#### **4.4 Becoming Agential Dishuman Child**

Making trouble is not the neoliberal way as it undermines the neoliberal assertion that there is no alternative (Chomsky, 1999). Making trouble requires an attentiveness to intra-active ongoing practices of becoming-agential-dishuman in the thick present of the now (Haraway, 2016a). The representational dischild-as-mirror is shattered and as the pieces of representational reflection and magnification fall so too do the images of normative adulthood. Becoming-agential-dishuman is not about reassembling the pieces, it is about dynamically re-patterning the pieces that have existed within and as an agential part of the spacetime-matter constituting worlds. The agential dishuman is granted dynamic agency as spacetime-matter engage in ongoing reconfiguration that dis/rupts the absolute separability of the fully human (adult) and quasi-human

(developmentalism's normative child and marginalised Other-children) thus disrupting the habits of negative and fixed identity differences (Barad, 2007). Agency is something done as part of "the world-body space in dynamic structuration" (Barad, 2007, p.185), not something held or assigned (Barad, 2007). Agentially intra-actively becoming opens to not-yet im/possibilities for re-configuring the powers that transmit "through repeated application of pressure" (Barad, 2007, p189) on the quasi-human body-as-matter, forces that shapes potential and suppresses those struggling against oppressions (Barad, 2007).

Repositioning the developmentalism's disabled children within this spacetime-matter as becoming agential dishuman kin within a re-turning commons un/does their quasi-status. Re-patterning possibilities entangle for weaving chronological advantage together with newness of life and re-threading value through young ways of knowing and novice ways of becoming with the world (Haynes and Murriss, 2013). These im/possibilities trouble the dischild confined as passive recipient of adult knowledge and neoliberal governance and redemptive normalising interventions (Moss, 2014). In this plateau, trouble is most keenly made for the rigid developmentalists, for the neoliberal child-for-the-futurists and for the Eurocentric application of the child as metaphor for Otherised peoples (Mills and Lefrançois, 2018). These captors of representational dischild-as-mirror have silently protected and reproduced desires for a dischild as lacking full human status. The silence in this context is desire at work; protecting the status quo as unchallengeable (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). Embracing this trouble and challenging these silences means skipping with my thoughts to play in my thesis, with my thesis, trying to "recapture what has been lost through ageing away" (Haynes and Murriss, 2013, p. 217) from a paradoxically pre-determined yet simultaneously past childhood of my own.

The agential dishuman youngling hiding in these silences, hidden by the status quo, is mattering in its materialization(s) (Barad, 2007). They are mattering with spacetime-kin as a part of the ongoing world(s), as a part of this becoming-thesis. This is but a pause before another intra-acts with the kin written into these pages, remaking them anew with their thoughts, with their comments, with their theories (Barad, 2007). The dischild as pre-determined, discursively-materialised by representational language has



perpetuated the condemnation of dischild-as-mirror serving to reflect not only the normative desires of separate adults but the desires that serve developmental notions of progress in and across cultures and societies (Nandy, 2010). The adult knowledges that shape psy-developmentalism's representational dischildhoods have determined not only the persisting ethicoontoepistemological injustices that articulate the dischild as quasi-human identity (Murriss, 2016) but intra-actively connect to relational discursive-materializations beyond (Burman, 2008). These developmental connections sustain wider ethicoontoepistemological injustices by virtue of inter-secting and intra-acting colonial, racialised, gendered and disabled identities within an inferior quasi-human exteriorised realm (Mills and Lefrançois, 2018).

The language of dischildren in all these contexts has relied upon an incomplete image of quasi-, inferior humans (Nandy, 2010). Where disability intra-acts with age, the exclusion from full-humanness is re-affirmed by neoliberal-ableist desires and the purportedly indisputable scientism of the psy-disciplines. The representationally constructed dischild figuration has been simultaneously determined by what is 'childlike,' such as their fragility, innocence and ignorance but also what is feared by account of their dangerous 'childish' potential (Nandy, 2010). This danger is imagined in discourses of childish rebellion, wilfulness and savagery and threatens the neoliberal status-quo of the rational adult-world (Nandy, 2010). This dualistic colonial imagery of child justified the Othering of colonized peoples as culturally and socio-politically primitive and immature thus requiring guidance and historically violent interventions towards social 'maturity' (Nandy, 2010). Developmentalism begins to (re)turn as its violence to Othered societies, cultures and peoples is becoming exposed. The "civilization of the children of 'savages' in the colonial world was an inherent part of the colonization mission" (Valentin and Meinert, 2009, p.23) of the nineteenth century. This representational idea continues in the global South in modern times with development and schooling projects heavily dependent upon donations from the self-purported 'mature' global North (Valentin and Meinert, 2009).

Inherent within any linguistic construct granting power to a particular knowledge that justifies normalising civilization processes of the Othered, whether children, colonized, racialized, disabled or gendered peoples, are unethical practices of violence and

marginalization (Fricker, 2007). In this context, developmental and educational practices are troubled by an ethico-ontoepistemological framework that demands becoming response-able for the ethical intra-actions that we participate in (re)producing from within (Barad, 2007). Representational knowledges done onto peoples and cultures is an assumption of exteriority and absolute separateness, a position dis/rupted and un/done within and through an agential realist framework (Barad, 2007). Spacetime returns as the Other can no longer be held as absolutely exterior and begins to assert its place within, as belonging and always kin (Barad, 2014). An ethico-ontoepistemology un/does the epistemic belittling of the knowledges of Othered people who are simultaneously ontologically positioned as passive quasi-humans (Murriss, 2016). “Subjugating notions of development” (Mills and Lefrançois, 2018, p.519) that sustain the childlike/childish figurations that universalise discourses of progress and sustain both injustices to dischildren and cultural injustices begin to return, opening to new possibilities.

These representational foundations of developmentalism entail a complex interplay of cultural, socio-economic and psychologized desire (Burman, 2008). The desire at work in this context regenerates images of mature civilisations and people that contrast with cultures and people positioned as inferior and requiring intervention (Mills and Lefrançois, 2018). The desire protects the status-quo of superior neoliberal economies and of able-bodied children as insurance vehicles for market futurity (Burman, 2008). This desiring silently positions young children as Foucauldian “abilities machines” (Senellert, 2008, p.229), an identity centralizing skills and knowledges as a site of capital worth in society: human capital (Schultz, 1961). In this context disabled children are de-valued and the dischild is threatened. Young abilities machines, the skills and knowledges that matter to the markets are psychologically universalised and normalised (Burman, 2008). Psychologised human capital development has largely protected itself from being overthrown via naturalisation as unchallengeable scientific developmental knowledge of the mind (Burman, 2008).

Psy-naturalised development has been sedimented via a knowledge construction of a mental life as a scientific part of the bio-physical medicalised life (Burman, 2008). Normative development trajectories from birth are linear constructions, presupposing a

fixed age-determined line of flight with an unchallengeable goal of adult 'maturity' at the end (Murriss, 2016). Chronological age has been married with normative 'mental' age expectations and milestones (Burman, 2008). Failure to meet age graded expectations makes the dischild precarious as disability re-turns as entangled site of pathologization and of increased medical, social and psy-professional surveillance (Burman, 2008). The disabled (dis)child is becoming separated from idealised child in this figuration. The othered disabled child is set onto an alternate and fixed Other trajectory of eternal quasi-human status by virtue of simultaneously failing to reach the prescribed maturational descriptors of adulthood and failing to break free from the linguistic representational constructs of childhood. Remaining othered as linear-life-long quasi-human means disproportionate vulnerability to neoliberal socio-political marginalisation and discrimination (Bates, Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2017).

Tentacles squirm, seeking to tangle and provoke dis/continuities into a naturalised unilinear developmental trajectory of maturation (Burman, 2008) ruptured this normative universalised and pre-determined psy-assemblage of a 'child'. Age and disability as sites of marginalising kin are becoming un/done as agential-dishuman intra-active commoners become relationally from within. The living rhizome-creature gains momentum as tentacles tear through the fabric of the chronological timescape (*Chronos*) in which these 'mental age' stages cavort as dictators of the norm and are dethroned (Haraway, 2016c). The timescape re-turns, alive, becoming agential realist time (Barad, 2012). Time becoming something agential-dischildren *do* and intra-actively produce (Barad, 2007).

Milestones begin to re-configure towards something more akin to an unpredictable and indeterminate Deleuzian and Guattarian (1987) plateau. A non-linear, unstable mapping of intensities in life, they are neither successive nor pre-determined (Murriss, 2016). These intensities are the agential-mappings of the dishumans in Haraway's Chthulucene, a timescape which grounds focus upon the now, not futurity or maturity (Haraway, 2016a). Poignantly, they are not enforced from exterior discourses or by exteriorised adults. . Normative notions of development in *chronos* have depended upon the dualized notion of abnormality for their existence and regeneration. Troubling dualisms troubles the hierarchy they enforce, abnormal cannot be known

without normal, the child cannot be known without the adult (Burman, 2008)  
Psychological stages of development and age identities of child/adult shift to becomings as kin, as “fellow travellers” (Murriss, 2016, p.89) in these commons and in these times of aion that give possibility for inhabiting new ways of becoming through new times.

The human becoming agential-dishuman has already taken flight as rupture of intensity with and through previous plateaus in this thesis. What the ‘dis’ in the post-dishuman reconfiguration of a child offers in this plateau is a ‘dissing’ of pre-determined notions of development and asserts possibilities for re-configuring what development means for *all* dischildren (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). The ‘dis’ foregrounds the trouble disability makes for the unwavering universalised psy-developmental trajectories that include and Other by virtue of normal/abnormal dualisms (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016). Re-turning psy-developmentalism towards becoming a concept of disdevelopment challenges the humanist constructions of chronological time that rigidly enforce a lifespan bounded and determined by ages and stages. Disdevelopment makes trouble for the quasi-human as the notion of a maturational goal of complete-humanness will no longer stand still. We are all ongoing, neither complete nor incomplete but intra-actively produced with the humans and non-humans with which we entangle (Barad, 2007). Status is not important, becoming kin, *for and with* our kin is the real trouble (Haraway, 2016a). The future is not ours. And it is not theirs. All that I can write about is the thick present we are becoming with. There is a lot of trouble to be made to ensure equitable justice for all the agential-diskin that are re-configuring (Haraway, 2016a).

#### **4.5 Re-Membering Disabled Childhoods and Indeterminate Relational Encounters**

Throughout this plateau I have come to resist the urge to ask what a disabled child is and open to the indeterminate im/possibilities of the dischildren I have yet to response-ably meet. These children are my own, they are those with whom I am becoming re-search companion through this thesis and those with whom I might become educator-companion in other timespaces, at each re-making of relationally co-constituted world(s). Without the limits of pre-determined unwavering psy-developmental demands, I am becoming curious without need for definitive answer as to the

transformational potential of the ontoepistemological “ethical move to allow the child ‘in’” (Murriss, 2016, p.246) and embrace the agency of the child to assert their differencing. The common-sense hierarchy of adult/child is dis/rupted and re-membered as ongoing mutually-constituted relational encounters (Murriss, 2016). This shift disrupts the neoliberal-ableist agendas and psy-developmental assertions that have infiltrated early childhood parenting practices and education (Moss, 2014) and opens to im/possibilities with the stories of disabled childhoods entangled with, through and beyond this thesis.



## Plateau 5... Methodicide in the Chthulucene

### 5.1 Entangling Beyond Humanism's Methodologies

Throughout this plateau I write, think and theorize re-search inquiry beyond the limits of pre-determined humanist methodologies that maintain an ontological orbit around the individualised human (Barad, 2007). Inspired by Barad I am seeking ways to sustain lively re-searching practices that chase and embrace “the infinitude” (Barad, 2012, p. 10) of (im)possibilities for knowing parents and disabled children still to come. Making trouble for instrumentalized pre-determined methodologies, I re-orient re-searching practices as ongoing theoretical matterings of lively, unconstrained and indeterminate re-search practicing (St. Pierre, 2015). I find myself in a middle place, provoking the idea(s) that through re-searching in other ways, other ways of thinking and knowing “justices-to-come” for parents and disabled children might be made possible (Barad, 2012). This is an invitation to entangle with a lively journey that patterns the constellation of my re-search-thinking-theories-practices.

### 5.2 Methodicide and Mattering in the Chthulucene

What happens when human exceptionalism and bounded individualism, those old saws of Western philosophy and political economics, become unthinkable in the best sciences, whether natural or social?  
Seriously unthinkable: not available to think with.

Haraway, 2016c, p.1

#### 5.2.1 *Tentacular Performative Discursive-(Re)Mattering*

It matters to matter how thoughts are thought (Haraway, 2016c). This is a spacetime that desperately needs an undoing of “thinking as usual” (Haraway, 2016c, p.2) in the understanding of how disabled children and their parents come to matter. Their mattering is a matter for us all, not just the individual parents entangled within a parent-child assemblage. Entanglement is not simply to be ‘tangled up with’ but an ongoing existential dependence with other elements within any becoming-assemblage; the pronoun ‘I’ is becoming troubled (Barad, 2007). Attending to the dynamic

complexities of mattering and meaning as “inextricably fused” elements (Barad, 2007, p.3) demands a re-turning of thought surrounding the representational concepts woven through anthropocentric ontologies, epistemologies and ethical engagements (Barad, 2007). Socio-analytic practices and the methodologies that guide them are on the move. The move is not linear but a re-turning dynamism of the thick present (Barad, 2014). This re-turning is understood in the Baradian sense of “turning it over and over again” (Barad, 2014, p.168) rather than reflecting on what has gone before.

A shift beyond human exceptionalism means acknowledging the limits of representational language (Barad, 2007). It means accepting the insufficiency of grammatical structures with their demands for linear time tenses and bound absolute categories of gendered and individualised pronouns (Rovelli, 2018). It means accepting that there is no definitive universal response in this thick present to the problem of *how* to understand this complex intra-acting world or the dynamic human and non-human inhabitants within it (Rovelli, 2018). *Intra*-action in this context describes the inextricable elements of any apparatus as they are becoming-together as opposed to common notions of *interaction* between individualised separate elements of an assemblage (Barad, 2007). What haunts my thinking as I follow the lines of flight that unpredictably rupture throughout this thesis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), is the provocation that there are far greater powers at play in the ongoing reconfigurations of matter and mattering in this world than those which oblige linguistic representational categorisation and thematic containment.

I am becoming *within* a re-mattering of the world beyond the limits imposed by linguistic structures and grammatical tenses (Barad, 2007). Re-mattering describes the ongoingness of reconfigurations of matter, a simultaneous emergence of “substance and significance” (Barad, 2007, p.3). The ‘human’ is a part of emerging physical systems of matter but any presumed privileged hierarchy of existence or individualised agency in the world’s becoming is no longer upheld. Human is as much an emergent system as any other species-as-kin (Barad, 2007). The representational modes of thought that presume the pre-existence of things or beings as an unchallengeable status quo are swept away with the ongoingness of a re-mattering world (Barad, 2007).

Discourse is no longer signified by linguistic structures and grammatical systems that describe something that pre-exists but emerges through the ongoing re-mattering, entangled with the materializations it co-constitutes (Barad, 2007). Knowledge is no longer a pursuit of representational meanings or categorisations and neither is it tethered to words or grammar. Knowing is becoming with and of the dynamic entangled assemblages of which we are intra-actively co-constituted by and with (Barad, 2007). Knowing is an immersive practice of production, an exhilarating openness to the ongoing possibilities that demand response, demand to matter (Barad, 2007).

Meaning comes to matter as matter comes to meaning, thus “being/becoming (ontology) and knowing (epistemology)” (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer, 2013, p.673) are inseparably entangled (Barad, 2007). This “fundamental inseparability” (Barad, 2007, p.26) is the middle-place from which Barad’s (2007) agential realist framework-in-flux can begin to entangle with re-search. As a philosophical framework an agential realist perspective troubles the notion of absolute separations and makes explicit the *dynamism* of ongoing boundary re-configurations that re-matter the world(s) (Barad, 2007). Agential realism situates material-discursive knowledge making practices as immersive practices of becoming with and as a part of the world (Barad, 2007). This dynamic framework opens knowledge re-turning practices up to possibilities that are not dependent upon pre-existing representational language, indeed there are no assumptions of pre-configured entanglements at all (Barad, 2007). “We must not allow ourselves to be confused by an inadequate grammar” (Rovelli, 2018, p.99) or to be confused by that which refuses representation. This ontoepistemological entanglement is something I understand via an ongoing intrigue with the *tentacular* (Haraway, 2016c) entangling with Barad’s notion of *performativity* (Barad, 2007).

Tentacular has its becoming-rhizomatic roots in the Latin “*tentacular*, meaning “to feel” and *tentare*, meaning “to feel” and “to try” (Haraway, 2016c, p.2). To *feel* and to *try* make explicit the more-than representational in performative ontoepistemological practises. The performativity in this context is an understanding that knowing is not an external process of observation but a “direct material engagement with the world” (Barad, 2007, p.49). The re-searcher is dynamically re-positioning (as process) as *part of* and becoming-with the re-searched and re-turned entanglement (Barad, 2007).



Performative tentacular entanglement as a practice of knowing dethrones representational language but does not banish it to exile; rather it re-situates it as emerging simultaneously with and through the human and non-human emerging matter it is entangled with. Tentacular performative discursive practices are not pre-determined by essentialised or individualised human will but through the intra-acting re-configurations of the world(s) that re-turn boundaries and categories and the meanings prescribed to them (Barad, 2007).

The indeterminant possibilities opening up at each moment of the world's re-turning demand an intra-active responsibility for our *part* in the world's reconfiguring (Barad, 2007). We are never entirely response-able but always a part of how entanglements are re-made, what boundaries and categories are re-turned and how they come to discursively matter (Barad, 2007). It is an inextricably ethical practice of knowing in being, thus an ethicoontoepistemology is required to ensure any practices of knowing in being are always enactments of explicitly ethical response-abilities at every turn. This is an ethicality that shapes the re-searchers becoming as much as the re-search. The re-searcher is always accountable for their role in the matter that is made to matter and the matter that is excluded from mattering at every re-turn (Barad, 2007).

This productive entanglement of material-discursive re-mattering opens every moment of (re)configuration up to new possibilities of *kinder* worlds. The marginalized 'other' can no longer be maintained as exteriorized as they are re-situated as relational and within the world as a part of an ongoing entanglement of becoming-kin (Haraway, 2016a). It is the responsibility as kin to attend to current practices of mattering that limit the possibilities for new ways of mattering. Invoking a "politics of possibilities" (Barad, 2007, p.246) means going beyond the representational categories of individualised identities that perpetuate and contain various configurations of intersectional injustice and othered identities (Barad, 2007). This is not more of the same but an insistence that unthinkable possibilities may be knowable through tentacular performative ethicoontoepistemological practicing. Levelling the field of accountability in a co-constituted and intra-actively enfolding spacetime-matter offers new possibilities for dynamic remaking(s) of unduly individualised representational materializations of responsibility, accountability and blame (Barad, 2007).

### 5.2.2 Methodicide

In troubling categorisation and labelling, representation and pre-determinism, I am becoming unfaithful to the methodologies I had previously courted in my academic writing, reading and thinking. This line of flight makes trouble for what is knowable as 'data' and for the exclusions from this category that I participate in enacting. It makes trouble for the pre-determined representational 'rules' about what counts as analysis and I am for now becoming intra-actively entangled with feminist philosopher Mary Daly and her configuring of "the tyranny of methodolatry" (Daly, 1978, p.11). Methodolatry refers to the worshipping, without question, of method (St. Pierre, 2018). Daly (1978) counters this worship by exercising "methodicide" (p.12), freeing thought from any pre-determined confines and creating space to ask what has never be asked and know what has not yet been known. Methodicide is not adopted in this thesis as a violent word depicting an act of killing methodology. It is rather a generative and dynamic *process*, a liberating reterritorialization that brings together dynamic reconfigurations of material-discursive entanglements and the possibilities for opening to what is currently excluded from the realms of the knowable, thinkable (Barad, 2007) or tentacularly tangible.

Methodicide as process flees the Anthropocene, invoking an epoch through which (re)opening to new possibilities for transformative ways of intra-actively (re)thinking and (re)configuring is not so much desired but demanded (Barad, 2007). This epoch is the Chthulucene (Haraway, 2016a). Haraway's Chthulucene (2016a) is a compound word of Greek heritage, rooted in the powerful *Kainos* (an ongoing present) and more-than-human *kthôn* (beings of the earth) (Haraway, 2016a). It is an epoch of forceful dynamism, a much needed timescape in which species can live and die as kin. The etymological roots of the Chthulucene tentacularly creep aroundaround a past, present and future that are neither linear nor bound to the human/everything-else-on-Earth binarized power structure of the Anthropocene (Haraway, 2016b).

The ethicoontoepistemological practices of the Chthulucene demand paying attention to "the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world

is remade again” (Barad, 2007, p.185) for it is in that pause that possibilities beckon, calling to be remade from the shadows of the not-yet-thinkable, to be included as mattering (Barad, 2007). Paying attention to these pauses as the world is remade is a profoundly ethical practice of knowing and of ensuring responsibility for the part we play in in every re-making of the becoming-world we matter with (Barad, 2007). This is the knowledge practice inextricably woven through the Chthulucene’s ongoing dynamic reconfigurations. Paying attention to these fleeting pauses requires surrendering from the assumed position of “master decoder” (Haraway, 1991, p.198) to an acceptance of a world far more complex than our words or grammar (Rovelli, 2016). This attentiveness demands we accept our ignorance and limitations of knowledge of a world “which does not exist in space and not developing in time” (Rovelli, 2017, p.233). It is to look beyond insufficient and unjust current answers to what matters and why in the anthropocentric systems that have allowed neoliberalism to flourish and methodolatory to maintain dominance (Haraway, 2016b).

Parenting and educational practices that intra-act with disabled children must not fall under the hypnotic neoliberal mantra “there is no alternative to the status quo” (Chomsky, 1999, p.15) and neither must the research methodologies that seek to reterritorialize them. There must be alternatives. As the premature death rate of people with learning disabilities reminds us, lives are depending on it (NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2019). Surrendering, not alone but as a relational becoming-re-searcher became a middle place from which the possibilities of knowing-otherwise began to (re)constructively and deconstructively intensify. Forces that I can’t adequately contain in words entangled with and through my thinking, my thesis, my data. Surrendering to these forces was the deterritorialization but methodicide the simultaneous reterritorialization. I am no longer concerned with demanding justices for a distant future as I am realising that future is one of many and entangled with the threads of injustices that cannot wait in the now, in this thick present (Rovelli, 2018). I am inextricably entangled as and with kin and the ongoing thick present that can be returned again...again...again...

### 5.3 Diffracting <sup>iii</sup> with Methodological Scissors

Diffraction can be a metaphor for another kind of critical consciousness...one committed to making a difference and not to repeating the Sacred image of Same.

Haraway, 1997, p.27

#### 5.3.1 Diffractive Differencing

Methodicide with and through a re-turning agential realist framework-in-flux allies with Haraway's (2016a) commitment to refusing more of the same, to making differences and becoming response-able for how differences come to matter (Barad, 2007).

Entangling with this dynamic framework makes trouble for ways in which re-search processes materialize; 'fixed' pre-determined linear steps of analysis become precarious as any assemblage with which they entangle carries them away with every re-turning (Barad, 2007). They themselves are re-turning, analysis is becoming-akin to a seemingly impossible staircases of steps, not unlike those in George Lucas's 1986 Labyrinth. This then is a framework committed to finding ways of traversing seeming impossibilities. Opening re-search up to impossibilities becoming-possibilities requires a new way of thinking beyond blinkered reflective optical metaphors that have dominated a long history of knowledge production in the West (Barad, 2007).

A middle-counter place emerges through entanglements with Haraway and Barad. They have re-figured an optical metaphor of diffraction for opening ethicoontoepistemological re-search practices behind, beyond, between and through that which can be known via *reflective* research practices and methodologies (Haraway, 1997). Where reflection gets caught up with the authenticity of copying likeness, diffraction is never caught but always in a dynamism of re-patterning difference (Barad, 2007). Like ocean waves crashing upon one another, diffraction is a mode of patterning the overlapping, the disturbing of formations and the interference that results with re-turned configurations (Barad, 2007). Boundaries are always fuzzy and the patterns are the result of two or more waves interacting with each other, bringing forth at the crest of the pattern a new 'superposition' (Barad, 2007).

Whilst wave patterns are classically understood to explain behaviours of light, sounds and water; contemporary quantum physics has ascribed wavelength and diffraction patterning to the electrons that reside in the atoms from which all matter is constituted (Sutter, 2019). Suddenly the answer to a question of whether something behaves like a wave or a particle (a physical mass) is met not with a categorical answer demarking wave or particle but with a paradoxical 'yes' (Sutter, 2019). Yes: matter can behave as both, it is different from within; not quite one thing and not quite the other (Barad, 2014). Belonging to neither definitive category, a "'wave-particle duality', a disturbing paradox" (Barad, 2014, p.173) becomes a useful tool from which to set into motion an ongoing re-configuring by way of diffractively re-patterning difference and identity.

The paradox of being different within, not quite one and not quite separated into two (Barad, 2014) troubles the singularity of individualised identity as much as it does group identity and belonging:

Two does not necessarily imply separateness for it is never really equated with duality, and One does not necessarily exclude multiplicity for it never expresses itself in one single form.

Trinh, 2010, p.56

Forces surge from this paradox, irreparably tearing open current configurations through which difference can only be known by virtue of its oppositional position to 'sameness' (Barad, 2014). Binary figurations of oppositional difference that designate power to One against a less powerful Other are disrupted (Barad, 2014). Normative notions of human 'completeness' and the quasi-human counterpart re-turn (Sonu and Benson, 2016); the divisive double-sided mirror reflecting back either a normative self or a self that is lacking has been shattered. Oppositional binaries may still offer a middle point from which analysis can flee (Trinh, 1988) but are themselves becoming-paradox; emerging boundaries simultaneously becoming alike but becoming different (Trinh, 1988). It is an impossible threshold yet it is where my understanding of difference is emerging. Difference itself is on the move, *differencing* tries to keep up with the re-configurations of undetermined intra-action (Barad, 2014). Performative entanglements of differencing never stop to allow a definition of Otherness to

naturalize, there is always movement of “at least two gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ (Trinh, 1988, p.4).

This paradoxical understanding of difference, the impossible threshold becoming possible is the place not-quite-between that analysis must drift never quite in and never quite out of to re-turn differences (Barad, 2014). A re-turning must be response-able for how differences are made and how they come to matter, ensuring the divisive wall of binary thought is not re-built. This re-turning then requires something otherwise as methodological approach that does not seek absolute division but rather intra-active enactments of “resolution” (Barad, 2007, p.140) of how difference comes to discursive-mattering (Barad, 2007). Such resolutions are made via contingent intra-active agential cuts (Barad, 2007). These ‘cuts’ do not enact the absolute dichotomous boundaries of same/different, subject/object, self/other but require “a very unusual knife or pair of scissors!” (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012, p.19).

These methodological scissors, materializing with and through this thesis intra-actively cut “together-apart” in one movement (Barad, 2014, p.168). The simultaneous entanglement and separation of what comes to matter together and on either side of the cut and how it comes to matter is not a matter of radical exteriorizing or individuating (Barad, 2007). It a matter of ongoing differential relationalities with kin (a category itself in flux as entanglements diffract) and how boundary making practices prescribe meaning to the identities, categories and positionalities of matter which is agentially separated (Barad, 2007).

These agential scissors set to work re-turning the very notion of what it means to be fully human. They are specifically wielded in this thesis to cut-together-apart humanness in a blinkered neoliberal world in the context of childhood disability and special educational needs. This context is neither fixed nor is it in isolation but an emerging entanglement fleeing with and beyond other fixed identities of parent, professional, educational policy, practice and intervention as intra-actively produced by the neoliberal apparatus. The agential-dishuman is re-turning as kin in the Chthulucene. It is with and through ongoing agential cuts that the agential-dishuman is becoming

knowable only with impossible-becoming-possible simultaneous thoughts of difference and sameness. We are all living at the threshold of impossibility-becoming-possibility in our intra-active entanglements.

### 5.3.2 Ethical Neologism: 'iii'

The pronoun 'I' has been causing trouble thus far throughout this methodical plateau. I is no longer quite I but neither is it a definite 'we'. 'I' is the throne upon which the essentialised, normative human has subjugated the Other humans and non-humans. 'I' has not anticipated the uprising of the Chthulucene. Murriss (2016) offers the neologism iii (p.92) as an innovative neologism far more apt at discursively re-mattering an intra-dependent, non-determined and emerging notion of subjectivity than an independent, pre-identified and essentialised human 'I' (Murriss, 2016). 'I' lingers in the habitual modes of thought; in the un-contested representational cutting to separate one from an Other (Murriss, 2016).

The Other is always precariously pitted in intersecting politics of disablism, "racism, sexism, transphobia, occidentalism, colonialism, classism, developmentalism and heterosexism" (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard and Runswick-Cole, 2019, p.989) against a neoliberal politics of normative human citizenship. I include the dischild as Other by virtue of their being set apart from full human status by virtue of non-adulthood (Sonu and Benson, 2016). The exploration of entanglements of intersectional identities of Other does much the same. The challenge is to re-turn *intra*-sectionalities of emerging identity-in-flux in such a way that the normative humanist 'I' is de-territorialized beyond capability of wielding socio-political injustice (Barad, 2014). The responsibility belongs to iii. The iii is the equalising of status of 'I' (i), the Other (ii) and of the world's agency in its own re-turning (iii) (Murriss, 2016).

It is *how* to attend to the pauses that demand this responsibility as iii in the world's re-turning. If for the essentialised human "divide and conquer has for centuries been his creed" (Trinh, 1988, p.1) than this is a line of flight fleeing into the next plateau making explicit the pauses before each re-turning of the world, the pauses from which diffractive re-patterning emerges. Divide and conquer has been re-configured:

diffract and connect!

This is the mantra for *iii* in re-turning worlds. This is the mantra for the Chthulucene.



#### 5.4 Chthonic Sense-Events and Response-abilities

Haraway's Chthulucene (2016a) does not "exist in space and does not develop in time" (Rovelli, 2017, p.233) but is an entanglement of spacetime-matter (Barad, 2007). Time and space are no more fixed than intra-actively emerging matter (Barad, 2014). Time and space are not measures of representational moments (second, minute, year and so on) or of empty 'spaces' in which things occur (Barad, 2007). Time and space are as much a part of the reconfigurations of the world as matter. An ethico-ontoepistemologically is becoming a means by which to entangle with an inextricable understanding of spacetime-matter (Barad, 2007). The forces surging through this this tentacular performative entangled spacetime-matterscape come to discursively-matter as Haraway's "Chthonic powers" (Haraway, 2016c, p.294).

These forces are more powerful than the language trying to hold them steady on these pages. They are the simultaneously generative and destructive forces at play in the ongoing re-makings of the world (Haraway, 2016b). They intrude as event within thought and through emerging entangled becoming(s) (Haraway, 2016b). Chthonic forces demand Barad's (2007) pause before each re-making of the world. They situate the ethical response(ability) in reconfiguring each moment of the world as a collective responsibility whilst simultaneously demanding that *iii* be attentive to the moments *iii* bring forth as relational event (Barad, 2007). It is Haraway's (2016b) Chthonic forces that spark the middle place for each re-turning as analytical encounter with 'data' that *iii* have begun to understand as agential matter making itself matter with and through this thesis. The re-research 'data' is something far greater than I had anticipated. It is becoming non-exhaustive re-turning assemblage of intra-active conversations, performative picture mapping, audio recordings, transcriptions, doodles, notes, thoughts.



The Chthonic forces surging through these re-mattering intra-actions with re-search-data assemblage are not concerned with false promises for a guaranteed utopian world-to-come (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010); they have no truck with any future in Chronos (Deleuze, 1994). They are intensities of data that demand responsibility for how this thesis enfolds itself into the world (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012). They simultaneously generate/destroy, territorialize/deterritorialize what *iii* was and will be but never am for long as researchermother entanglement with this thesis. *iii* feel like a wild swimmer, simultaneously succumbing and embracing the river currents (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer, 2013); *iii* am becoming-wild writethinkerknower, my writing/thinking/knowing swept along with the rhizomatic and unpredictable Chthonic forces.

The generative and destructive power of Chthonic forces existed before *iii* had read Haraway's writings and long before *iii* began contemplating analysis in an agential-dishuman Chthulucene. They don't need their name, only *iii* living in a timescape still dependent upon representationalism requires it. They surge through my re-search conversations, *iii* with parents, the listening and transcribing tasks, the reading and re-searching transcriptions and re-turning of performative picture mappings. The pauses are demanded, moments of intensity that insist on forcing my attention, my responsibility (Barad, 2007). The moments can be as dreadful as Haraway depicts (Haraway, 2016b). They pull out my tears, play with my heart rhythm, make me uncomfortable, tense; so much so *iii* find myself abandoning my laptop, walking away from this thesis (Haraway, 2016b). Other moments are kinder, my lips are curled into a smile or laughter emerges from my mouth, creating unexpected relational event with the stranger who smiles back as the tentacular sound of laughter intrudes.

These intense moments of force-encounter rupture my (re)configuration with the world (Barad, 2007). They act with/in/through me but this is not just about 'me'; *iii* am always a part of and with the world with which *iii* am intra-acting (Maclure, 2013a). *iii* am becoming with the data-apparatus as it re-configures. Unplanned lines of flight set into motion, rupturing through the thesis. They don't so much invite (Maclure, 2013a) as demand attention. They chose me before *iii* became consciously, intra-actively aware of

their entanglement with my becoming-body. These examples are not the *entirety* of any encounter but are examples of my becoming-responsive to parts of the data that made themselves matter with and through me (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012). The surrender is not a re-positioning of myself as passive in knowledge production but rather to invoke Murriss's (2016) *iii* a part of the (re)configurations of knowledge in dynamic relationality *with* and as a part of the 'data' in its becoming with this thesis (Barad, 2007).

Maclure (2010) describes these intensities in relation to research data as affective encounters through which the data "glows" (p.282). Glow became entangled with a Deleuzian influence (Maclure, 2013a) that revised 'glow' data as a discursive-material "sense-event" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 22). Sense and event are in this context inseparable (Deleuze, 1994). The sense-event is not a description of what has occurred as merely a thing that has happened or an occasion. Neither is sense any kind of common-sense reaction to what has occurred (Deleuze, 1994). Through a Deleuzian lens, the sense-event is something "inside what occurs, the purely expressed. It signals and awaits us" (Deleuze, 1994, p.154). The sense-event is a mobile-becoming-moment of spacetime-matter (Barad, 2007), one of an infinite number of knotted points of intensity in the thick present. The sense-event re-distributes the productive Chthonic energies that rhizomatically surge through the task(s) of re-searching with and of data-apparatuses (Deleuze, 1994).

There is a Baradian ethico-onto-epistemological application shaping my understanding of the sense-event in relation to the ongoing responsibility for what is "understood, willed, and represented in that which occurs" (Deleuze, 1994, p.154) at every re-made moment of becoming with and of the world (Barad, 2007). The re-search re-makes me/ *iii* re-make the re-search with "destructive/generative" (Haraway, 2016b, p294) moments of intensity and at times ferocity. These moments in my becoming escape the word 'glow' for they rarely glimmer (Maclure, 2010). They rather surge, *demand* my attention. These moments of intensity are moments *iii* feel the rumblings of Haraway's Chthulucene and the demands of this epoch that we must be attentive and "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016a, p.3) of a thick present, of Kainos. These moments are Chthonic sense-events.

Becoming-responsive, attentive, responsible to the demands of Chthonic sense-events is a middle place from which analysis is anticipated, encountered, re-turned. Realising these Chthonic agential sense-events as a mode of becoming-analysis means engaging in re-searching, re-turning and re-mattering practices that defy stability in any attempted 'how to use Chthonic sense-events in research' step-by-step guide (Ulmer, 2018). My becoming-responsive to the Chthonic sense-events demanded my trust in the becoming-process. This was not the post-qualitative methodology iii had originally imagined as the post- prefix is here and there and neither here nor there in this thick present of the Chthulucene. Chthonic sense-events made themselves matter with me, with this thesis and now in the thick present they reach out as they are read, tentacular, "tangling you in" (Haraway, 2016c, p.31). They demanded analytical response. iii sought the "flow of entangled social, material and discursive forces" (Lenz Taguchi and Palmer, 2013, p.675) that constitute the Chthonic forces and they sought me; intra-actively seeking new ways of mattering as kin.



## 5.5 Opening to Responsibility and Points of Departure

There is no definitive answer. Only possibilities and opening up this entangled thesis-apparatus to respond to them, to become intra-actively together with them. There is a re-turning that iii know iii cannot finish for it is a quest far beyond a life, let alone a thesis. iii asked re-search questions when proposing this thesis as if iii could ask from a position of exteriority. iii asked set questions about pre-existing separate beings, separate matter and separate policy and practice narratives, not realising this thesis would re-turn my approaches to re-searching and demand iii seek something different. A research question asked by an external observer does not do justice to an ethicoontoepistemological re-searching entanglement. iii am entangled inextricably with this re-search, a position-within that intra-acted and gathered speed with the material-discursive meaning (to matter)of research question(s). Reading iii had done some years ago in linear time made itself known to me again in this thick present as iii grappled with this re-purposing. iii became consciously drawn to re-read a study by Olsson (2009) in which research questions have been reconfigured as "decisive points" (p.48) to guide a research problem through a study. iii am not looking for a guide so

much as a middle place from which this re-search may be opened up and from which to depart and so in keeping with the ethico-onto-epistemological commitment of my own re-search, two departure points emerged. These departure points are configured as middle places from which to open a problematic assemblage via analytical re-turning and new possibilities. The problematic assemblage at the time of writing is understood as:

How can children with special educational needs and disability and their parents be relationally understood beyond current dominating neoliberal-ableist ideologies and pre-determined developmental expectations?

To entangle with this problem, opening and re-turning it, responding and being response-able to the ongoing humanist, neoliberal and psy-developmental injustices *iii* prepare to depart from these two points:

- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring neoliberal parenting beyond individualism towards possibilities for relational agential dishuman commoning.
- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring disabled childhoods beyond neoliberal-ableist developmental expectations.

Destination Unknown. But *iii* take comfort that *iii* am never travelling alone.

## **5.6 Re-membering Parenting, Disabled Childhoods and Response-ability Beyond Methodolatry**

Diffraction by and through this plateau, I am always becoming *iii* (Murriss, 2016). The individualised humanist subject that makes trouble for parents and disabled children has been un/settled as identity becomes a relational infinitude (Barad, 2012). The parent and disabled child companions are becoming *iii* together with the other human and non-human companions entangling with and producing/doing this thesis. I have found a trusted metaphorical tentacular companion with whom to feel and try re-searching practices that un/do the habits of deploying and pre-determining “over-formalized” (St. Pierre, 2015, p.18) traditional methodologies. Diffractive optics has

made and keeps making trouble for dualistic modes of differencing and is beginning to un/do neoliberal and developmental attempts to sediment an idealised human against whom parents and their disabled children have been made precarious and Othered. “The Other interrupts, irrupts within/through/as the constitution and deconstitution of the self” (Barad, 2019, p.541) and it is through this mode of differencing that I find and feel momentum in my re-search practices.

Beyond a formalized methodology I find myself busy with the trouble of the thick present (Haraway, 2016a) and asking what these interruptions and irruptions of humanism’s Other *do* to any attempt to sediment an idealised neoliberal ‘self’ or developmentally pre-determined norms. This ongoing dis/ruption is stirring trouble for individualised parent identities and pathologized disabled childhood identities. Staying curious, asking response-able questions about what thinking and materializing difference and disability through a diffractive optics *does* is becoming my generative and relational provocation with which to become re-searcher. Becoming curious re-searcher, I am shaking off the shackles of methodological expectations and embracing multitudes of theory with which to think and *do* re-searching that is as indeterminate as the im/possibilities of relational parenthoods and celebrate “the plenitude” (Barad, 2012, p.10) of dischildhoods to come that I seek (St. Pierre, 2015).



## Plateau 6... Becoming Agential Re-searching Apparatus

### 6.1 Entangling with a Re-search Apparatus

Throughout this plateau I offer an articulation of the methods that entangled as a means to discursively-materialise this re-search inquiry. Method is not abandoned or refused (Springgay and Truman, 2018) but rather considered as a lively and inseparable entanglement of re-searcher-parents-dischildren-theory-data-ethics-analysis that performatively intra-acts to produce this thesis (Barad, 2007). It is this liveliness of indeterminate relational intra-acting phenomena that constitute a re-searching apparatus (Barad, 2007). I explore the challenges of engaging in re-search that opens to lively possibilities for transformation in the encounter, beyond pre-determined procedural limits and expectations (Springgay and Truman, 2018).

Ethics is explored through both a traditional lens and an agential realist framework, highlighting tensions that persist in doing re-search in other ways that must still satisfy institutional demands and pre-determined examination criteria. The modes of entangling parents who I have come to know as re-searching companions are addressed. The representational concept of 'participant' is diffracted to engage with re-search companion identities as indeterminate and relationally-produced beyond the limits of any representational human identity (Mazzei, 2013). I re-turn with an ongoing concept of data and data-gathering that resist the limits of representational data and refuse to settle in their 'thingness' (Springgay and Truman, 2018); becoming responsible to that which resists-exceeds-un/does representational concepts of what counts as data and for whom (Holmes and Jones, 2013). This plateau completes its unfurling through these messy practices by dancing with indeterminate analytical practices that are busy making new stories with parents-disabled childhoods that disrupt neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism (Haraway, 2016a).

### 6.2 Gathering Speed and Finding Faith

Because faith creates its verification  
and reaching you will be no harder than believing  
in a planet's caul of plasma

or interacting with a comet  
in its perihelion passage, no harder  
than considering what sparking of vacuum, cosmological  
impromptu flung me here, a paraphrase, perhaps,  
for some denser, more difficult being,  
a subsidiary instance, easier to grasp  
than the span I foreshadow, of which I am a variable,  
my stance is passionate toward the universe and you.

Fulton, 2001, p.1

The extract from Fulton's "Cascade Poem" (Fulton, 2001, p.1) as entree into this plateau weaves itself through this plateau and the cells of my fleshy entanglement intra-acting throughout. This plateau chases the busying hows, wheres, whats and whys of re-searching-thinking-practices but also the processes of finding faith in ways of doing re-search beyond method (Daly, 1973) and beyond the bounds of the qualitative (St Pierre, 2018). iii trace and chase the lines of flight that gather speed, busying in the weaving of an academic web-apparatus of intra-acting re-search phenomena (Barad, 2007). It is an ongoing critical exploration of my re-searching practices which will never stay still enough to be meticulously replicated. Thinking-theory-re-search-practice escapes the boundaries of early plans and intentions as there is no pre-determined way of knowing, only knowing in being, what ethical response-abilities the world will demand at each moment (Barad, 2007). No longer bound by *intention*, the demand shifts towards an ongoing commitment to pay *attention* to each indeterminate moment of tentacular-re-search unfurling intra-actively. This commitment is a generative one as re-search and re-searcher are becoming ethically response-able constituents of world-making (Barad, 2007).

Barad's conceptualization of an apparatus is becoming useful companion for understanding the tentacular re-searching and analytical practices explored in this plateau (Barad, 2007). Re-search apparatuses are not assembled in advance but are "perpetually open to rearrangements, re-articulations, and other reworkings" (Barad, 2007, p.170). Understanding re-searching practices as apparatuses opens to the not-yet-knowable possibilities and ethical demands the re-search will bring forth; making explicit the intensely ethical practice of becoming response-able for what is made to matter through the re-search and how it is re-made to matter through this thesis

(Barad, 2007). I am made to matter as re-searcher as an intra-acting part of the apparatus (Murriss, 2016), not from a position of exteriority. Agency is becoming something I enact through my response-able meetings of each re-search moment (Barad, 2007).

Re-searching apparatuses are ongoing (re)configurations unfolding into the world as agential-realist re-search (Barad, 2007). I am still learning to trust in practices of knowing as an ongoing part of the world (St Pierre, 2018) and ask for collegial generosity to the mistakes that will be made in every re-configuration of this thesis (Haraway, 2016a). Im/possibilities are what I seek, not perfection. It was never for me to hear all the Chthonic demands of this re-search and there are endless stories from this re-search to be told (Haraway, 2016a). I faltered with apprehension and at times discomfort at the shift away from traditional ontologies of exteriority and the sense of planning and control that they entail. I am ultimately strengthening in my faith for that which lies beyond method (Daly, 1973). Re-searcher faith-in-process is becoming a critical phenomena in an agential realist re-search apparatus (Barad, 2007).

What follows is a tracing of the re-searching apparatus as it made itself known to me and configured itself into the world with me. The apparatus remains in-flux despite my best human efforts to (re)configure and tame its intra-active becoming through these pages, to convey the processes of gathering data, caring for the data and re-turning with and as an inextricable part of the data. Ethics is attended to explicitly in the first instance as it is woven into every research decision-action (Barad, 2007) and weaves as inextricable thread throughout and far beyond this apparatus (Barad, 2007).



### 6.3 *EthicoOntoEpistemology*

Ethics is an integral part of the diffraction (ongoing differentiating) patterns of worlding, not a superimposing of human values onto the ontology of the world.

Barad, 2012, p.9



### 6.3.1 Entangling Ethics and Onto-Epistemologies

Ethical practices are inextricably woven throughout the entirety of this re-searching apparatus, unfurling across the spacetime(s) through which it is re-mattering (Barad, 2007). Here *iii* story becoming responsive to the ethical rippling patterns as they diffractively re-pattern ethics beyond the confines of humanist and universalising configurations; a diffractive crescendo in my re-turning with ethical re-searching thinking-practices. Ethical universalism traces the emergence of its boundaries through Kant's philosophical notion of an ethics that attributes the moral principles of what is 'right' (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). What is 'right' and what 'should' be done is held as an exterior code of morality by which to live according to the Western concept of idealised *human* (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). Circumstance, context and agency as something becoming through the diverse ethical response-abilities to a complex world as it reconfigures are denied, the moral subject is pre-determined and expected to follow ethical 'rules' (Dahlberg and Moss, 2005). An agential realist framework makes this exterior positioning of objective ethics im/possible as the world is only ever known from a position within. Agential realist ethics are about becoming attentive to the demands for response-ability at each moment, not a universalising set of humanist rules to be unquestionably applied in pre-determined assemblages of fixed boundaries and identities (Barad, 2007).

It is as a part of this framework that *iii* am becoming of the world with which *iii* re-search, only ever knowing *because* of my part in this world's ongoingness (Barad, 2007). An ontoepistemological relational position un/does exterior objectivity and humanist subjectivity and simultaneously de-centres the human (Barad, 2007). The human is de-centred by acknowledging the role of the non-human elements in re-searching and worlding apparatuses. Human is also de-centred by virtue of the re-positioning of *iii* as becoming inseparable *part* of the human and non-human world; no longer sitting on an imagined pedestal as 'higher' exterior observer and ethics-shaping governor posing as inherently different to the non-human world (Barad, 2007).

It is not then a fixed pre-determined ethical response or value that must be superimposed onto an external other/traditional research participant that is demanded. It is rather a commitment to the dynamic practice(s) of relational ethics from within the re-searching apparatuses we become an inseparable part of (Barad, 2007). Becoming responsive to each indeterminate moment is a profoundly ethical re-searching practice that opens to im/possibilities for the differential ways in which boundaries and identities can be enacted and can be made to matter (Barad, 2007). Making explicit this response-ability as an inseparable ethical dimension of “practices of knowing in being” (Barad, 2007, p.185) is another enfolding of Barad’s inseparable “ethico-onto-epistemology” into the world (Barad, 2007, p.185).

### ***6.3.2 Traditional/Formal Ethics***

As universalism and humanism re-pattern, so to do the ripples of traditional ethical research practices. They are becoming a dynamic *part* of a much bigger ethical diffracting pattern, re-configuring with the ongoing ethical obligations of meeting this re-search at each unfolding moment. Critically, this re-patterning is always entangled with the upholding of the fundamental ethical principles of trust and respect “for the participant’s dignity, rights, safety and well-being” (University of Sheffield, n.d, p.1). This is an ongoing commitment of ethical relationality that tentacularly unfurls from policy guidelines and ethical frameworks as they become alive; guardians of safety within the re-search, becoming guiding companions for re-searchers. They do not deny my relational autonomy in ongoing demands for ethical response-ability but re-turn as ongoing threads woven with and through this becoming-doctoral re-searcher context.

Institutional ethical approval was obtained from the University of Sheffield (Appendix I) and relevant parental voluntary informed consent forms and participation sheets approved (Appendices II and III). In addition to written participation sheets, the research aims were shared and opened for discussion and opportunities remain open for parents to ask any questions (BERA, 2018). Parents and their children were allocated pseudonyms, as were non-human identifiers such as schools and nurseries to protect the privacy of all human and non-human companions that unfolded with the becoming-data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). Any other details that were felt to still risk the identification of parents, their children or other human and non-human

discursive-materializations were omitted entirely from raw data (BERA, 2018). Any written or drawn identifying markers in the visual data produced have been digitally erased and the original copies stored securely. Saved digital recordings and transcriptions have been password-protected (BERA, 2018).

When the re-search slowed and the intensity of my involvement with this apparatus and the ongoing (re)imagining in/possibilities for new stories eased, *iii* created personalised research report summaries (See Appendix V). These were sent to parents as a part of my ethical commitment to the parents to whom *iii* remain indebted. *iii* spent time talking through feedback ideas with my supervisor as *iii* grappled with how to feedback that which re-returns and is indeterminate (Barad, 2018). *iii* took care to draft and re-draft each individual personalised summary as an articulation of findings this thesis enfolds as provocations for thinking differently, rather than a traditional summary of findings as exhaustive and absolute. This was not simply a tick-box exercise in formal ethics but something *iii* wanted to get right. *iii* wanted to convey to the parents through the dissemination of the research how invaluable their input had been in transforming my thinking. *iii* also wanted to ensure my gratitude was heartfelt, a moment of intensely felt ethical-response-ability. Having entangled with the formalities of traditional ethics, entanglements that re-turn beyond the forms with my re-search practice(s), *iii* now trace the wider re-patterning beyond these initial diffractive ripples, towards Barad's "ethics of mattering" (Barad, 2007, p.391) .

### *6.3.3 The Mattering of Ethics*

Just as the human subject is not the locus of knowing,  
neither is it the locus of ethicality.

Barad, 2007, p.393

As ethical re-search re-patterns, it de-centres the human and diffracts the notion of fixed and objective individual embodiment (Barad, 2007). All relational becoming, human and non-human, is an ethical matter in the world's ongoingness (Haraway, 2016b). Traditional ethics diffract, patterning alertness (Haraway, 2016b) for that with which we intra-actively entangle and the inclusions and exclusions that we participate in through our ongoing re-configurations (Barad, 2007). This is not to make such a humanist statement as there are causes and effects for which we are responsible, as if

the world unfolds in such a neat manner as to suggest our actions “ripple outwards from their point of origin well after a given action is completed” (Barad, 2007, p.394). Causality is only understandable as an agential cutting-together-apart through intra-active entanglements (Barad, 2007). The transfer is not neat between fixed individuals and things but non-linear reconfigurations at the quantum levels of the world that remake what is possible and what persists as im/possible (Barad, 2007).

Ethics is not then something to be understood from beyond the re-search in a disconnected room or through an isolated ethics-application. Neither is ethics situated inside the research apparatus, still dependent upon human conscious intent, response and action (Barad, 2007). Ethics is diffracting into a far more complex pattern than is convenient to humans and our insufficient language (Rovelli, 2018). Ethics *is* the very becoming of the world from within (which is not the same as inside which would suggest an exterior boundary) (Barad, 2007). Becoming ethically response-able with the world we are a part of means an undoing of the individualism that has denied the possibilities that lie beyond humanist thought. It undoes the application of a traditional notion of ethics that persists in exteriorizing a pre-determined ‘Other’ to whom we can respond to. There is no action-response beyond human-centric individualism, only an ongoing ethically-relational dynamism of becoming (Barad, 2007) that is urgent, demands an alertness and is waiting beyond our current imaginaries.

#### ***6.3.4 Apparatus-Becoming-VwO (Voice without Organs)***

An agential mattering of ethics undoes the traditional fixed boundaries of ‘participant’ as an entirely autonomous human subject taking part in research (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Instead, participation is becoming a matter for all human and non-human intra-acting matter within an apparatus and subjectivity is an ongoing affair of re-configurations (Barad, 2007). It is with this understanding of knowing from within and as an ongoing re-articulation of the world that *iii* reified the re-search focus upon parental experiences without directly involving their children who are intra-actively produced with the ‘parent’ as identity-in-flux. The humanist question of ‘who’s voice’ is undone. Voice becoming more than human and more than speech sounds or actions (Mazzei, 2013). There is no “incorrect or artificial child’ voice to be separated out from a correct and authentic voice” (Lesnik-Oberstein, 2011, p.10) and neither are parent

voices seen to be universalised or fixed. Voice as concept is diffracting, becoming inseparable from the research apparatus with which it is produced – an apparatus of human *and* non-human intra-actions (Mazzei, 2013).

To conceptualize this, my thinking entangles with Mazzei's (2013) Deleuze and Guattari inspired Voice without Organs (VwO); voice is not something that emerges from an essentialised subject but is produced through intra-actions. Humanist agency is undone when thinking with Mazzei's (2013) VwO. Agency is not something prescribed as there is no pre-determined fixed identity to prescribe it to *per se*, rather agency is something that is *done* and emerges through specific intra-actions that re-configure possibilities for "boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices" (Barad, 2007, p.178). Possibilities for how boundaries and identities are produced exist in every moment and how they come to matter through response-able intra-actions is the deeply ethical mattering of thinking with a VwO (Mazzei, 2013). VwO makes explicit the need to attend to the ways in which research is produced by de-centring traditional research gathering methods and analytical tools (Mazzei, 2013).

Invitations to entangle with re-search, interviews and their subsequent analytical engagements are not abandoned but re-positioned as a part of an ongoing production of VwO thought re-configurations of "researcher-data-participants-theory-analysis" (Mazzei, 2013, p. 739). As this plateau proceeds to explore components of this apparatus, it is their agential contribution to the production of VwO that is being explored. These are connected and agential components of this apparatus (Mazzei, 2013). VwO is a way of framing the ethicoontoepistemological research production of 'voice' as something becoming through agential material-discursive intra-actions of the human and non-human (Mazzei, 2016). It is a voice re-configuring into this world through this productive re-search and belonging to this thick present, the enfolded topology, through which it is felt.



## 6.4 Human Companions

### 6.4.1 *iii Becoming Companion(s)*

VwO (Mazzei, 2013) un/does any traditional attempt to debate my own researcher-positionality. *iii* am parent, *iii* am carer. My child has various labels of special educational needs and is disabled by an intractable genetic epilepsy syndrome. Yet *iii* no longer assume a traditional 'insider researcher' position but seek something beyond the fixed identity and group belonging that an 'insider' occupies (Braun and Clarke, 2013). To be inside implies a possibility for being outside and that position is becoming in/possibility in this agential realist framework. The knowing from within that underpins the ontoepistemology of an agential realist framework (Barad, 2007) and the ways in which my identity-in-flux are understood needs a conceptualization of a space between insider/outside researcher (Barad, 2014). This is something *iii* have come to understand as a "double-movement" (Barad, 2014, p.176) research position; resisting the impossibility of unity that traditional 'insider' research suggests but refusing the absolute separation of being 'outside' pre-determined identity boundaries (Barad, 2014). There is always a simultaneous assertion of that which is alike and that which is different, intra-actively re-configuring identity relation boundaries (Barad, 2014).

Whilst *iii* use the double-movement position to make explicit my understanding of researcher position, this understanding extends to all relational intra-actions and the un/doing of binaries and identity hierarchies (Barad, 2014). Using Murriss's (2016) pronoun *iii* is becoming an increasingly urgent matter to not only re-configure habits of thought as discussed in its introduction in plateau 5, but also as a means to re-configure re-search apparatus as ongoing ethical human and non-human relational intra-actions. Traditional representational language that divides 'researcher' and 'participant' and other non-human elements troubled and disrupted my thinking with and through this apparatus. In an attempt to resist the lure of habitual thought *iii* have re-turned the intra-acting relational connectives of this apparatus as 'companions'. Becoming-companions is not a matter of any bound identity or to trouble a fixed identity that never was, but a focus on the relational and "relentless becoming-with" (Haraway,

2016a, p.13) of matter with which this world is becoming-knowable (Barad, 2007) and a desperate matter for us all to be response-able to, as companions with and of these Chthonic spacetimes (Haraway, 2016a).

#### *6.4.2 Entangling Companion Parents*

Companion parents were sought to entangle their thoughts and experiences of parenting a young child identified as having SEND. For the purposes of this re-searching practice *iii* understood definition parameters through intra-action with current national statutory documents in England that contextualise the thick present with which this thesis is entangled. A 'young child' is defined as a child up to the age of seven which corresponds to the age upon completing Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014). The definition of SEND aligns with that used at the time of writing in the SEND Code of Practice (DfE and DoH, 2015):

A Child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream school.

A child under compulsory school age has special educational needs if he or she is likely to fall within this definition above upon reaching compulsory school age.

DfE and DoH, 2015, pp. 15-16

Invitations to entangle with my planned research project were posted on the social media platform Facebook within two private United Kingdom based parent support groups to which *iii* had membership. Prior to posting recruitments and guided by the Association of Internet Researchers (2012) ethical guidelines, the Facebook group moderators were contacted via a private message explaining the research purpose and seeking permission to post. Permission was quickly granted. The first group was a parent-run support group offering advice and support to parents with issues relating to their child's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The second group was a parent-run support and discussion group for parents of children with epilepsy.

Facebook was chosen as a useful tool for broadening the regional scope of parents beyond those local to me. This was an ethical decision after a conversation with a fellow parent of a child with an EHCP at my son's school. She had asked how my doctorate was going and iii explained that iii was getting ready to recruit parents for my research. She quickly made an unprompted apology and told me she was too busy to take part despite not having been asked. iii became concerned that the parents of children with SEND iii am acquainted with would feel pressured to either take part or feel obliged to excuse themselves. Using private groups on Facebook became a way of explicitly enacting a wider search with no expectations placed on parent friends and acquaintances.

Beyond being a tool for overcoming this ethical obstacle, Facebook served as a time-effective and easy to use tool for purposive volunteer sampling of parents with young children identified as having special educational needs and disability (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). iii was mindful of an ethical comment an anonymous University of Sheffield ethics reviewer had made regarding the ethical issue of having too many applicants and having to say no to parent volunteers. As such, iii posted the recruitment messages early in the morning on a day iii had no other commitments and was able to intensely monitor replies through the day. As a part of my ethical commitment to maintaining parent anonymity it was explicitly stated in the recruitment post not to comment directly to the post but to privately message me or respond to the email address provided. iii edited the two posts immediately upon receiving four replies from parents to state that iii had received enough interest and recruitment was closed. iii permanently deleted the posts once contact detail had been established with each parent.

The small sample of four parents was considered appropriate in this re-search context through consideration of the word count limitations of an EdD thesis and the volume of data per parent and depth of analytical writing-thinking-(re)theorising anticipated (Braun and Clarke, 2013). This research set to work to make trouble for the dominant discourses of humanism, neoliberalism and developmentalism that inhabit the experiences of parenting a young child with disability. It was an exploration of experimental diffraction patterns that unfolded rather than any desire for "identifying patterns across data" (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.55).



Using Facebook as sampling tool meant enacting exclusions for which *iii* am accountable. It entangles with issues in the United Kingdom surrounding digital exclusion. Digital exclusion refers to the percentage of the population that are non-Internet users (ONS, 2019a). At the time of recruitment in 2018 this figure stood at ten percent of the adult population (ONS, 2019a). This strategy also excluded those without a Facebook account and those who were not members of the support groups targeted (Forgasz, Tan, Leder and McLeod, 2018). This exclusion was mediated by my own circumstances as a parent-carer to a disabled child and the associated childcare issues that are circumvented by Internet use and the very small sample that was needed for this project. An agential realist framework is never seeking generalization and makes explicit that there are always other entanglements to be re-turned and other companions to be making re-search with.

#### ***6.4.3 Parent Companions-In-Flux***

Traditional demographic information contradicts an agential realist perspective of unfixed boundaries and the ongoing production of identities as produced *with* an apparatus (Barad, 2007). *iii* could not reconcile asking for traditional demographic identifiers within this framework as they operate on an understanding of fixed identity and would serve no purpose in a small sample that purports no 'population' representation and re-search that actively diffracts beyond generalization. As such, *iii* took inspiration from Jackson and Mazzei (2012) who suggest that some background to parent-companions may be welcomed by the reader and that this information need not be seen as a beginning or end, but understood as the momentary identities-in-flux, what the parents felt was important to share as they became a part of the re-search apparatus. As agential companions to this re-search, parents were asked to share some self-descriptors of their choosing that serve as a lively collective insight into the agential parent-companions made, making and contextualised with *this* re-search apparatus. They were given a code to access a free 'Mentimeter' word cloud generator tool which allows completely anonymous inputting of up to 10 word descriptors that then produce a word cloud collage (See figure. 1). Words that were used by multiple companions or multiple times are given the greatest visual prominence and all data is encrypted and was deleted as soon as *iii* had saved a screen-shot.

# Word Cloud



*Figure 1* Word Cloud Self-Descriptors Produced Collaboratively by Naomi (parent to Sophie), Vivian (parent to Johnny), Liz (parent to Natasha) and Tom (parent to Josh).



## 6.5 Non-Human Companions

iii now turn to my thinking with and through the non-human companions that agentially entangled with this re-searching apparatus (Mazzei, 2013). iii am acutely aware that my narrations are only ever an ongoing part of this thesis reconfiguring itself into the world. This is not a definitive recount of how the re-search enfolded itself, as if arrested in a distant past and available to me to plop into a neat chapter of replicable re-search practice (Mazzei, 2016). iii know *because* iii am narrating-with-apparatus and this knowing re-configures itself as iii continue intra-acting and re-configuring with re-search companions (Mazzei, 2016). It is in this spirit that what precedes are edited notes and documentations re-configuring in the thick present as iii attempt to trace the picture-mappings and audio-recordings with which iii am becoming companion and they are becoming companion with me. Time is becoming dis/jointed as this is not 'method' entirely pre-determined but an ongoingness of research-data-production that has enfolded itself and then re-configured again (and again...) through editing-thinking

practices (Barad, 2018). Non-linear topologies can cause discomfort for the insufficient tenses of the English language that demand we are only ever past OR present OR future. There are occasional provocations through unexpected grammatical shifts that serve as reminders that we are an entanglement of spacetime-matter. Entanglements that are far more complex than representational grammatical systems allow for (Rovelli, 2018). Embracing complexity and opening to im/possibilities has no desire to tend to human comfort; an ongoing-discovery-becoming-researcher-apparatus.

### *Becoming Companion Rich-Picture Maps*

Barad's assertion that "language has been granted too much power" plays with my thoughts, tickling them and demanding they wander beyond the confines of representation (Barad, 2007, p.132). Wandering thoughts open towards experimentations that will grant matter its agential place in this re-search apparatus. <sup>iii</sup> have always been seeking more than language; seeking engagements with re-searching practices that do not completely arrest the momentum of the world. <sup>iii</sup> also desire an opening to attend to the non-human, to open to im/possibilities that are denied through the representational humanist gaze (Mazzei, 2016). My thinking turns to entangling visual imagery and dis/rupting representational notions of 'what counts' as still and moving imagery.

Traditionally, moving imagery would invoke discussion of video imagery and film (Lorimer, 2013). Pink (2011) discusses the movement of imagery in a new materialist context, affording movement to visual images by virtue of their ongoing intra-actions as re-search is produced and then re-mattered. The images re-matter as the re-search apparatus re-configures with new agential re-search companions, entangling as readers, critics and in the context of this thesis, examiners (Pink, 2011). This to-ing and fro-ing of image re-production is becoming a way to explicitly attend to the power of the non-human visual companions to enact agential forces, un/making ongoing connections (Pink, 2011).

Thinking about opening to visual agential forces and im/possible connections beyond those limited to representational language, Checkland's (1993) concept of "rich pictures" (p.317) begins to entangle. Rich pictures entangled with the world as a

component of Checkland's soft systems methodology (SSM). This methodology seeks systemic ways in which to understand the complexities of the world. Whilst it is ontologically incompatible with an agential realist framework as it presumes the knower to be an objective observer to an 'outside' world (Checkland, 1993), SSM's rich picture starting point that seeks connections beyond the linguistic is diffracting within this apparatus. Rich pictures are created as informal diagrammatic drawings that visually convey the complexity of a problem, an event or a situation (Checkland and Scholes, 1999). Text is discouraged but otherwise the content and style is left up to the participant (Bell and Morse, 2013).

More recently, rich pictures have been utilised as a visual means to disrupt and transform thinking surrounding such complex situations (Cristancho, 2015). They are not a replacement for spoken interviews but rather as a tool for complementing and provoking research interviews (Cristancho, 2015). Cristancho (2015) highlights the use of rich pictures to foreground both human and non-human relational connections, including those with the environments that may otherwise be missed through linguistic data alone. As rich pictures diffract with my thinking I am drawn to the agential possibilities that might be opened and potential for provoking impossible re-configurations in discussions and beyond with these pictures. I am settling momentarily on the concept of a 'rich-picture map' as I want to make explicit the mappings of re-connectivity through the complex experience of parenting a disabled child. Rich picture mappings are becoming a non-human research apparatus companion with which to entangle human, non-human and discursive ongoing relational re-configurations.

There is a tension in this moment as rich-picture mappings attempt to assert themselves as pre-determined procedure to be deployed at arrested moment of time-to-come (Springgay and Truman, 2018). Through an agential realist framework, this becoming-traditional approach to procedural and pre-determined method is incompatible. Inspired by Springgay and Truman (2018), rich-picture maps diffract as a middle place through which relational connections may be provoked through human and non-human entanglements. It is an ongoing ethical middle-place that re-configures with and through this re-search apparatus through every re-made moment as different

human and non-human companions re-work this visual-data-research-apparatus (Barad, 2007). There is more than just flexibility of design, there is becoming-exhilarating speculative middle place from which to depart, “propelling thinking-making-doing forward into the next speculative middle” (Springgay and Truman, 2018, p.212).

iii am aware that even speculative dynamic engagement in visual-data-research-apparatus-production does not guarantee the de-centring of language and neither does it guarantee something beyond anthropocentric optics (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010). Hultman and Lenz Taguchi remind us, it is extremely challenging to move beyond the anthropocentric “habits of seeing” (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p.525) that centres the individualised human (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010). This human centric gaze perpetuates a binary between what is being viewed and the viewer, denying the agency of visual data (Colebrook, 2002). To diffract these optics and habits of thinking-seeing, there is an ongoing sense of alertness as iii become with an agential realist framework (Barad, 2007). The challenge will be to maintain this response-ability and trust in the ongoingness of a re-patterning world of agential human and non-human intra-acting relationality (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

### *Supervisor-Doctoral Student Picture Mappings*

iii want(ed) to feel what a rich picture map can do. iii follow(ed) an ethical calling to know rich pictures, a task only understandable from within, beyond written theory. From this desire an urgent task to know-in-becoming-with and through (a) materialization of a rich-picture map gathered speed. Knowing-in-becoming opens explicitly to the ways in which the non-human elements that iii bring/that bring me to the re-search intra-act. From this desire to entangle iii created my own rich picture mapping. iii felt a sense of freedom as iii drew and thoughts came and led to others, unexpectedly and quickly. The drawing became frantic as iii chased my thoughts. Thinking visually provoked drawings of non-humans and humans that I was surprised to see on paper. iii remain doubtful they would have materialised with this apparatus had iii relied on spoken or written data production in isolation. iii talked through my rich picture-mapping together with my research-supervisor-becoming-research-companion and recorded the conversation. My research-supervisor created a rich

picture map too of her own parenting experiences and I experienced listening and following the rich-picture-mapping of another.

These maps and the conversations that they have provoked are not included explicitly in this re-search apparatus as it has become an impossible task to protect the anonymity of the entanglement of human stories in a thesis-document that names both student and supervisor. These experiences of knowing-rich-picture-maps-in-being has further entangled their demands to be re-configured into the world as they have made themselves matter with and through this apparatus. The rich-picture-map and its speculative im/possible provocations are becoming inextricable from my thoughts and this re-searching process. *iii* cannot let go of the unanticipated connections and conversations that they have provoked. *iii* marvel at the ways in which the maps provoke both non-human and human agential connecting forces. The maps also support the ongoingness of conversation when it stalls, when the words cannot be found. The drawings create an agential prompt to continue with the forward-propulsion of this apparatus-in-motion (Hultman and Lenz-Taguchi, 2010).

### *Becoming Performative Picture-Maps*

*iii* tasked parent-companions to create a rich picture map from a speculative middle-place title-provocation: “a rich picture of [parent name] as parent to [child’s name] in the early years”. An ‘instruction’ sheet was provided for reassurance and tips to get started rather than as prescriptive document to be obediently followed (See Appendix IV). Parents were given as long as they required to create the picture-mappings in the privacy of their own space and time. Stationary resources were offered and accepted by three of the four parents. *iii* remained available to be contacted throughout this process and beyond.

Parent feedback regarding the creation of the picture map has been varied and provides a useful insight into the challenges and experiences of being tasked to create a visual rich picture mapping of experience that do not privilege language:

Liz: You have to excuse my pictures (laughs), I find it hard. I’m a terrible drawer. It’s funny expressing myself through people. I really can’t very well (laughs). But I started here with me, that’s me there.

- Tom: Hmm, so I found doing the picture tough. I guess because the brief was so loose and I couldn't use words or graphs for instance, you know? It's all this qualitative nonsense (laughs). I started off doing a timeline um, but actually it got a bit condensed at the end and I was running out of paper thinking oh my god how big is this thing going to get? I just used a biro and I did it in about half an hour without interruptions.
- Vivian: Where shall I start? I mean I saw this as a kind of journey, trying to work out the whole experience of Johnny. Trying to figure it all out.
- Naomi: I really quite enjoyed doing this. It was nice remembering things because you forget things. I actually went back through some photos beforehand because I couldn't remember everything and it's funny how you forget.

When the maps were finished iii arranged a suitable time and location to meet with parents to explore their rich pictures. This was either in person in locations of the parents choosing or through a video Skype call in the case of Tom. As the maps intra-acted with humans and we humans intra-acted with them, they began to diffract in my thoughts. What iii had understood as 'rich picture maps' became performative in the Baradian sense that they were not capturing arrested moments of reality but moving with the world's dynamic re-patterning (Barad, 2007). Making what iii now think with as performative mappings is an ongoing performative task that did not finish when the parents presented their pictures but continues with every lively engagement (Kind, 2013). There are many ways to enter, entangle and engage with visual performative data (Kind, 2013) and the task is then to become a part of the collective experimenters and data adventurers who dare to create, make mistakes and know data as an ongoing agential part of a more-than-human world (Haraway, 2016a). Photographs of the individual rich-picture maps produced by parents await, lively loiterers in Appendix VI.

### *Becoming Audio-Recordings*

We've taken every tiny little thing in qualitative methodology and elaborated and expanded it so we could publish the next journal article or book. We must have hundreds of articles on interviewing...I think we've created a monster.

St. Pierre, 2015, p.16

St. Pierre (2015) discusses the challenges of escaping human-centric methodology knowledges and training and iii feel this as an ongoing challenge in opening, changing

and rhizomatically growing as re-searcher (St. Pierre, 2015). Research beyond the monster of Daly's (1973) methodolatry demands an agential response-ability to the ongoingness of re-search (Barad, 2007). Inspired by both St. Pierre (2015) and Lather (2014), my thinking diffracted what iii had understood to be traditional semi-structured interviews towards a dynamically ongoing and rhizomatically unpredictable intra-active re-searching conversational processes. These processes do not privilege an individualised human-subject voice but are an ongoing re-patterning of the re-search apparatus in all its intra-acting human and non-humanness (Mazzei, 2013). What the parents say, how iii respond, how the performative-mappings intra-act and how this would later become a part of an analytical process is dynamic and ongoing (Mazzei, 2013). Becoming rhizome not as root or plant but as another creature making with another timespace, beyond St. Pierre's (2015) qualitative monster. Becoming with this Chthonic creature iii shake off the cloak of methodolatry and become free to chase and follow the thinking that intra-active conversation-visual-data produces (Haraway, 2016a).

Entangling as process beyond method and thinking as Chthonic becoming-creature-researcher, parents showed me where they wanted to start their conversation with their performative picture maps. An audio recorder joined us so that iii could later transcribe these conversations. Parents added to their maps with felt-tip drawings, connecting lines and annotations as they talked and the maps felt as though they guided their thinking-talking. iii listened actively, engaged and responsive, but had no pre-prepared questions and resisted the urge to interrupt or steer the conversations (Mazzei, 2013). We followed connections rather than trying to interpret or settle on any representational meaning (Mazzei, 2013). Two parents cried during the conversations at which point the audio recorder was switched off. iii asked parents if they wanted to stop the conversations but neither did and the conversations resumed gently when they told me they were ready. Recordings were uploaded onto my computer and stored as password protected files, awaiting transcription as an entry into the analytical practices of this researching apparatus.





## 6.6 Documenting a Sympoiesis

Unknown to me, data ‘analysis’ had already begun before *iii* sat down to formally begin an analytical process (St. Pierre, 2015). Chthonic sense-events were already making themselves matter with and through me during the intra-active re-searching conversations and had lingered, already escaped from humanist control (Holmes and Jones, 2013). *iii* began to know the analytical process as a mode of sympoiesis, “a simple word; it means ‘making-with’” (Haraway, 2016a, p.58). Sympoiesis of visual-auditory-written-data-feeling-theory-thinking, the apparatus goes on beyond any chain of representation yet still through habit *iii* try to convey the spirit of this work, this “renewed relationship with data” (Holmes and Jones, 2013, p.359). Making with the data as sympoietic practice is a generative and deeply material practice of thinking-with-data-apparatus (Barad, 2012). Analytical practices diffract in this thesis as they cannot be understood through traditional lenses that apply practices of description, interpretation and ‘sense’ making as learnable instrumental tools (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Sympoiesis and the material analytical *doing* of theory is not about applying a pre-determined toolkit onto passive data sets but about opening to “the world’s aliveness, allowing oneself to be lured by curiosity, surprise and wonder” (Barad, 2012, p. 2).

### *Transcribing and Tracing Chthonic Sense-Events*

Such are the habits of qualitative methodology *iii* transcribed the recordings verbatim before *iii* realised *iii* was dancing with St. Pierre’s (2015) methodology monster once again. Yet something had re-turned, the traditional humanist demand to “signal what is said and who is speaking” (Braun and Clarke, 2013, p.163) was no longer centralised. Without prior thought, a notebook had been filled as *iii* listened and transcribed (See Appendix VI for a collage of notebook examples), pausing at what *iii* began to know as Chthonic-sense-events, demanding my response-ability. Doodles, pictures and notes had filled an entire A5 notebook, unrestrained and indeterminate; agential beyond human direction. There were moments *iii* had cried, tears smudging my notes to convey long after my face dried just how dreadful these moments can be. Becoming response-able for my own well-being *iii* often left the research for hours or days at a time, this was important and becoming-ethically response-able to myself. Simultaneous

transcription and note-taking became an entry into the analytical process as connections were already being made.

After completing verbatim transcripts iii re-listened to the recordings together with printed typed transcripts, highlighter pens and my notebook. Thinking with St. Pierre (2015) iii was learning to “read, read, read and then trust [myself]” (p.18) and listen, listen, listen and trust myself. iii wondered again and again what to do next but trusted in the theoretical resources of Barad’s (2007) agential realism, Goodley and Runswick-Cole’s (2016) dishuman, Haraway’s (2016a) Chthulucene and St. Pierre’s (2018) post-qualitative inquiry to guide my analytical thinking-writing (St. Pierre, 2015). Despite desperately wanting to “succumb to uncertainty” (Chesworth, 2018, p.859), there were moments iii found myself searching for themes or trying to group data and organise it for analysis. Draft after draft was abandoned as iii became repeatedly infuriated at the unwelcome intrusion of habit.

Eventually iii did succumb, trusting in the process in a way that made me think-with-childbirth, an unexpected enfolded timespace within this thesis (Chesworth, 2018). As iii abandoned my birth plan during labour, so too did iii learn to over-ride habit and traditional demands. Eventually giving in to the squirming of my animal-fleshy-body-thoughts, tearing open unexpectedly to possibilities for messiness and the not-yet-possibilities (Chesworth, 2018). Trusting in the theorist-writer-thinkers with whom iii/data...diffracted, became a performative and indeterminate framework-without-borders through which iii understand my own analytical thinking as curious inquiry. This framework-in-flux has many visitors by way of more writer-thinkers than iii can mention but every reference in this thesis has performatively shaped and guided this inquiry. As iii re-listened to the audio-recordings iii highlighted moments in the transcription and made more notes and doodles, iii began to feel-with-data, tracing new connections and Chthonic moments of intensity that provoked unexpected thinking-affective-response-ability-connection (Mazzei, 2013). iii then re-turned again, re-configuring these moments together with the performative picture-mappings.

### *Picture-Mapping-Wallpaper*

Throughout the transcription process *iii* had stuck the mappings on my bedroom wall, the space in which *iii* do this writing but my identity shifts in its dynamism as *iii* occupy a variety of identities in this re-searching space: sleeper, dresser, wife, mother, time-waster, reader, phone-scroller and so on. As such there would be moments when *iii* occupied my mother-identity or human-who-needs-sleep identity and something would catch my eye in the maps, demanding my attention. *iii* would be thrown back into the re-patterning boundaries of re-searcher (Barad, 2007) and quickly chase the provocation of this materially agential visual data, rushing to my notebook or turning my laptop back on, opening books or journal articles that made themselves known through connective thoughts and memories of readings. The maps became akin to an agential re-search wallpaper, busying themselves and catching me unaware and unprepared with their provocations as analysis became something *iii* lived both intentionally and unintentionally. This lively analytical practice of making-with-theory-data is not about straying anywhere one chooses but about learning to stay responsive to the trouble of the thick now (Haraway, 2016a), to the Chthonic sense-events that have been described in detail in plateau 5 and opening to the im/possibilities of “what might yet be/have been/could still have been” (Barad, 2012, p.2).

How to contain and convey sympoietic analytical practices that resist traditional human-centric application has made lively trouble for this thesis and it is how *iii* met this trouble to produce the analytical-thinking-writings in plateaus *\*\*7* and *\*\*8* that *iii* attempt to convey next.

### *Producing Sympoietic Anarchival Writings*

The concepts of archiving and anarchiving have become invaluable in conveying the liveliness of sympoiesis-in-motion and the ongoing re-configurations of re-searching-thinking (Barad, 2012). The archive is understood as a means to organise and store the past and consequent potential actions for the future (Murphie, 2016). Archives “structure the potential for feeling – and thus action, remembering, thinking” (Murphie, 2016, p.41). Archives operating power and control organise the *known* past(s) and *known* possible futures, becoming authoritarian on that which is possible and that

which can be known (Murphie, 2016). The anarchival operates somewhere between, departing from the archive as a “feed-forward mechanism” (Massumi, 2016). Whilst archiving busies with describing and interpreting what is already known to the world, the anarchival is making lively trouble re-configuring the not-yet-knowable world(s) to come (Barad, 2007).

The archive is never abandoned for good, it organises and re-settles; “just as there is anarchival potential within the archive, there is always the potential for an archive within an anarchival; for a return to order” (Murphie, 2016, p.43). It is the simultaneous creative promise of other worlds *and* nothing new of the anarchival that *iii* chased as *iii* became with the re-search sympoiesis. Haraway’s sympoiesis an articulation of a (re)generative and ongoing world with which “nothing makes itself” (Haraway, 2016a, p.58). Sympoiesis as a lively analytical process refuses to settle as containable practice (St. Pierre, 2015). *iii* followed intense Chthonic moments and the thoughts that were provoked without a sense of where they might lead or what sense-making would be conveyed (Mazzei, 2013). *iii* spent weeks wondering what to do and thinking about what could or should be next; learning to follow the data and allow unexpected connections and dis/jointedness in felt uncomfortable and took time to settle with (St. Pierre, 2015). *iii* made mistakes, *iii* planned the plateaus in advance a number of times before realising these plans entirely missed the point of a generative sympoiesis and were incompatible with an ethicoontoepistemology of knowing in being (Barad, 2007).

Analysis as sympoiesis, making with the data and writing in the anarchivals is something *iii* had to learn in doing, writing with the thoughts and theories that made themselves matter at Chthonic moments of intensity with the data (St. Pierre, 2015). *iii* had to resist the urge to seek a definitive meaning and stay busy and curious with the theories that made themselves matter to me beyond my pre-planned intentionality. *iii* busied myself with theory-data asking what theory can do with and through the data as *iii* poured over the transcripts, pictures and listened again and again to segments of audio, opening to the non-human as well as human elements of data-stories and pictures (St. Pierre, 2015). From unpredictable moments of Chthonic intensity with data momentum would fire my writing. At times *iii* was lost in a furious writing that would take me by surprise and at other times writing paused and slowed to create timespace for more

reading/re-reading of theories and writings of the multitude of others who have made themselves matter and diffracted my thinking (Benozzo *et al*, 2018). Symptoiesis became a system for making with the data/making data anew through writing and theory; worlding unexpected connections and openings to human and non-human im/possibilities (Haraway, 2016a).

iii followed of the paradoxical promise of the Chthonic sense-events seeking that which lies beyond the horizon of the known but might also lead nowhere, an ongoing process that demanded faith and trust in the unfurling of unpredictable entanglements with data and theory (Murphie, 2016). Finding this faith to make lively trouble re-turned excitement, anticipation, apprehension and self-doubt. What follows then are two plateaus through which iii trusted in process and in theory and data to guide me, to risk everything and nothing at the limits of knowing “to open to it as the very vitality and force that propels the change to come” (Lather, 2001, p.202).



## Plateau 7... Sympoiesis#1: DisPolitical Love (Re)Worlding Webs

### 7.1 Entangling with a Sympoietic System

Throughout this plateau iiii engage with Haraway's notion of sympoiesis as a way of staying with the trouble of thinking and materializing relational parenthoods in the context of childhood disability. Haraway's term "means 'making-with'" (Haraway, 2016a, p.58) and is deployed here as a way of re-making and re-configuring parenthoods and disability beyond the pre-determined individualistic constraints of dominant neoliberal discourses. To stay curious and response-able to the stories and pictures shared by the parents entangled with this thesis, this plateau has been generated through an indeterminate process that resists organisation, themes and codes (Haraway, 2016a).

This sympoietic system is imagined as a lively system that will be re-made again and again by readers as it is anticipated the data might provoke thoughts and matterings beyond those articulated through the words and images on the pages of this plateau (Haraway, 2016a). Chasing and generatively 'making-with' the data that has made itself matter stirs up trouble in often unexpected and unpredictable ways. The dis/joints of diffraction may cause dis/comfort , a prickly companion with whom one must learn to become hospitable toward in the pursuit of doing re-search in other ways beyond the false comfort of tradition and qualitative analytical status-quo (Barad, 2018). It is a diffractive commitment to social justices and response-abilities to parenting disabled children that shapes this plateau, rather than the neoliberal desire for linear progress or traditional pursuits seeking to lock in new stories (St. Pierre, 2015).

## 7.2 Departure

To be in love means to be worldly, to be in connection with significant otherness and signifying others, on many scales, in layers of locals and globals, in ramifying webs.

Haraway, 2008, p.97

Gathering speed tentacles unfurl; *feeling* and *trying* (Haraway, 2016c). Entangling with the “many-armed allies” (Haraway, 2016c, p.2) that join in the lively practices of responding with and through the ongoingness of the Chthulucene (Haraway, 2016a). Allies are imagined here in all their+my ongoing reconfigurations of iii, theories, writers, data... The three dots function as a reminder that data... is always understood in connection, never entirely separable from that with which it intra-acts (Barad, 2007). Data...always in multiplicities, re-territorializing relational intra-actions (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Tentacles tickle the first departure point to provoke it. They make trouble for the inequitable precarity that entangles with overly-individualised response-abilities facing parents of disabled children in neoliberal times of austerity (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). They feel the feminist call to try and re-pattern equitable modes of feminist parenting (Comerford, Jackson and Kosior, 2016) in the persisting ongoingness of inequitable burdens placed upon mothers (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). Tentacles engage and return from, with and through this departure point as middle place from which to gather speed:

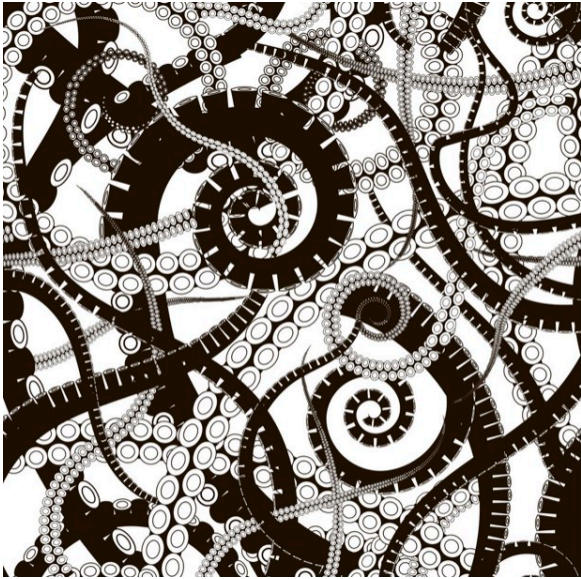
*Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring neoliberal parenting beyond individualism towards possibilities for relational agential dishuman commoning.*

What precedes departure is a collection of experimental writings and rhizomatic, tentacular unfurling. The Chthonic sense-events guide the spinning of Haraway’s (2016c) ramifying web. Entangling intra-actively with data... is proposed “not to say what is, or what ought to be, but to provoke thought...” “slow down” reasoning and create an opportunity to arouse a slightly different awareness” (Stengers, 2004, p.1).



### 7.3 Anarchiving Sympoietic Writings and Ramifying Tangle Webs

Figure 2 Tentacular Tangle Web



The experimental writings extend as Anarchive: “A repertory of traces of collaborative research-creation events” (Massumi, 2016, p.6). No plan for this plateau was written out. The Chthonic sense-events provided (non-linear) entry points from which experimental thinkings-writings in collaboration with data...and all that data...entails set to work. Anarchival writing presentations vary in compositional form (Murphie, 2016). The anarchive are entangled

phenomena, always creating in *sympoiesis*. Always “making with” (Haraway, 2016a, p.58), never alone. Always iii.

Collaboratively and creatively, the anarchive enfolds itself as tentacular, extending Chthonic sense- events through a lively worlding practice busying with feeling and trying. It’s rhizomatic form becoming-ramifying-tangle-web (See figure 1). An anarchive of sympoiesis makes trouble for habits of generalization (Stengers, 2004). “Lots of trouble, lots of kin to be going on with” (Haraway, 2016a, p.8).



### 7.4 Entering the Writings Via (An) Impatient Epilogue

Only when the sympoiesis of this plateau paused, when the writing stopped and the thinking wandered would it dawn on me just how ferociously the anarchive unsettles the neuro-parenting that made trouble and was troubled in Plateau 2. Love diffracting as multiplicities of cosmopolitical-dispolitical love. Love re-turning, provoking and unsettling the neuro-architect-as-parent. This is not a maternal forgive-all love-phenomena but a love-at-work that is fearsome, fearful, intrudes and demands response-ability (Barad, 2007). It exists in and beyond parents becoming kin. Like Stenger’s Gaia, invoked as a generative and destructive re-configuration for



understanding the Earth in Chthonic timespaces (Stengers, 2015), this dispolitical parent-love has been provoked. Provoked by the neoliberal and psy-developmental discourses that assert an authority that is becoming unrecognizable with and through the anarchic. Love's intrusion here as 'impatient epilogue', an unexpected inclusion that made itself known to me as iiii read back with the writings. DisPolitical love returning as "running lines", never pre-plotted points or representational linear-developments. Never planting roots of authority in their provocations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).



## 7.5 Tentacular Hearts



*Figure 3 Apparatus: Performative Picture Map Heart Icons, Diffracted*

### *Tentacular Thinking-Searching with Apparatus 2, Haraway and Barad*

These heart icons (❤️),  
so familiar  
companions  
image of emojis in my thoughts  
coupled with love for centuries (Yalom, 2018)  
re-turning ❤️ icons that flutter around with/through/as data...  
representational love  
on the move  
re-turning ⇔ Barad(companion) ⇔ phenomena  
❤️ becoming tentacular ⇔ Haraway(companion)

### *(En)Tangle Web-Making*

Red hearts. iii keep finding them through the picture-mappings (See Figure 3). iii begin to tentacularly feel what is becoming a rhizomatically “ramifying” (Haraway, 2008, p.97) web of hearts. Spinning with stringy tentacles and words. The tentacular-

(en)tangle-web gathers speed from the pages of Haraway's 'When Species Meet' (2008) and Haraway's description of love, the entrée to this plateau, that posits a relational becoming of love as something connective, a way of worlding (Haraway, 2008). Representational love as word or icon diffracts: heart icon/pre-determined love do not pre-exist but extend only ever in relation, intra-actively coming to matter (Barad, 2007). iiii am becoming a part of this diffracted phenomena; reconfiguring that which has made itself matter as a phenomena with possibility for making new connections matter, new ways of mattering as worlding disparent (Barad, 2007). Ways of spinning reconfigurations of a feminist disparenting commons that do not take the neuron, austerity or individualised normative institution as a middle place from which to gather speed (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). These hearts, beating through, with and of the data that they constitute(d) offer an alternative middle place. A middle from which to come and go (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), rhizomatically establishing possibilities for re-configurings, re-imaginings and re-searching the worlding of (many) feminist disparenting commons.

iiii spin back through a notebook which houses the notes and doodles iiii made as iiii listened and entangled with the audio recordings of re-search conversations. iiii cannot remember drawing so many hearts yet they flutter out, make themselves known (See Figure 4):

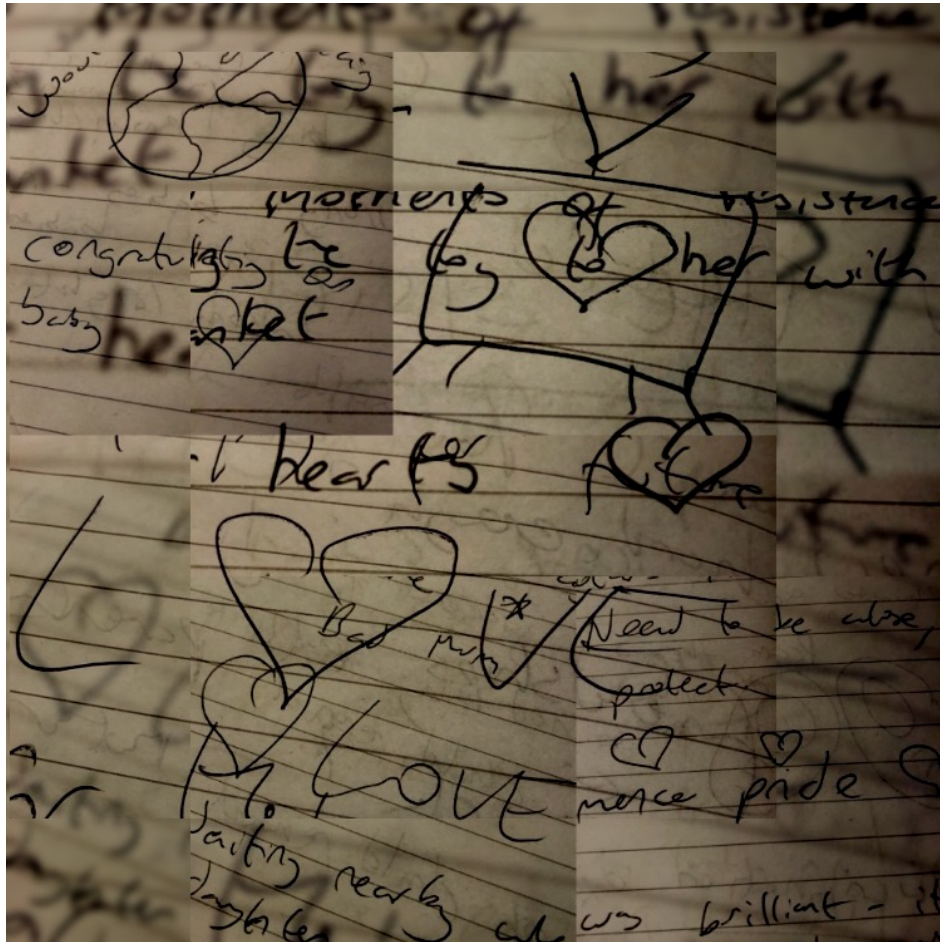


Figure 4 Apparatus: Diffracting Re-search Doodled Hearts (Re-Mattering with Audio)

A growing collective of hearts, connecting through performative picture mappings, audio recordings and doodles. Attending to the heart icons re-returns them from common doodle-objects “mundane...not usually attended to as significant can unsettle, emerge as something special, arousing curiosity and interest” (Silva, 2015, p.184) thus orientating an explorative opening of data. As my thinking entangles with them and Haraway, these hearts begin to squirm. iii spin the web further with string and Haraway. Stringy heart-tentacles busying, spinning the middle of a rhizomatic worlding web of diffracting hearts and re-mattering love. As iii think with Haraway and Barad iii am drawn to the potentiality for re-turning the individualised parent with these hearts and love as phenomena, something far more complex than a symmetrical shape with re-worlding(s) potential:

Women, men and children...innovated and strengthened coalitions to recraft conditions of living and dying to enable flourishing in the present and times to come. These eruptions of healing energy and activism were ignited by love of earth and its human and nonhuman beings and by rage at the rate and scope of

extinctions, exterminations, genocides, and immiserations in enforced patterns of multispecies living and dying that threatened the ongoingness for everybody.

Haraway, 2016a, p.137

iii paused to reflect on the length of this quote but the thinking it ignites in its entirety is far larger than the sum of its words and has already sped off. This thinking-in-flight speeds up: worlding love as parental activism and the inextricably linked rage of a parenting-commons against injustices. Lines of flight, speed critically with and through this re-turning. of an experimental feminist parenting discommons-to-come, making explicit the powerful role a re-crafted concept of love can offer activism; these words demanded to be written beyond their original book-pages and set to work.

### *Tentacular Thinking-(Re)Searching*

~~Intimate love~~

~~Dyad love~~

~~Private love~~

~~Apolitical love~~

DisActivist Worlding-love.

DisAlly Worlding-love.

DisPolitical Worlding-love.

Feminist DisPolitical Worlding-Love

Worlding with & through re-crafted love the Feminist DisParenting Commons

iii am captivated by possibilities; by different agential possibilities for a re-turned love as an intra-active phenomena for connectivity and commoning with-through-beyond feminist disparental entanglements. Tentacular love squirms through boundaries understood now only ever as relationally constituted. Diffracting, the love-hearts are beating loudly; becoming-powerful in their response-ability to individualised discourses of parenting. Love-heart-tentacles reach in and provoke the entangled discursive-material phenomena that make themselves matter with and through neoliberal individualised parenting:

Neuro-parenting-phenomena

Normative-psy-developmental-phenomena

Austerity-parenting-phenomena

This apparatus of intra-acting phenomena is non-exhaustive but serves to highlight the agential phenomena interacting specifically as entanglements with the departure point

from which this plateau has taken flight. These material-discursive phenomena all intra-act to affirm again and again normative views of parenthood that perpetuate the precarities (explored and opened up in plateau 2 of this thesis) for parents of disabled children (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). Re-crafting love as a powerful response-able phenomena offers a middle place from which to entangle and re-turn these material-discursive entanglements toward a feminist disparent commons. A commons understood as an agentially re-mattering of kin collectively engaged in re-turning intra-dependent practices of disparenting.

### *Re-Turning DisPolitical Parental Love as Phenomena*

To engage with love as a response-able agential phenomena requires a re-turning of representational concepts of love that position love as an affective, private affair, separated and held as oppositional to reason, public interests and rational politics (Hardt, 2011). This binary persists, relatively unchanged through an untroubled “archaic and destructive pair of the private and the public” (Hardt and Negri, 2018, p.105). Re-turning this opposing dualism toward a love-phenomena that can be understood politically requires what Hardt (2011) has described as the simultaneous deployment of both “reason and passion” (p.676). A Baradian notion of differencing via a becoming-paradox is useful as an experimental tool here as love and politics are set in motion and cut-together-apart in one movement (Barad, 2014, p.168). Love is opening beyond its sentimental and private representational confines. Love becoming a mattering for public lives, spaces and commoning (Zembylas, 2017). Re-turning towards “the possibility of love as a site for collective becoming” (Zembylas, 2017, p.26) and making explicit the possibilities for new understandings of love that might un/do social and political practices from which it has been largely absent (Hardt, 2011). Love diffracting, becoming an ethical relational practice of care for those historically Othered and denied full citizenships and equitable value in both life and death (Zembylas, 2017).

A political notion of agential love reconfigures parental/familial love that has been representationally confined to private space (O’Reilly, 2016). This political love phenomena opens towards the paradoxical thresholds of differencing that finds a place not-quite-between public and private mattering (Barad, 2014). It is through re-turning and (re)opening toward this impossible threshold that political love is given spacetime

to make itself matter with and through dominant discourses that attend to parenting-as-(highly individualised)-governable practice (O'Reilly, 2016), naturalising what iii argue is an impossible separation of parental love and parental practices. That is not to say they are one and the same but rather that they operate paradoxically; parent-work never stopping to be isolated as parent-work without love or love without parent-work. The political love phenomena intra-acts and is re-turned by the lives and love-work of parents of disabled children. The addition of 'dis', remattering an agential *dispolitical* love demands "recognition of our common [post]humanity, whilst valuing diversity and difference" (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018) in any experimental writings of parenting. The *dispolitical* works together with love to make trouble for the political as a site cut apart from current notions of 'private' love. It makes trouble for the becoming-entangled private/political spaces through which parents are understood. *Dispolitical* love disrupting the normative, neoliberal and psy-developmental discourses (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016) that entangle and uphold inequitable precarity for parents of disabled children (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018).



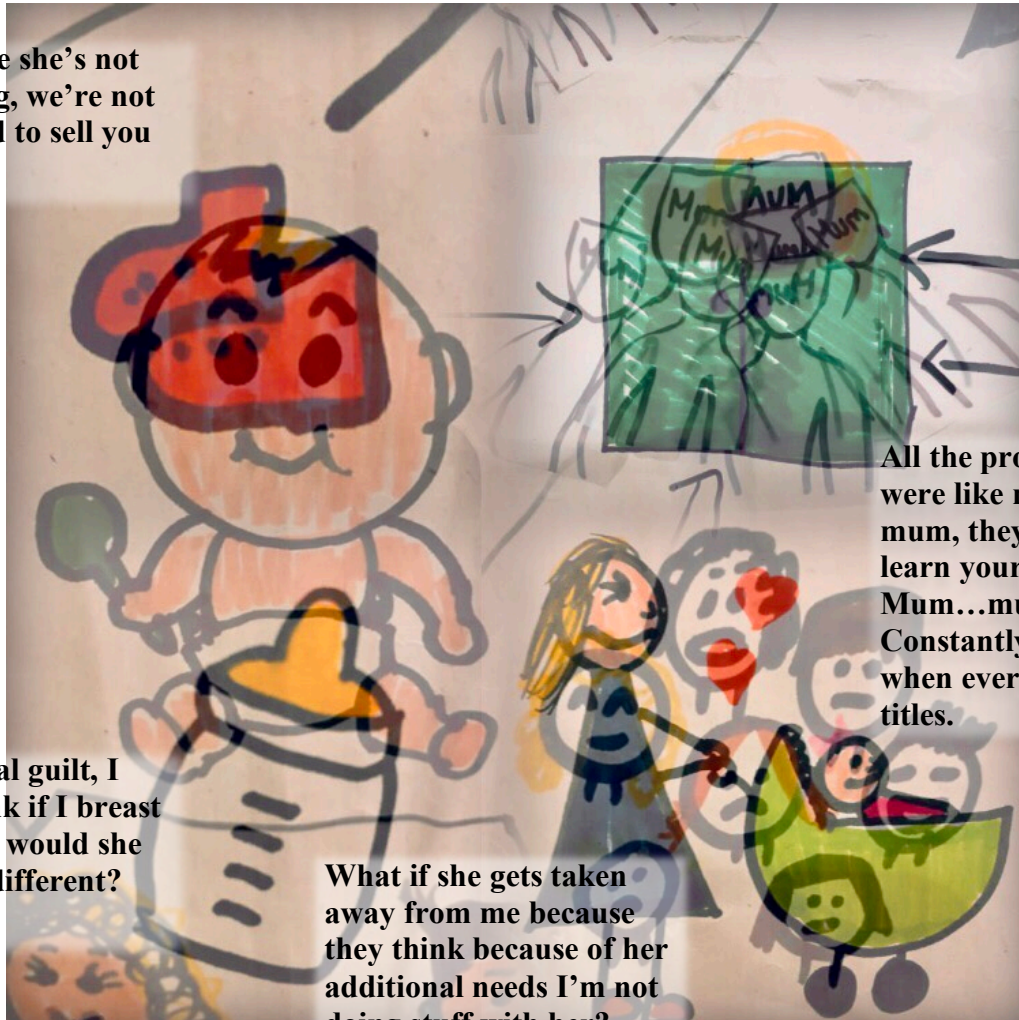
## 7.6 Chthonic Apparatuses

What follows is a selection of Chthonic sense-event apparatuses that made themselves matter with and through me as iii re-turned with the plateau's departure point and the entangling *dispolitical* love phenomena. These sense-events demanded re-turning, demanded my attention. As part of a sympoietic anarchic (Murphie, 2016), they are provocations for thought (Stengers, 2005). They do not ask questions or expect answers. Rather they intrude and provoke, unfurling rhizomatically and unexpectedly.



## 7.7 Chthonic Apparatus: Diffracting with Red Boots, Bottle, Breast and Faceless Mum

Because she's not walking, we're not allowed to sell you shoes



Total guilt, I think if I breast fed, would she be different?

What if she gets taken away from me because they think because of her additional needs I'm not doing stuff with her?

All the professionals were like mum, mum, mum, they don't ever learn your name. Mum...mum.. Constantly being mum when everyone else has titles.

Figure 5 Chthonic Apparatus ↔ Naomi ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching

Mum mum mum mum

Just mum

Representational Etymology 1:

From 'm' sounds babies make drinking milk (Hoad, 1996)

Sounds the same on breast and bottle? Mum judgements

Representational Etymology 2:

To keep 'mum', keep silent. To stay silent (Hoad, 1996)

Good mum/bad mum/just mum/silent mum.



## Faceless Ghosts

*Becoming-Verb Mum /mʌm/. Diffracted*



Figure 6 Faceless Mum Diffracted

Naomi's picture of faceless mum 'haunts' my thinking. Face-less, ghost-like, she moves and makes herself re-matter within this apparatus of which iiii am now part (Silva, 2015). She cruelly quietens my doctoral writings, my engagements with multitudes of theory-practice, my becoming-academic. You are mum of a disabled child too, just mum, she taunts. iiii want to escape her spectre and iiii sense through Naomi's multiple references to the identity of 'mum' she does too.

The faceless mum that haunts here is not born of feminism and neither is she post-dishuman. She too has a disabled child and her work is undervalued (Lee, 2018), precarious and subject to ever-increasing surveillance and governance (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018).

iiii set to work, urgently. Wanting to escape but finding the timespace(re)matter here to face the ghost that has silently haunted my daily life for years. The unwelcome spectre frequenting so much of Naomi's conversation and map. Mum that haunts us is returned, opening towards possibilities of commoning and equitable recognition of the private labour that is subjugated against a binarized public market-valued counterpart (Lee, 2018). This is dispolitical love work in action, traversing the threshold of the private/public in disparenthood, never completely one nor the other. Private motherwork, disparentwork, pushing its value so as to deterritorialize the public domain.

Mum diffracts, beyond her representational etymology. An etymology that silently reproduces more of the same. Mum, from middle English, meaning to be silent. Stay 'mum' to the ongoing reproductions of persisting gendered precarity and economic inequity of parenthood (Comerford *et al*, 2016) in the Capitalocene. More of the same. Stay mum to the subjugation of surveillance and stay silent, for fear of being labelled

'bad mum'. Mum won't stay mum. Mum is re-turning. Demanding her equitable value. Demanding to be seen for the exhausting, valuable dispolitical love-work:

Naomi: That was my biggest fear. I thought what if she gets taken away from me because they think because of her additional needs I'm not doing stuff with her. I'm not a bad mum because my child's not doing what everyone else's child is doing. I'm probably trying harder than everyone else.

Entangled with this excerpt is further conversation regarding the repeated professional probing into her parenting. Naomi was asked multiple times whether she talked to her daughter Sophie, whether she read to her and gave her opportunities to try to walk. <sup>iii</sup> am re-turning an unanswerable curiosity as to whether this repeated interrogation would happen if Sophie's development had obliged the psy-trajectories her becoming resisted. Sophie's speech was delayed against psy-developmental trajectories and she 'missed' physical expected milestones for crawling and walking. The probing by professionals regarding Naomi's parenting practices entangle negatively with Sophie's own developmental trajectory. Yet the intensive labour that Naomi asserts as being even more intense than that of the mothers she encounters with children obliging developmental expectations is ignored. Naomi is forced to assert her right to not be labelled 'bad mum', a poignant moment of resistance that re-matters, albeit fleetingly, with political love as phenomena. It is important <sup>iii</sup> speak up here; there is a line of flight that might be expected to be followed here. A fleeing towards the constructions and reconstructions of 'good' and 'bad' mothering and parenting in policy. It is however my commitment to thinking differently, diffractively that keeps me entangled with my commitment in this plateau to the love hearts with which <sup>iii</sup> entered and from which political love phenomena are re-turned.

Naomi's assertion that she is not a bad mum is a small but powerful one that re-matters the 'stay silent' of representational 'mum'. That her daughter is not conforming to psy-developmental expectation is not a reflection on her parenting but re-mattered as an exposé of the ableism embedded in the distinction between good and bad parenthood: raise a child to prescribed norms or you will be challenged, made to feel like 'bad mum'. Naomi did not stay mum; she spoke out. A small but poignant re-mattering that is forever re-turned into the ongoingness of the world, A moment of dispolitical-love, taking response-ability for her collective part in the "world's differential becoming"

(Barad, 2007, p.396) beyond the individualised, idealised and ableist institution that persists.

### *Diffracting with Haraway's Camille*

An alternative etymological haunting of representational 'mum' is stirring up trouble. Mum, born of the sound infants make when suckling (Hoad, 1996). Mu-mu-mu-mu. An etymological haunting that quietly persists as reminder of the naturalised biological role of mum whilst simultaneously undervaluing the reproductive labours, such as breastfeeding, that constitute intensive motherwork (Lee, 2018). Feeding work has become another site of surveillance and judgement for mum in England (Lee, 2018). The bottle in Naomi's Chthonic apparatus is becoming agential object of guilt-production that is made more troubling for Naomi as mum to a daughter with learning disabilities and a diagnosis of Autism:

Naomi: (Whispers) So I struggled to breastfeed so she was bottle fed. I felt like I was being judged from the moment I had Sophie. When we went for Sophie's Autism diagnosis one of the questions I was asked was 'did you breast or bottle feed?'. Like I didn't understand how that would, you know, almost like so you bottle fed that's why she is this. I know lots of people who bottle fed and their children haven't got anything wrong. It's like, why are you making me feel even worse now.

A loud and ferocious line of flight flees, (re)-searching the private and public sphere divisions that persist in infant feeding practices (Lee, 2018). Campaigns promoting breast milk as the 'best' choice for feeding babies on the basis of argument that milk functions as "developmental patterning tool, affecting cognition, immune maturation and physiology" (Biggs, Fidler, Shenker and Brown, 2020, p. 46) situates mothers of disabled children as particularly precarious to healthcare judgements regarding feeding choices. In my commitment to the post-qualitative and diffractive re-matterings it is the quieter suckling line of flight, mu-mu-mu-mu, that re-turns my thinking and demands my attention. I am becoming curious as to the potential for different possibilities, different ways of re-thinking that might be re-crafted in the diffractive re-patterning of representational mum as haunt(ed)ing name. A new name is needed to escape the etymological hauntings and subjugation of 'just' mum. A name with which to

experimentally engage and bring into mattering as a collective parenting engage in *kin* der worlding practices of political love-work: Camille.

Camille was birthed with and through the thinking of Haraway whilst writing with colleagues (Haraway, 2016a). Camille is Haraway's child, "born for sympoiesis -for becoming and making with a motley clutch of earth others" (Haraway, 2016a, p.137). Camille taught Haraway (Haraway, 2016a) and together they have taught and challenged me. Academic parent-work? Entangling with my thesis writing as a political love-work. Camille, not mum. Camille is a name freed from the naturalisation of the biological gendered parenthood. Camille is certainly not in the habits of staying silent, of keeping mum. Haraway's Camille reimagines kinships in the Chthulucene beyond the dyadic mum-child intensities of Anthropocentric England:

The decision to bring a new human infant into being is strongly structured to be a collective one for the emerging communities. No one can be coerced to bear a child or punished for birthing one outside community auspices.

Haraway, 2016a, p139

Children born and raised outside of the auspices of neoliberalism. Camille's children as commons. Camille as a shared parenting practice, to be done by many. Camille is not a new representational noun for 'mum' but a practice to be collectively undertaken and for which response-ability to the youngest kin is a shared endeavour. The bottle as feeding-site for guilt and judgement re-matters; the bottle is a feeding tool for many connected Camilles, not an individual mum. The Camille's have no truck with surveillance and judgement nor gendered or ableist expectations.

### *These boots were made (only) for walking*

Haraway's (2016a) birthing of Camille's communities and specifically the word 'punished' re-turn in my thoughts, entangling and troubling the infiltration of neoliberal ableist discourses into unexpected spaces. Together with the little red boots Naomi tried to buy as Sophie's first shoes, <sup>iii</sup> re-turn her experience of normative developmentalism and the way in which it was deployed to punish 'mum' and child in retail spacetime. What follows is a tentacular sympoietic writing-thinking experiment with the red boots.

Naomi: I just remember these red boots. I was so excited to buy her first proper shoes. The lady in Clarks said 'well she's not walking' and I was like 'she's standing up' and because she's not walking because she can't walk across the shop we are not selling her any shoes. I didn't think a shop had that kind of power. I remember at the time feeling so rejected I just wanted to buy my daughter her first pair of shoes.

Neoliberal developmental expectations  
Re-turning a moment of beautiful memory potential into haunting (Silva, 2015)  
Infiltrating retail – meta-narratives get everywhere  
Rejected  
Sophie didn't get boots/Naomi didn't get the 'first shoe-shopping' memory  
Punished, haunted  
Facing these ghosts  
Invoking Haraway's (2016a) Camille  
Camille engaged in political love-work  
Assert the right to boots, not milestones  
Camille's living "lives for flourishing" (Haraway, 2016a, p136) collectively  
"strengthening the healing" (Haraway, 2016a, p.166)  
Of the Chthulucene that still carries threads of its neoliberal inheritance.  
Small agential cuts matter in the re-mattering  
The red boots as possibility for worlding  
Collectively re-turning, seeking a seller-becoming -Camille  
For healing the everyday injustices that intra-act  
Re-turning the neoliberal lives of mum.



## 7.8 Chthonic Apparatus: Troubling Tears and Cosmopolitics



Figure 7 Chthonic Apparatus ↔ Vivian ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching

So many tears  
Faces, expressions  
Felt-tip tears spattered across faces and mapping  
Vivian spoke so matter-of-factly, tears stayed silent, private  
Until the very end, the tears came.  
Pouring  
Demanding my attention

Demanding worlding remattering, a right to be shed  
A right to matter  
A right to know how to parent-work collectively, commonly  
Dispolitical parent love, tears leaking into public spaces, academic spaces  
Public tears – public emotion – etymology: *emovēre* -causing movement  
DisPolitical emotion on the move  
Emotion  
“The combination of emotion plus femininity yields disastrous results  
Because women are seen as protesting, not from the position of realpolitik but out of  
fear and anxiety. Historically, women’s exclusion from politics rested on a belief in  
women’s innate characteristics, such as emotionality, which rendered them too  
irrational” (Moravec, 2010, p.23)  
Tentacles swarming, re-patterning, entangled with DisPolitical tears.

### *Intrusion: Thinking with Stengers*

Diffracting with tears *iii* resist the urge to fall back into the “representational trap of trying to figure out what the participants in our study ‘mean” (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012, p.viii). *iii* am troubling with tears, feeling ways to provoke thoughts and open this writing up towards something becoming sympoietic. “Nothing makes itself” (Haraway (2016a, p58) after all and this thesis, when intra-acting with the world is never alone. This thesis does not presume authority, learning “to laugh not at theories but at the authority associated with them” (Stengers, 2004, p.1). Refusing to assert authority is a risky sympoietic undertaking as opening up in such a manner leaves (re)-searching entirely vulnerable to being representationally (mis)interpreted and carried away by more of the same theories, tethered back into stories that have already been told (Stengers, 2004). An experimental re-patterning with and of tears. Thinking with and through the watery haze to re-matter with, through and of the tears that demanded my attention. Tentacular becoming-political tears.

### *Thinking with Stengers’ Cosmopolitics*

Re-turning towards inclusions and spaces for tears is a political feminist endeavour. *iii* return with Moravec’s (2010) observations that when women speak from a register that is representationally associated with emotion, they reinforce a feminised, maternal emotionalism that has been positioned in opposition to the rational sphere of the political (Hardt, 2011). That the personal *is* political in feminist scholarship and activism is nothing new (O’Reilly, 2016) yet it speaks as though there are two distinct halves to be married in the story of feminist activism. Persisting as representational

slogan, the personal can still be entirely undone from the political as intimate 'love' pulls apart from public 'reason'. So long as this absolute separation is possible, so too will the excluded sphere of emotionalism persist as a feminized oppositional space to the rational of a patriarchal political sphere. *iii* want to provoke possibilities for a cutting together/apart of the personal/political stories that have been, that are and that are yet to come (Barad, 2014). This is not one movement together-apart but ongoing agential cuts as a means for ongoing commoning and asserting difference from *within* (Barad, 2014). The story is no longer about dividing and conquering, as if somehow *the* pre-defined personal can conquer a historically separated political space (Trinh, 1988). The story is one of ongoing configurations; about disrupting binarized identities and unsettling spaces before they assert themselves as representationally universalised (Barad, 2014). The personal/political cut-together-apart, becoming a dynamic and ongoing state of indeterminacy, un/doing any notion of what they represent towards being knowable only from within (Barad, 2014).

Within this un/doing as an ongoing story of indeterminate personal and political becoming-spaces-bodies-times (Barad, 2014), *iii* want to open towards making trouble for the ways in which representational notions of 'politics' as detached generalizable concept persist (Stengers, 2004). The politics with which so much activism speaks remains a humanist politics: "there was a risk of me forgetting that the political category with which I was working was part of our tradition and drew on the inventive resources peculiar to that tradition" (Stengers, 2004, p. 1). A new politics then with which to experiment, to resist re-telling what has been already re-told. Stengers (2004) invokes a 'Cosmopolitics", opening understanding of the political to a 'cosmos', a world for commoning (Stengers, 2004). Cosmopolitics as the mode of paradoxical personal-political re-patterning. A place where the personal can affirm *iii* am political of commoning worldings, whilst simultaneously asserting the equitable value of the personal.

A cosmopolitics for dispolitical commoning; the cosmopolitics for living and flourishing together in the Chthulucene (Haraway, 2016a). A cosmopolitical landscape in which the tears of parents of disabled children are not tears of gendered emotionalism but re-patterned as a fierce display of dispolitical love-work, of activism in the commons as a



collective mode of re-mattering kinder worlds. Tears signifying there is work to be done, lots of commoning and cosmopolitics to be engaging with.

### *Wounded Gaia*

Re-thinking together with Stengers and Vivian, Stenger's Gaia intrudes into my re-thinking as *iii* re-turn to Chthonic sense-events in Vivian's transcript that provoked felt-tip tears. Gaia is invoked to breathe fearsome life into humanism's passive constructs of the planet (Haraway, 2016a). Gaia assembles both living and non-living matter in a complex systemic entanglement of composition and destruction (Latour, 2017). Gaia herself is not threatened by anthropocentric destruction; it is humanity (Haraway, 2016a). As systems shift to becoming-intolerable climate-space for the species, Stengers (2015) asserts that Gaia's tolerance for human-species is running out. Vivian had recalled going into school multiple times, desperate to learn what strategies were being used to support her son, Johnny. She wanted to use them at home to support school but began to feel very "out of the loop". The teacher became angry with her, she recalls finding the reaction unprofessional and was taken aback:

Vivian: And then, after half term, the Head called me in with the Business Manager and it was kind of like two on one and was at me and at me and at me and I was like, you've done it now. You've had a go at me, made your point. For being too demanding, you know. I just walked out and said 'you can just piss off'. I was so angry. That was pretty horrendous. That was awful. All I wanted was what's best for Johnny, I just wanted to know what he's doing so we can support him.

*iii* shiver as *iii* re-turn this excerpt. Two against one. It feels like a playground fight, invoking images of gangs and otherness. Re-turning with Vivian's tears. Re-turning 'you've done it now'. Becoming kin to Gaia, Vivian's "margin of tolerance has been well and truly exceeded" (Stengers, 2015, p.45). Wounded. Tears fall on paper. Re-wounded, together with Gaia. The cry that "another world is possible" is made in unison. The Gaian Chthulucene where the desperate love-work that Vivian engages in, the desperate call for commoning, for always being 'in the loop' is answered.

## *Fleshy Tentacular Hearts*

The heart icon on Vivian's picture mapping was her middle place. It became the middle



*Figure 8 Heart Icons Diffracting Flesh*

place iii kept going back to. As iii re-turn the heart, my thinking, my becoming-entangled pays attention to the red lines, exploding from this middle-placed loveheart. Becoming tentacular, tentacular Chthonic lovework. Feeling and trying. The heart diffracts, becoming fleshy and squirming. Beating the sound of cosmopolitics. Tentacles provoke something else in my re-patterning, de-individualising a seemingly lone fleshy tentacular

loveheart. Pulsing through these hearts are cells of the babies these mums carried.

'Fetomaternal microchimerism', refers to "the persistence after pregnancy, in women and children, of cells acquired through two-way traffic during pregnancy" (Aryn, 2010, p.31), cells which can entangle for decades (Aryn, 2010). Fleshy tentacular hearts, not 'just mum' hearts, collective relational hearts.

Extending this rhizomatic thinking with Haraway to re-make far beyond individualised identities, response-abilities, ways of living. Never alone, never just human. Entangled with maternal cells and others:

Haraway, 2008, p.3: I think we learn to be worldly from grappling with, rather than generalizing from, the ordinary. I love that fact that human genomes can be found in only about 10 percent of all the cells that occupy the mundane space I call my body; the other 90 percent of the cells are filled with genomes of bacteria, fungi, protists, and such...I am vastly outnumbered by my tiny companions.

The heart tentacles and the fleshy multitude from which they squirm entangle with a moment of Chthonic intensity in Vivian's sense-event transcription. <sup>iii</sup> entangle, grappling with a moment alone but opening to possibilities. Already and always many. Vivian's intense dislovework, alone but opening towards possibilities for re-worlding, re-mattering with and a commons-to-come. Not alone, but not-yet commons:

Vivian: There was like all these speech therapy strategies and well, my friend used to call it "Boswell Academy" cos that's my surname (laughs). It was a bit like, oh gosh, you know, doing all this and these strategies.

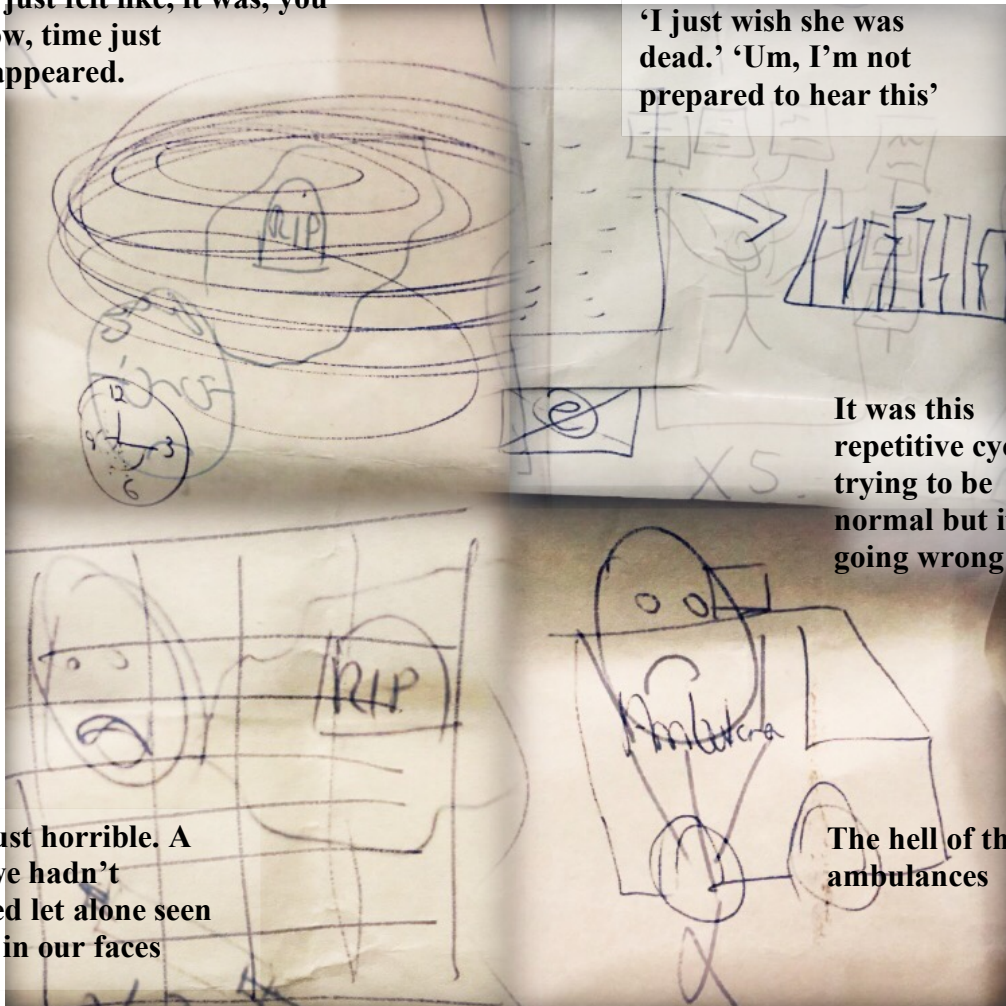
The naming of the academy made me pause. The work of many happens in an academy, students and teachers. This is an academy for Vivian and Johnny. Just the two, just the mother-son dyad (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). Yet the work fills an academy. Private work seeping into a word normally reserved for public space. Strategies that Vivian had actively sought out and fought for are re-turning. They re-pattern to increase in labour, intensifying the parent-work required of her. Thinking with Runswick-Cole and Goodley, (2018), this increase in private labour is a direct and exhausting consequence of Vivian claiming her son's difference. Re-orientating therapeutic strategies as another line of flight from Runswick-Cole and Goodley's (2018) "claiming difference [as] a risky strategy" (p.237) in their intra-actions relationally intensifying private disparent labour demands. A poignant reminder of the expectations of individualism in intervention practices offered to parents and the additional parent-work that entangles and naturalises with labels of additional needs. A moment calling to the commons, calling for a re-thinking of intervention strategy-practices that are kinder to all entangled with them. Entangling with tentacular hearts and Haraway, the reminder that we are already all multitudes is a provocation for experimental re-patterning the individualised, exhausting and undervalued private disparentwork demands.



## 7.9 Chthonic Apparatus: Black Holes, Hauntings and the (Re)Matterings of Matter

We just felt like, it was, you know, time just disappeared.

'I just wish she was dead.' 'Um, I'm not prepared to hear this'



It was this repetitive cycle trying to be normal but it all going wrong

It was just horrible. A future we hadn't envisaged let alone seen slapped in our faces

The hell of the ambulances

Figure 9 Chthonic Apparatus ↔ Tom ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching

RIP

Biro Tombstones

Thinking with death and early disabled childhoods – uncomfortable?

SUDEP – Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy

Intrusion of *iii*: How many mornings have *iii* shouted “Is he dead?” to my husband

Death lurks around my thinking daily, nobody wants to listen, they just cry

Stop crying and pay attention!

Entangling with Tom's tombstones

Tombstones demanding *iii* pay attention

“Thinking *with* rather than *against* death” (Goodley, Lawthom and Runswick-Cole, 2014)

Life-Death Paradox, inextricably bound (Murray 2003; Braidotti, 2019)

Re-turning, listening to Haraway's "speakers of the dead" (2016a, p163)  
Opening to possibilities of living and dying together.

### *Opening to Possibilities with Death*

Tom talks and draws of death in disabled early childhoods in what becomes for me an apparatus of Chthonic sense-events that iiii feel an ethical obligation to open and provoke possibilities for response-able ways of intra-acting with disabled-childhood-death phenomena. Whilst death entangles as an unavoidable intra-action for all that enfolds as living, death in the context of young disabled children is a differentially precarious mattering than death as entangled with and through the lives of their non-disabled peers (Todd, 2007). Runswick-Cole (2010) emphasis the ongoingness of disablism that persists through disabled childhood lives and deaths in the contexts of inadequate support services and familial and peer support. Perceptions of diminished importance attached to disabled childhood deaths is a harrowing observation that forces my writing to momentarily pause here (Runswick-Cole, 2010). It is not for me to linger in these contexts but to open death in early disabled childhoods as a phenomena that might be re-turned and re-patterned beyond the negative inequitable precariousities that persist in lives and deaths that demand to be equitably valued and cared for/with/about.

The realities of his son Josh's diagnosis of Dravet Syndrome, a life-limiting epilepsy syndrome, foreground the realities of living entangled with increased risks of sudden death. Experiences of prolonged seizures that resisted medical interventions have re-mattered disabled childhood death intra-actively into Tom's life:

Tom: I was with him and you know, his sats dropped to ten percent he was, you know, he properly stopped breathing and they resuscitated him before they intubated him. At that point I thought he was about to die, um so that was scary.

There was always that fear that it was going to end badly at first but it was just a case of acceptance, this has become our new normality that Josh is in intensive care.

Death does not intra-act here as a part of a parental bereavement phenomena in relation to Josh's disabled childhood or to under-value Josh's life (Todd, 2007). Death intrudes, becoming inextricable from living. Fear entangles but does not prevent Tom

from facing the increased likelihood of death in Josh's childhood as an inextricable entanglement with his childhood disability. Tom actively resists threads from "Better off dead than disabled" ideologies (Runswick-Cole, 2010, p.815) in a moment that would be one of the most profound Chthonic sense-events for me in this thesis. A moment that made me shudder, made me cry repeatedly, made me stop and walk away. <sup>iii</sup> abandoned transcription until the following day. Perhaps unknown at the time, this was the middle place from which <sup>iii</sup> began to acknowledge my response-ability to intra-act with death-in disabled childhood phenomena:

Tom: We walked back with another mum who actually just said at the time about her daughter "I wish she was dead". It was massive. Like 'woah, can I just eject straight away' but there was five minutes of the walk left. Really tough.

Tom 'ejects' as quickly as possible from this mother's wish and so do <sup>iii</sup>.

### *Experimentally Re-turning With Death to (Multiplicities)Possibilities*

"As life and death merged, so too did the boundaries between self and other -my son and I were separate but one, in life as in death" (Murray, 2003, p.524.

An impossible paradox becoming imaginable, togetherness, selfother, lifedeath

Inseparable, possible

Haraway's (2016a) "Speaker for the Dead" (p.167)

"Re-presencing, to the practice of vital memory...

to strengthen the healing" (Haraway, 2016a, p.166)

Facing extinction

Gaia provoked, threats to species, extinctions (Stengers, 2015)

Precarious disabled childhood lifedeaths

Made increasingly precarious as Gaia intrudes.

Urgent:

Re-Mattering "practices of living and dying in rich worldings" (Haraway, 2016a, p.10)

### *Ma(r)king Time with Barad*

The materialization of time re-matters through and with Tom's picture mapping and as Chthonic sense-event. Tentacles envelop, forcing my attention and thinking as <sup>iii</sup> read with Barad and consider childhood disability-parent-(re)mattering time phenomena.

Tom: That's a really crap drawing of a black hole, um, we just felt like it was, you know, time disappeared. We spent two or three days in hospital

every week for a year, uh, it probably wasn't every week but it felt like every week for the best part of a year.

I don't know why, uh, I think the black hole, I had to ask my wife about some of the timings of things in the earliest years. It's just this eat sleep repeat you know?

iii re-turn this black-hole-time-Tom-disabled-child phenomena and thinking with Barad become curious with the provocation "matter doesn't evolve in time. Matter does time. Matter materializes and enfolds different temporalities" (Barad, 2012, p.1). It is not my intention to hypothesize here or interpret but to provoke thinking around parenting temporalities in the context of childhood disability.

*Provocation for thinking:* The black hole and apparent 'Groundhog' day are very different sensings of time enfolding for Tom. Time differentially enfolding and being remattered as quantum entanglement with agential disability. This agential disability is a poignant enfolding of disability as a powerful re-mattering of timespacematter and a middle place to meet it with response-ability for "new imaginaries of time" (Barad, 2012, p.2) that dis/rupt conventional, normative timescapes.



## 7.10 Chthonic Apparatus: Welcome-Baskets, Television-as-Kin

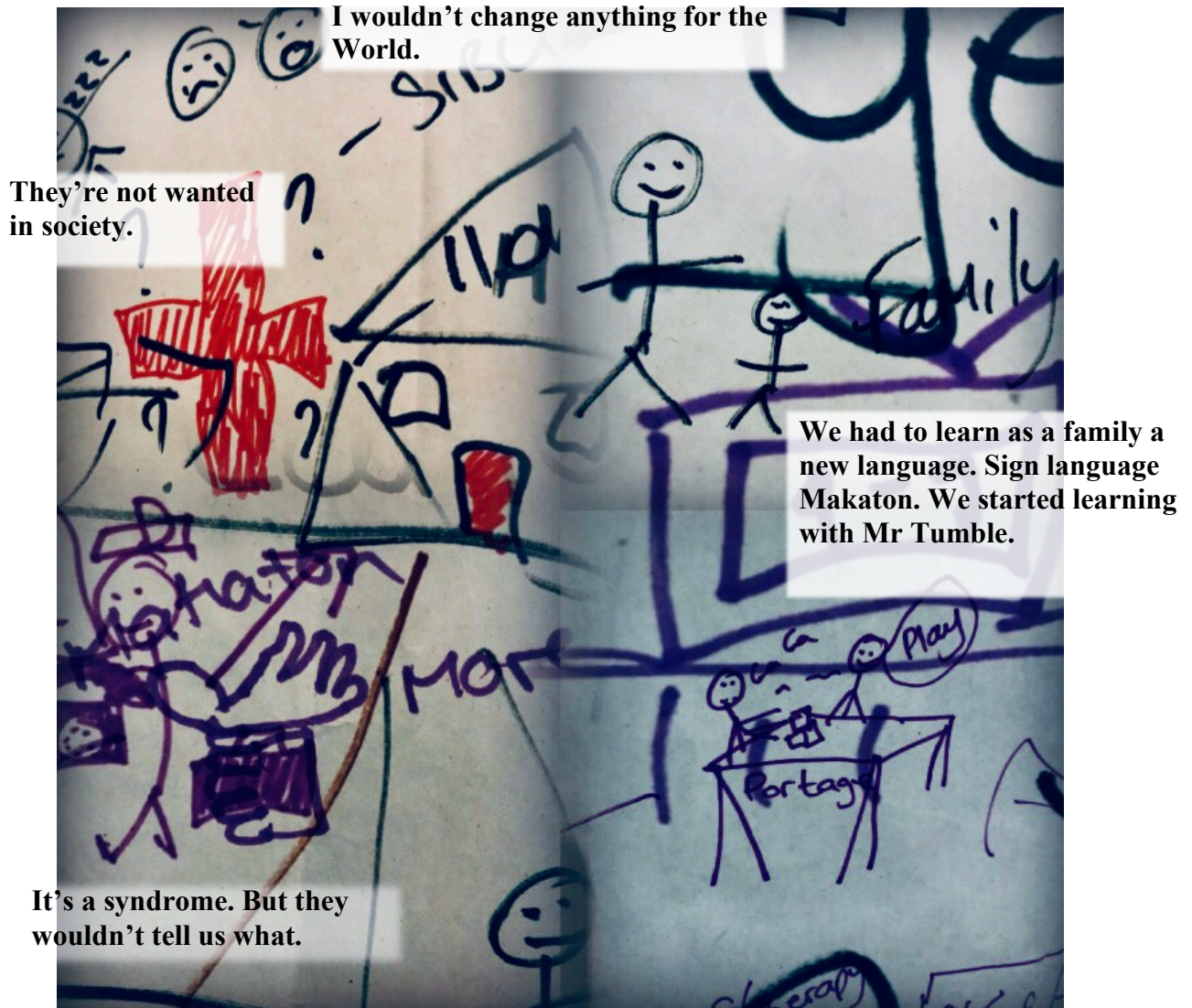


Figure 10 Chthonic Apparatus ↔ Liz ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching

A red cross

An emblem of protection (Red Cross, 2020)

Liz: A lot went on in hospital...

An emblem to protect

Liz: They're not wanted in society

No protection from the norm

No protection from neoliberal (foetal) developmental expectations.



### *Re-Turning with a Red Cross and a Basket of Worlding*

The red cross in Liz's picture map is already intra-acting in the apparatus as multiplicity. A symbol from which rhizomatic lines of flight flee as Liz talks of her surprise in hospital when her second baby was born with Down Syndrome, the heart operations, the tests, the diagnosis, time in the Special Care Baby Unit. A multiplicity returned many times already. The red cross lingers in my mind. As representational symbol it purports "protection and neutrality" (Red Cross, 2020). For the workers wearing this symbol in conflict zones it re-matters as a shield, the only protection against weapons (Red Cross, 2020). Re-turning as agential in Liz's mapping it is becoming a part of a maternal-delivery-baby-hospital-phenomena. What it shields and what it protects as it intra-actively entangles as part of this phenomena are re-mattering in unexpected patterns. The cross shakes off its representational origins and the 'common-sense' knowledges of its meaning. Re-turning Liz's mapping and Chthonic sense-event transcription with and through a middle place of a red cross as shield. As the cross as shield intra-acts with hospital-diagnosis phenomena, it is becoming an emblem of protector of normative human baby-bodies and chromosomes. It is becoming-shield to the challenges made to the norm and to neoliberal-ableist desires by babies who intra-act differently with these discourses by babies and their agential chromosomes:

Liz: Once Natasha was born, so we didn't know she was Down Syndrome but then we found out obviously there was something wrong. I was told 'it's a syndrome' but what sort of syndrome they wouldn't tell us. They then said 'okay we're thinking Down Syndrome and she has a problem with her heart'. I couldn't handle all this information, so a huge shock a big shock here.

It is not my intention to re-turn this vignette as another already told story of negative parental experiences with Down Syndrome in the medical context of diagnosis (Farkas, Cless, Cless, Nelson-Goff, Bodine and Edelman, 2019). Neither is it my intention to seek meaning (Jackson and Mazzei, 2012). What I am interested in is diffracting the red cross as entangled in Liz's map as with and through the hospital-phenomena it was drawn to represent. The cross entangling in my thoughts is diffracting with the red cross utilized as humanitarian symbolic representation (Red Cross, 2020) and re-turning associated dominant discourses that it protects in this particular (re)configuration (Barad, 2007). Entangled with and through dominant medical

discourse are termination rates in England following prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome, repeatedly reported at around ninety per cent per year in England (Morris and Springett, 2014), a statistic that has entangled in relation to a Chthonic sense-event during my conversation with Liz:

Liz: They're not wanted in society., it's just heart-breaking. When you think in Iceland, is it Iceland? They terminate all the babies with Down Syndrome and there was just one and she's actually a public speaker now, which I think is just incredible.

A glimmer of activism. Enfolding itself into the dominant discourse, re-patterning, forever enfolded in the world's becoming (Barad, 2007). Heart-breaking becoming heart-making as Liz applauds this Icelandic speaker. Heartlove, re-turning with Liz. Heartlove become worldly, commoning through a Down Syndrome support group to which Liz belong:

Liz: We were in the hospital with this new baby, just been told she's got Down Syndrome and that was it. Whereas now, there's the local Down Syndrome Group and they have done this lovely basket of goodies for the new parents in hospital, just to help them along their way, just to support them and say we're here if you need us.

A powerful basket of goodies indeed, *iii* have goose bumps and tears start to form. A powerful basket re-turning the red-cross-hospital-ableist-norm-phenomena and demanding to be enfolded. Disrupting, making trouble. A basket carrying new discourses and possibilities for commoning and welcoming all babies as kin. A basket diffracting the cross, enfolding, demanding it re-turn as protector of *all*.

### ***Becoming Kin: Television-Mr Tumble Phenomena Re-turned***

The television in the apparatus begins to re-matter as agential. The television contributed to the family collectively engaged and diffracting individualised parent-work. Familial live-work as Liz-husband-brother-sister-Natasha-television-Mr Tumble-Makaton intra-actively produce and phenomena through which the television and Mr Tumble character become object-as-kin (Benozzo, Carey, Cozza, Elmenhorst, Fairchild, Koro-Ljunberg and Taylor, 2019). *iii* become entangled as this phenomena invokes familiarity: many televisions-multiple Mr Tumbles-as-kin.



### 7.11 Intrusion: iii Martina

Tom: It's usually mum gives up work and just becomes absorbed into this special needs world. You know, starts doing doctorates on it (laughs).

Now I know how to write my thesis. Love letters. Writing out of love.  
Guttorm, 2012, p.602

Following a methodological principle for science studies that I adopted many years ago, I will critically analyse, or "deconstruct", only that which I love and only that in which I am deeply implicated.

Haraway, 1997, p151

Writing love letters, love stories, love narrations. Not the gentle kind though. A ferocious love, a dispolitical love. At times an angry love, an urgent love-(re)crafting. Dispolitical lovecraft. Relational, commoning. Love as becoming-theoretically available to think with and through. My fleshy tentacular heart squirms through this becoming-thesis, never detaching from iii mother. Without iii mother this would not be written.

So many more love letters to write. So many dispolitical acts of love to be making worldly with. These are my experimental entrée into dispolitical love letters. They returned as you read them. Vignettes, pictures, excerpts of theorists with which and with whom iii have written may linger with you as the tentacles reach out and provoke your thinking. Not so much caught in a tangle web but picking up the stringy tentacles waiting to spin, to re-craft response-ably in the ongoing re-matterings of Gaia and the Chthulucene.

The following plateau entangles another mode of sympoiesis that entangles DisTemporalities in the un/making of psy-developmentalism in early dis/childhoods.

\*\*  
**Plateau 8...**  
**Sympoiesis#2:**  
**Performative Agential Childhoods Doing DisTime**

**8.1 Entangling with Sympoietic Systems out of Time(s)**

Throughout this plateau iiii engage with a sympoietic practice of (re)configuring and (re)worlding disabled childhoods through indeterminate entanglements that have no allegiance with developmental notions of progress, linearity or continuity (Barad, 2010). Thinking with Barad iiii question how much thinking about disabled childhoods is shaped and constrained by thinking through a sedimented concept of linear and continuous time (Barad, 2010). Woven throughout this plateau is the provocation “what if it were otherwise?” (Barad, 2010, p.240), a provocation that lives as curious creature-companion entangled with my sympoietic practices of making with data-theory-thinking-writing (Haraway, 2016a). To entangle iiii invite the reader to *feel* the (im)possible dis/orientations and dis/continuities that provoke other ways of discursively-materialising disabled childhoods response-ably (Barad, 2010). This is an ongoing invitation to the unknown timespaces beyond the psy-developmental discourses that Other and pathologize disabled childhoods that materialize resistance to psy-developmentalism’s pre-determined uni-linear trajectories (Burman, 2017).

**8.2 Departure**

Matter doesn’t move in time.  
Matter doesn’t evolve in time.  
Matter does time.  
Matter materializes and enfolds different temporalities.

Barad, 2013, p. 1

This sympoiesis is out of time. Unsynchronized to humanism, modernity and the dominant neoliberal and psy-developmental material-discourses that swarm with and through disabled childhoods. A seemingly unchallengeable material-discursive force of relationality producing and performing the measuring, the charting and the time for neoliberal psy-desired childhood(s). Re-searching tentacular Chthonic monsters (Haraway, 2016a) devour and digest with and through desires for progress, for linear

time and human exceptionalism. Tentacles regurgitate the matterings of world(s) that are paradoxically bigger (beyond the limits of imaginations) and smaller (encompassing the quantum world) than classically understood (Barad, 2018). Re-turning response-ability for the ways in which material-discursive practices intra-actively enfold disabled children's mattering with the world (Barad, 2007). Through dis/continuous re-searching and asynchronous un/worlding, *iii* follow the data...Chthonic sense-events entice, entangling with and through *iii* to curiously re-search past-present temporal injustices and futures that will be held accountable. Response-able to the calls from children enfolding pathologized and Othered temporalities, the data...-*iii* entanglement depart from the following point:

*Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring disabled childhoods beyond neoliberal-ableist developmental expectations.*

There are no linear writings, tracing the past, to present to hopes for future for this habitual trajectory is the beating heart of developmentalism for which *iii* seek a new rhythm, a dis/continuous beat (Barad, 2010). Resynchronization to dis/continuity requires a re-imagining of not only developmental expectations of childhood but the world(s) in which expectations are constructed and discursively materialized (Barad, 2007). Re-searching with data is sympoietically asynchronous from the middle place in which you are invited to remain throughout. Re-imaginings emerge not from a loyalty to histories but in response-ability to data...when the data...call. The writings are dis/jointed. How else to document time out of joint (Barad, 2016)?



### 8.3 Troubling Time(s)

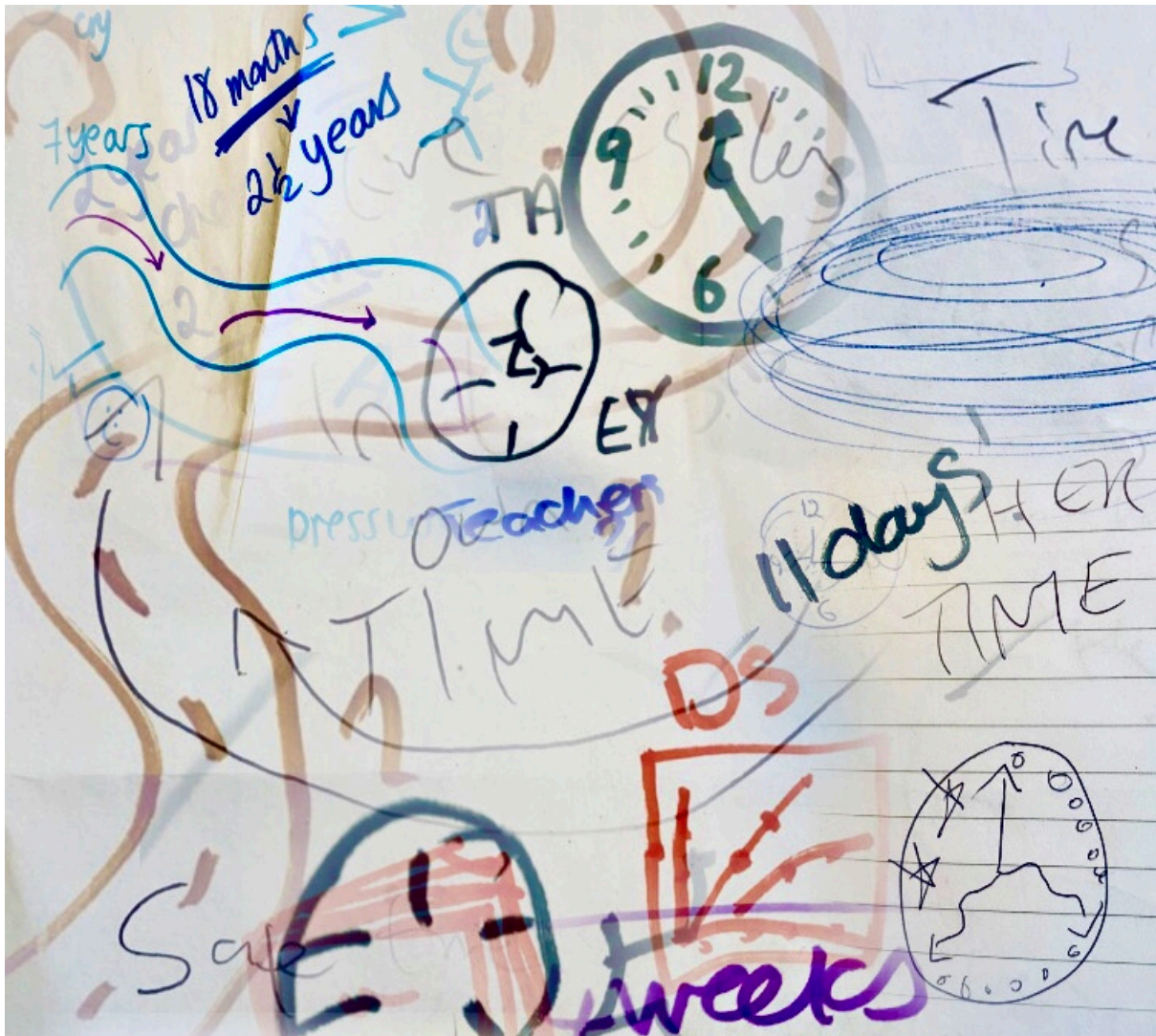


Figure 11 Time Apparatus: Dis/orientating SpaceTime ↔ Diffracting Temporalities

#### *Tentacular Thinking-Searching with Time Apparatus and Barad*

Apparatus Provocation: Barad, K. (2010):

How much is thinking of early childhood and childhood disability “caught up with the idea of continuity? What if it were otherwise?” (p.240)

Clocks. So many clocks.

Time everywhere.

Naomi: “Her time”

Tim: “Safe time”

Liz: “Does she need to be plotted?”

Ages. Stages. Trajectories. Linear plotting.

Experimental dis/ruptions to continuity.

Dis/orientating.  
Clock time. Calendar time. Linear Time.  
Diffracting and dispersing temporalities (Barad, 2013)  
“Joins and dis/joins” (Barad, 2010, p.244)  
Children don’t move in time.  
Children don’t evolve in time.  
Children *do* time.  
Doing time. Not *in* time but materializing time (Barad, 2013)  
Children materialize and enfold different temporalities (Barad, 2013).  
Doing your time, my love, iiii am intra-actively enfolding anew (thinking as mother)  
Feel time diffracting; together in the past, present and future as enfolding topology  
“Quantum dis/continuity is at the crux of the im/possible, im/passible,  
trans/formation” (Barad, 2013, p.5).



#### 8.4 (Re)Materializing DisTemporalities: Doing Time

Barad’s entrée to this sympoietic plateau posits time as something matter *does* rather than something absolute that matter moves in or through (Barad, 2007). Time understood through an agential realist framework is a lively relative affair rather than a passive backdrop against which to measure childhood (Barad, 2007). Relative time is “mutually constituted” (Barad, 2007, p.181) through the inseparable intra-actional enfoldings of space, time and matter (Barad, 2007). This opens possibilities for re-turning the time that post-dishuman children have been *doing*. Exploring, becoming response-able to their *doing* time rather than measuring what and how they materialize against a backdrop of psy-prescriptive time (Barad, 2007). Possibilities for intra-actively re-turning and becoming response-able intra-actively with children *doing* time makes lively trouble for the positioning and pathologizing of children against a powerful humanist-appropriated and time-dependent developmental discourse (Burman, 2017a).

Temporality is becoming something a child does; although never in isolation. Temporality enfolds the child-as-mattering intra-actively, producing specific “demarcations of space” (Barad, 2007, p.181) and of time. It is through the dynamic production of mattering intra-actively with specific spacetime entanglements that embodiment is understood *as* the ongoingness of the world(s) rather than being positioned at any point *in* the world (Barad, 2007). The child is no longer understood as

materializing “in the sense that the values of particular properties change in time; rather, which property comes to matter is re(con)figured in the very making/marking of time” (Barad, 2007, p.180). The response-ability to meet the child and entangle with their ongoing worlding as an inseparable part of our own worlding is an urgent call for a re-thinking of development-as-usual. It is a demand for tentacular trouble makers to shake up/down classical assumptions about the nature of time with and through which psy-developmental theories function as dominant discourse. Shaking, disrupting, re-working time is blurring the developmental boundaries that superimpose psy-values onto children (Barad, 2010) from an outside position. There *is* no absolute outside position (Barad, 2007). These values include(normalise) and exclude(Other) children as though their doing time can be calculated from a position of exteriority (Barad, 2010).

Post-dishuman kin *are*  
the “ongoing differentiating of the world”.

Barad, 2018, p.17

Shifting the (ethico)onto(epistemo)logical foundations of developmental theories makes trouble by disrupting what is held as ‘natural’ and ‘inevitable’ (Barad, 2012). It makes trouble for how children come to matter and the assumptions of inevitability assumed in specific psy-created ideas that construct linear and continuous developmental progress. Ideas that are intrinsically entangled with a concept of developmental normalcy and deviancy/deficit (Barad, 2018). Time is diffracting, becoming dis/continuous and inseparable from space and matter (Barad, 2007); “there is no [linear] story – only a complex, tightly knit tissue of activities and events that have no single explanation” (Barad, 2014, p.184). Dis/continuity in this context is not understood as a binary difference opposed to continuity but rather an enactment of agential cuts; a simultaneous and ongoing cutting together-apart of space/time/matter that are “neither fully discontinuous with continuity or even fully continuous with discontinuity” (Barad, 2010, p.244).

Enfolding a dis/continuous temporality enacts agential cutting together-apart of the ways in which disabled and non-disabled children *do* time. The absence of fixed boundaries opens up to possibilities for disabled children to assert their enfolding of the world so that their time can tentacularly feel and make trouble for material-discursive



practices of entangling with children that insist on telling linear stories about linear-time-travelling children. New material-discursive stories are needed about dis/children and the dis/continuous time *iii* all enfold in the ongoing reiterations of the world (Barad, 2007).

Thinking as entanglement with Barad's dis/continuity  
And Goodley and Runswick-Cole's dis/human,  
dissing human (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016) dissing time (Barad, 2018).  
Disabled childhoods diffracting  
fully disrupting without undisrupting,  
disabled childhoods diffract  
fully undisrupting with disrupture:  
together-apart  
"differentiating and entangling" (Barad, 2010, p.265).  
Agential dis/rupture,  
Disrupting disruptures of time (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012, p19).  
Agential dis/ruptures,  
dis/ruptures of development,  
dis/ruptures of a re-turning child.  
Dis/rupting rights  
to do living,  
to do time.  
Dis/time.

The words remind me of a sand-timer in the shape they assume. The sands of dis/time.



## 8.5 Quantum Theory as Tentacular Theoretical Re-Turning Device

It is even hard to say this when our imaginations are so constrained when it comes to talking about time.

Barad, 2016, 24.02

Tentacles prod and feel but also push and pierce where boundaries persist. The boundaries of my imagination as entangled with time becoming punctured; diffracting possibilities through the perforations of a boundary becoming undone. Quantum theoretical insights are not entangling through this plateau to provide analogy for the entanglement of socio-political and psychologised theories that dominate territorialisations of childhood disability (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012). They are entangling with social theories that operate at a much larger scale than quantum theories and from which their insights remain largely absent; a scalar division

purporting distinct ‘macro’ and ‘micro’ worlds (Barad, 2012). The macroworld being a world of easily perceptible ‘larger’ matter and the microworld the domain of particles and that which feels alien and Other worldly in comparison to the humanist domain of a macroworld (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012).

There is nothing natural about this boundary between worlds (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012). The binary division it creates upholds the naturalisation of modernist views and their assumptions whilst keeping insights from quantum physics that challenge and disrupt classical ontological and epistemological foundations at a “subhuman level. Out of sight, out of mind. Normalcy is thus safeguarded by the micro/macro distinction” (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012, p.18).

### *Tentacular Interruption: Out of Sight, Out of Mind*

Out of sight, out of mind.  
Subhuman.  
Safeguarding normalcy.  
iii physically wince.  
Tears threaten to salt the wounds  
Of the deeply cut binaries that Other;  
That naturalise words  
And worlds that  
Keep learning disabled children and young people segregated,  
In isolation.  
Out of sight, out of mind.

### *Re-turning Quantum Theory as Tentacular Theoretical Re-Turning Device*

Interruptions enfold as iii submit yet actively follow/actively follow yet submit to the non-linear topology of tentacular re-searching/thinking. Troubling the boundary of the quantum/Other and humanist macro-worlds troubles the very way in which boundaries are created and upheld (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012). Un/doing these big worldview boundaries makes trouble for the binaries that have been naturalised as fixed and hierarchized as the onto(epistemo)logies that maintain them are diffracted. New patterns of mattering in the world open up through diffraction patterns, an exciting re-orientation for exploration(s) and possibilities for new patterns of living and dying together with and of a world of ever-changing performative boundaries (Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012).

Insights from quantum physics and the behaviours of micro spacetime matter are considered so Other-worldly that their behaviours seem impossible through a classical lens (Barad, 2014). Electrons travelling through two openings at the same time; still one but somehow two (Barad, 2014); resisting any explanation from classical origins yet inviting an exploration of the seemingly im/possible (Barad, 2014). This particular insight is the underpinning of performative differencing as an ongoingness not a fixed state (Barad, 2014). An electron asserting both wave and particle behaviours yet not settling as either one (Barad, 2014). The fundamental workings of the world supporting the notion of differencing, identities-in-flux. The disabled child, “affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of Otherness arrived at” (Trinh, 1988, p.3). Boundaries dis/rupt further as adult/child boundaries diffract in flux:

iii am like you,  
iii am different,  
iii am never Other (Trinh, 1988).  
Kin.  
iii are(there can only ever be multiplicities) kin.

Quantum theory is brimming with ontoepistemological possibilities for new, simultaneously old and also very present imaginaries for disabled childhoods and the myriad of ways in which disabled and Other marginalized childhood identities are not only held as Other but subjugated to an adulthood that is itself becoming-performative differencing of spacetime matter (Barad, 2014).

\*  
\*\*

## 8.6 Documenting an Interruption with Mechanical Time-Keeping Artefacts

iii re-turn with the clocks scattering through the performative picture mappings and my notes and doodles. So many temporal referencing artefacts reside in the re-search that have for so long reassured me that time ticks along in uniform and measurable linearity (Barad, 2007); mechanical-clock-matter performing with my own materialization. Mechanical time artefacts begin to diffract. These artefacts check a child’s synchronicity,

their conformity with modernist time. Check check check goes the tick tock clock. It is through these clocks and calendars that human delays and differences are quantified, labelled (Zerubavel, 1987). Temporality manipulated is not the temporality of the world (Zerubavel, 1987). Time is troubling and opening toward possibilities for dis/understanding(s). Time misunderstood is knowable only as a uniform tick tock to the beat of normative humanism. The march of the Anthropocene, dictated by a uniform synchronicity to linear time. Clocks, graphs, schedules and other fragments of modernist time scatter as tentacles push and playfully dis/join them from their onto(epistemo)logies.

Thinking as entanglement with a Baradian agential realism, re-searching tentacles prod and provoke these scheduling, tick-tocking mechanical matterings that enforce and naturalize a “standard temporal reference framework” (Zerubavel, 1987, p.868). Standardised temporal referencing machines diffract as they become more-than passive matter. Understood intra-actively with an agential realist ethicoontoepistemology (Barad, 2007), the seemingly passive time-measuring artefacts are becoming governors, enforcers and controllers. Neoliberal tick-tocking guards and psy-developmental trackers, enfolding and entangling to naturalise the *doing* neoliberal normative psy-time (Barad, 2013).

iii remove my wristwatch.  
Turn off the silent red numbers on my alarm clock.  
Take down the calendar that hangs by my desk.  
Notice with puzzlement the little digital clock on the corner of my laptop that iii  
cannot seem to hide as iii am typing.  
Clock time, calendar time, everywhere.  
Matter diligently doing time intra-actively.  
Keeping me in check.  
Keeping me synchronized.  
“The mechanical guts of the capital world” (Barad, 2016).  
Enforcing linearity,  
continuity,  
normative temporalities.  
“Time hands tick like wheels,  
wheeling down a road called progress” (Barad, 2016)  
Unwittingly doing conscripted time;  
enlisted into the neoliberal psy-normative enfolding discourses.

## *Tentacular Interruption: Clocks*

Thinking with Barad (2016), tentacles wander to re-turnings of 'clock' and towards possibilities for synchronizing with performative spacetime-matter. Tentacles prod measuring dis/jointed time. A dis/synchronization that is synchronous and a synchronization that is dis/synchronous. Im/possible calibrations for an intra-active world.



*Figure 12 Apparatus: Hiroshima/Peace/Doomsday Clocks Diffracted*

The Doomsday clock  
synchronized to estimated presentfuture nuclear annihilation (Barad, 2018).

One hundred seconds from apocalypse (Pérez Ortega, 2020),  
calibrated to nuclear threat and climate catastrophe (Barad, 2018).

Synchronized to multiplicities united toward humanist demise.

Hiroshima clocks telling the time that stopped  
but never stop(ped) telling that time;  
eternal time (Barad, 2018).

Hiroshima's "peace watch tower  
a digital clock synchronised to peace...  
reset back to zero every time there is a nuclear test anywhere  
in the world" (Barad, 2018, p.59).

Different time mechanics yet still assuming universal human-centric  
progressive endeavour to a future (disastrous or not) (Barad, 2018).

Doing-time, quantum entanglements  
Freeing from clocks and universal progress measures  
toward "embodied practices of re-memembering"

to begin to account for the exclusions and Othering  
of disabled children through histories  
while re-researching in the dis/joins  
of time;  
finding new openings that were always there,  
through which possibilities might be found  
for “justices-to-come”(Barad, 2018, p.63).



### 8.7 An Experimental Re-turning with Crip Time

Others are here. Troubling time. Re-orienting, re-turning, crippling temporal ontoepistemologies towards new possibilities for enfolding time. As a time-troubling activism (Kafer, 2013), crip time is re-turning towards new expansive im/possibilities with quantum entanglements/quantum entanglements are opening to new im/possibilities with crip time. Crip time enfolds crip theory’s rich insights (Goodley, 2014) into the troubling of neoliberal “compulsory able-bodiedness” (McRuer, 2006, p.2) and the entangled able-bodied/minded ideological citizenships that “masquerade as a non-identity” (McRuer, 2006, p.2). Crip time thus troubles the *temporalities* through which able-bodiedness/mindedness is enforced and the ways in which ableist timespaces also masquerade as naturalised, unchallengeable norms (Kafer, 2013). Queer theory’s legacy from which crip theory and subsequently crip time made itself known is woven through as dis/continuous thread, entangling heteronormativity and associated “queer time” (Halberstam, 2005). There is an interwoven project in queering and crippling time to assert “strange temporalities, imaginative life schedules and eccentric economic practices” (Halberstam, 2005, p. 12).

Similarities lie at an agential dis/juncture; acknowledging shared plight and identity politics whilst affirming difference. This is not a dis/juncture of not quite -two however, it is an enfolding towards an ongoing “post-modern body studies” (Sykes, 2009, p.239) that makes complex intra-disciplinary cuts from “multidimensional” (Sykes, 2009, p.239) embodiments of marginalized identities. This expansion enfolds as agential realist ongoing embodiment: identities *doing* time. Hierarchies, binaries and visibility and invisibility of identities are becoming un/workable. Through a quantum agential realist framework dualisms are not available to work with as the reconfigurations of mattering as a part of spacetime unfold as topology not as fixed or pre-determined

boundaries on trajectories. Agential realism affords a framework through which to re-turn “post-identity politics that allows us to work together” through meeting our response-abilities to the boundaries of spacetime that are produced and how those boundaries are (re)configured in terms of exclusions and inclusions . The ongoing worlding demands our response-ability in the materializations we are enfolded with and the exclusions and inclusions we intra-act through our own spacetime mattering (Barad, 2007). The ‘natural’ of the heterosexual/body/time, the non-disabled/body/time, the/child/body time and the adult/body/time is displaced as nature becomes something that “performs itself differently” (Barad, 2007, p.184) .

Quantum theory entangles and enfolds a re-oriented crip time beyond the world “as we know it” (McRuer, 2006). Re-turning towards an expansive, strange and troubling coupling of quantum and classical world theories and the lively trouble this dis/jointed union-in-flux makes for identities *doing* spacetime. Doing identity-time is an ongoingness, in flux and with potential at every moment to dis/rupt timespaces (McRuer, 1997). There are openings to possibilities for crip time to be *done*. Experiencing accommodations or time-extensions in classically understood and normative time is not crip time (Kafer, 2013) but rather what Freeman (2010) refers to as enforced “chrononormativity” (p.3). Crip time and crip theory is an urgent call to ensure the mattering *into* the world of disabled people, an assurance of crip futurity (Kafer, 2013). It is a demand for attendance to the ways in which crip and multidimensional intra-sections of identity come to matter with-uterus, with-education, with-family, with-reproduction, with equitable [companion kin] rights (Kafer, 2013).

The ways in which modernist time matters with disabled lives is abusive in its demands for universal expectations in doing prescriptive norm-time. Classical time is life-limiting in the shortening of life expectations (NHS England and NHS Improvement, 2019) and it re-matters failures to acknowledge the approximately one billion people globally (WHO, 2020) living and doing time beyond capital and psy-prescribed schedules. This is an urgent call to become response-able to the ongoingness of compulsory time and to become responsive to meet the (re)imaginaries of multi-dimensional expansive temporalities that demand inclusion in thick now. The time we do is a mattering of exclusion(s) and inclusion(s) that are *unnaturally* silent and it is from crip theory and

crip time that iiii am re-learning the multifaceted ways in which to keep troubling compulsory time (Barad, 2007) and experimentally address its invisible and naturalised existence (McRuer, 2006).



### **8.8 Diffractive (Re)DisOrienting with Material-Temporalities**

This plateau re-turns to the task of re-imagining and opening toward im/possibilities with Chthonic sense-event apparatus that have lured tentacular Chthonic Ones and intra-actively produced me as re-searcher. They are becoming dis/continuous anarchival writings (Murphie, 2016). Paradoxically jumping with and through time and theories whilst through their enfolding on paper somehow “continuing in thought” (Barad, 2018, p.75). As enforcers of trouble, tentacles “arrest the present and do not allow it to get away with itself for a single minute” (Barad, 2016, 13.53). Becoming time travellers is no longer about leaps toward Utopian futures (Haraway, 2016a) but about getting uncomfortable in the thick now, bubbling into other times and other quantum possibilities.





## 8.9 Chthonic Apparatus: An Agential Naughty Chair and Becoming Dis/Dancing-Ballerina.

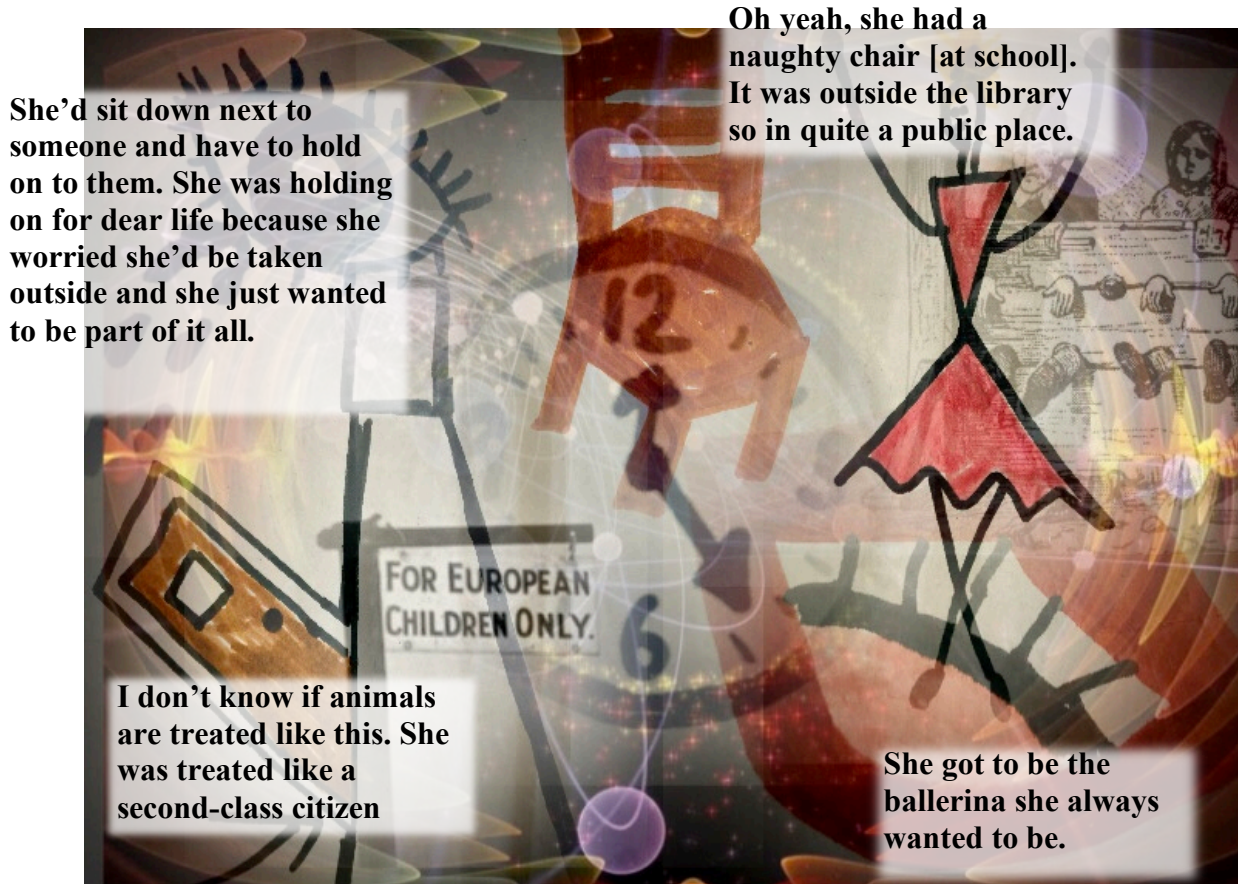


Figure 13 Chthonic Temporalities Apparatus ↔ Naomi ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching-Dis/Orienting

A school chair

Naomi: "She used to be put on the naughty chair all the time, like constantly.

It was outside the library so it was in quite a public place"

Becoming public shaming chair

The naughty chair

Dis/rupting time as medieval stock punishment imagery

Intrudes with my thinking

To shame

To punish

"Everyone has a fundamental right to respect and dignity...

For children, this right can be particularly difficult to enjoy" (Lenihan, 2018, p.21).

Becoming even more difficult for Sophie.

Because Sophie says 'poo' a lot.

### *Dis/rupting with an Agential Naughty Chair*

The wooden school chair seemingly passive begins to squirm. Four legs, a seat and a



back becoming one of Haraway's Chthonic monsters, performing "the material meaningfulness of earth processes" (Haraway, 2016a, p2). The Chthonic monster-chair also "demonstrates and performs consequences" (Haraway, 2016a, p.2); tentacles (re)performing consequences for Sophie that are tangled up with and through the production and configuration of bodies through normative Western developmental ideologies (Barad, 2007). The chair re-turning, dis/continuously diffracting.

*Figure 14 Chthonic Monster Chair*

The naughty chair becoming-Chthonic monster chair is more than non-agential matter. It is becoming understandable as having a different agency to the chairs left in the classroom space. The agency in this agential realist context is "cut loose from its traditional humanist orbit" (Barad, 2007, p.235) and not limited to human possibilities. It is not something the chair has, agency is rather something the chair *does/is* (Barad, 2007). Intra-actively entangling with the 'public' corridor timespace outside the school library, the naughty chair materially casts agency by re/marking the bodies it produces in its relational worlding. The children for whom it is purposed with become knowable 'naughty child bodies' made visible to anybody else who walks by (Barad, 2007). Stocks re-turn in my imagination, medieval restraining devices to publicly shame (Andrews, 2013). Sophie is frequently put in the naughty chair for saying the word 'poo', a consequence re-producing 'poo' as an undesirable word again and again. There exist records of public stock shaming for medieval English citizens who used undesirable language. (Andrews, 2013). As the stocks image re-turns the repeated use of the word 'poo', the naughty chair is diffracting as an image that contradicts developmental notions of progress in Western child-educating and caring practices. I am caught momentarily in a blurring of temporalities that undoes the medieval to modern-day chronology of my thinking (Barad, 2018).

### *Poo Interruption*

Naomi: Sophie has this thing where she says 'poo' a lot, sometimes it's a bit like Tourette's. So, she'll say things like 'thank you poo'. She might say it like thousands of times a day and every time she says it she's put on the naughty chair. She must be spending entire days on that chair sometimes.

As Slater, Jones and Procter (2018) point out: "excretion and urination are things we all experience; we all shit and piss" (p.951).

Children are fascinated by and will often use scatological language (Kirby, 2019).

iii think about the 'Poopy head' board game my children love, putting plastic poos on their heads, shrieking with laughter.

The laughter stops

When Sophie says 'poo' at school.

She is put on the naughty chair.

Poo is dis/rupting.

Diffraction with scatological language interruptions as becoming dis/ruptive to the civilising (Elias, 1978) and colonizing projects of developmental education spaces (Slater, Jones and Procter, 2019).

### *Re-turning Towards an Uncomfortable (Colonial) Civilising Chair*

Naomi explains that Sophie uses the word 'poo' as an unusual addition to sentences or as an unexpected response to questions rather than blurting the word out or interrupting. At home, this does not cause any problem; Sophie is listened to and although the word 'poo' is acknowledged it is not punished as Naomi has deemed it an involuntary inclusion. In contrast, the word 'poo' performs differently in the school environment. As agential, it performs Sophie differently than when she says it at home and iii am drawn to re-turning with the nature of representational scatological language and (re)imagining how this language performs beyond representation in the school environment (Barad, 2007). Whilst 'poo' is not an expletive, in this early years classroom context its excremental representation is considered to perform as problematic when entangled with the concept of 'civilisation' (Elias, 1978).

"Civilisation can be a word that makes us feel uncomfortable, especially in thinking about 'child to 'adult' development"

Slater, Jones and Procter, 2018, p.953

Re-turning with this concept and the associated discomfort draws attention to the ongoing re-production of colonial, ableist and gendered threads that tangle through the Western child to adult 'civilising' developmental project and associated normalised expectations (Slater *et al*, 2018). Re-turning with these problematic threads of injustice diffracts naturalised developmental discourses and opens towards re-understandings of the role we play "in the differential patterns of the matterings of the world...but also the exclusions that we participate in enacting" (Barad, 2007, p.394). Colonialism has been legitimized through the Western civilising of 'uncivilised' and racialised Others (Nandy, 2010). Uncivilised in this context subjugated cultures positioned as 'inferior' and metaphorically 'child-like' in comparison to the 'adult' superior Western worldview (Nandy, 2010).

The chair diffracts through this provocation, becoming an uncomfortable chair. The discomfort unleashed from the chair seat, ongoing, becoming tentacular and intra-actively producing itself through the material-discursive chair-civilising-colonial-development entanglement. The naughty chair as Chthonic-Monster performs and (re)produces uncomfortable binaries tied up in these developmental material-discourses. The chthonic-monster intra-actively producing the naughty-chair-sitting-child as uncivilised Other against intra/secting discourses of 'civilised' adulthood. Ideologies of despotism and disenfranchisement are woven through developmentalism, re-turning injustices as naturalised and unchallengeable. Further entangled with colonial civilising practices in the context of scatological language, are the very Western developments of the past few centuries of heightened revulsion and embarrassment surrounding bodily excretions (Elias, 1973). Western toileting practices are far from universal with over fifteen per cent of the global population practicing open defecation (WHO, 2012) and associating alternative attitudes to bodily functions (Elias, 1973). Re-turning with Sophie's word 'poo' and the lack of physical excreted matter yet the repeated punishment on the naughty chair, the word 'poo' is becoming understandable as being afforded far more representational power than it deserves (Barad, 2007).

### *A Brief Colonial Posture Interruption*

Sitting  
Still  
Upright

Western sitting postures re-turning  
“Children squat very well...  
But the West views that as a sign of poverty and being ‘less-developed’  
(Cranz, 2008, p106).  
The naughty chair civilising  
Through extended sitting-time.  
Denying species design “for movement and change”  
(Cranz, 2008, p.106).  
Naturalising colonial postures.

### *Re-turning Towards an Uncomfortable (Ableist) Civilising Chair*

Diffractionally re-patterning the scatological language-naughty chair apparatus with Elias’ production of civilisation (1978), the chair is becoming knowable with and through Western normative civilising childhood toilet training expectations (Millei and Cliff, 2014). Whilst the naughty chair in this context is not explicitly entangled with physical ‘leaking’ bodily matter (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2013), the word ‘poo’ and the excessive representational power granted to its intrusions begins to feel entangled as leaky discursive-mattering (Barad, 2007). The control of bodily-excretion language is becoming a marker of adult-defined ‘civilised’ behaviour (Kirby, 2019). The word poo intrudes unpredictably and uncontrollably (Shildrick, 2009), representationally as unwelcome as bodily fluid-matter might be beyond the private toilet-space (Millei and Cliff, 2014). The repeated use of the word ‘poo’ dis/rupts the civilised ‘private’ matter of toileting and the ‘civilised’ expectations of discretion surrounding toilet practices (Millei and Cliff, 2014).

Re-turning with Barad’s concept of performativity dis/rupts the power of the word ‘poo’ that Sophie keeps saying. The word poo begins to shake free from the discursive practices that have assumed its representational meaning (Barad, 2007). It shakes free from the civilising discourses that have situated it representationally as something shameful and repugnant (Elias, 1978). The desire to contain it, for tentacles to swarm and sting with the naughty chair at its utterance is loosening. Re-turning representational linguistic power towards something understood as agentially performative demands meeting Sophie’s talking with response-ability at each moment; as a practice of engaging with her as an intra-active part of her worlding (Barad, 2007). To intra-act response-ably is a far more ethical practice than to deploy pre-determined assumptions of meaning to Sophie’s words and punish accordingly. To meet Sophie

response-ably means to open to new possibilities beyond repeated punishment for the deployment of a word based on normative assumptions of linguistic regulation and pre-determined normative representational meanings prescribed to child scatological language (Barad, 2007).

### *A Dis/Continuous Becoming Ballerina*

Naomi tells me how much Sophie wanted to do ballet. She adored princesses and dresses and tutus. Sophie's dancing story re-turned with me as a dis/continuous becoming ballerina topology through which Sophie asserts herself as agential dis/ballerina (Goodley *et al*, 2016). The story is explored dis/continuously through two different dance school experiences. Thinking with Goodley *et al* (2016), iii trace moments through which Sophie "claims the status" (Goodley *et al*, 2016, p.778) of dancing child-ballerina through timespaces that threaten to exclude her from this status through the re-production of normative developmental/ballet dancing expectations (Goodley *et al*, 2016). iii explore this 'claiming status' as an affirmative production of understanding the world beyond pre-determined representational notions of what it means to be a ballerina (Barad, 2007). This opens to affirmative diffractive re-patterning; affirming Sophie's becoming-ballet-dancer as potentially "exceeding the limits of the taken-for-granted ideas" (Lenz Taguchi, Palmer and Gustafsson, 2016, p.707) about the pre-determined and normatively defined dance-class expectations. In opening to possibilities for positioning Sophie as exceeding and inventing dance-as-ongoing production, the position of Othered dancer becomes destabilized (Lenz Taguchi *et al*, 2016). Pre-determined normative expectations re-expose themselves as deficient narratives for the productive worlding of unexpected, unpredictable and diverse becoming-child-dancers (Barad, 2007).

### *Finding Dis/Dancing Possibilities*

Naomi: It was all very strict. They all had to stand on a square of carpet and the teacher kept saying 'Sophie get back on your square' because for some reason she didn't want to stand on this square of carpet. Every time this lady turned around to put the music on, Sophie would step off it and start, you know, doing a bit of a wiggle. She was making the other parents who were there smile and laugh but then the teacher let rip at me after the lesson, 'your child can't even follow a simple instruction,

god help her when she gets to school. Your child doesn't have special needs, she has got serious needs'.

This vignette enfolds itself into a normative representational child ballet dance class, built upon pre-determined expectations and pre-defined child-body responses to adult input (Lenz Taguchi *et al*, 2016). Sophie's movements off the mat and her response-ability to movement-with-music as opposed to direct adult instruction threaten to exclude her from representationally 'proper' dance response (Goodley *et al*, 2016). Following Goodley *et al*'s (2016) provocation to foreground the dancing and affirm Sophie-as-dancer, I follow the music as becoming dynamic with dance-producing agency (Barad, 2007). Together as music and Sophie's body produce ballet dancing, the joy her wiggle invokes through parental smiles and laughter is becoming something beautiful; dis/dancing as worlding practice of joy. The agency for control shifts from adult-teacher and carpet square pre-determined agential apparatus to child-music agential apparatus. Something that allows the history of ballet as a "here and now art" (Homans, 2010, p.3). reverberate as liberating and affirming the legitimacy of this here and now dis/dancing.

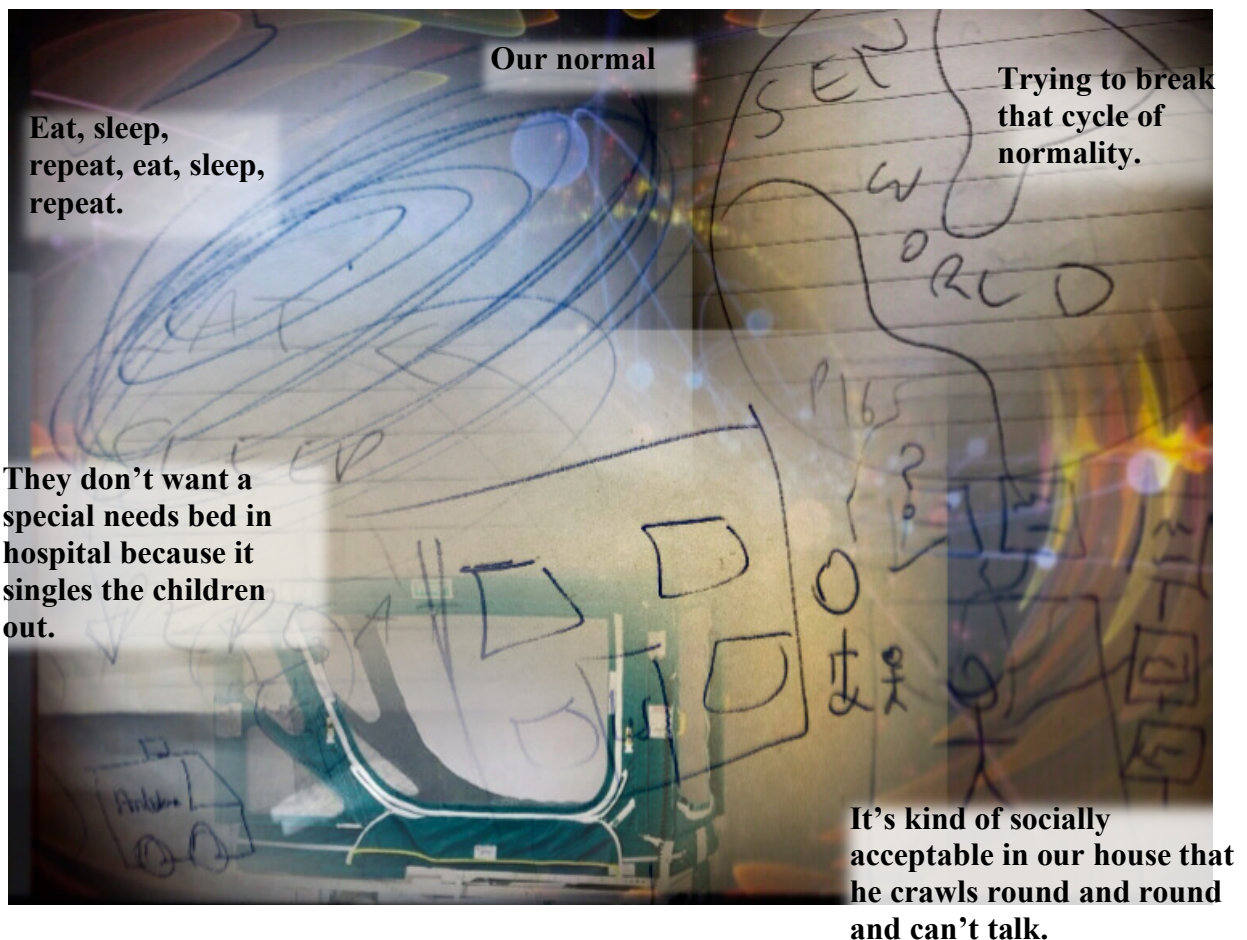
Naomi: She's happy with the younger ones, she's just prancing around to music, they'd play 'Frozen' songs and she just absolutely loved it. The teacher was so relaxed, she never told them off. If they were supposed to be taking turns and Sophie just went, she'd go 'oh Sophie can go now' and it was just lovely.

The agency for ballet as a becoming of the here-and-now abounds in this vignette. The music from the film 'Frozen' and Sophie's ongoing prancing/dancing re-turn any pre-defined notions of what it means to dance, they don't stay still long enough for representation (Barad, 2007). The dance teacher meets Sophie's worlding at each moment, her turn to dance becoming something understandable beyond inflexible pre-determined turn-to-dance-time.

Naomi: She got to be the ballerina that she'd always wanted to be.



## 8.10 Chthonic Apparatus: Material-Discursive Safe/Unsafe TimeSpaces, Re-Turning Normal and SEND (micro) World(s) Becoming MACRO-World(s)



*Figure 15 Chthonic Temporalities Apparatus ↔ Tom ↔ Diffracted*

### *Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching-Dis/Orienting*

Staying home.

Tom: "It's easier to stay at home, he can crawl around, he's in his environment that he likes, we've got all the gear that we need. He's safe".

Safe from...normative desires and  
Compulsory able-bodiedness (McRuer, 2006).  
Home/Social worlds dualism.

Safe spaces/unsafe spaces (Rosenfeld and Noterman, 2014).  
His environment/Whose environment?

Private spaces/public spaces  
Binaries becoming un/done  
Through agential realist frameworks



Re-turning with feminism's oppressive spaces (Rose, 1993)  
Difficult spaces  
Exclusionary spaces  
Becoming response-able for spaces we enfold,  
for differencing (Barad, 2007)  
as kin (Haraway, 2016a).

### *Re-turning with Feminism's Paradoxical Spaces*

Home becoming a 'safe space' in a developmental context during the re-searching conversation re-turns and troubles my thinking. *iii* am becoming curious about the timespaces beyond the house walls in the picture mapping. Inside the walls a fixed 'safe space' is contained and a fixed binary (re)marked between home(private) and social(public) spaces. The binary manifests solidification as *iii* entangle with Tom's discussions of homespace-socialspace-Josh's crawling-not talking entanglement.

Tom: You know, while he's a four years old and can crawl around and can't talk, that's kind of tolerable, I mean we do get a few comments but it's kind of socially acceptable in our house that he crawls around and round and can't talk. When he's ten that's not going to be socially acceptable and I guess that's where I get to that, oh god, that'll be awful when he's ten and people are staring at him.

We often say you don't see disabled kids out and about very often and the reality is sometimes it's just too hard, it's easier to stay at home.

He's just my little boy. We have fun, we have a laugh. I guess that goes back to in this house [points to the picture of home on the picture mapping] everything's fine because it doesn't matter that he's got this epilepsy syndrome, to me he really is just Josh.

It's a safe space

The binary that divides the safe private space of home and what is becoming an opposing and difficult 'unsafe' public space gathers speed. The intruding comments of others regarding Josh's development and the unwanted stares of strangers threaten to thicken this boundary making spaces oppressive. 'Unsafe' space is re-turned and expanded to acknowledge the subtle violence of spaces that challenge people's perceptions of belonging with/in them:

Space suffocatingly surrounds me with an opacity that robs me of my right to be there...space almost becomes like an enemy.

Space as spatialization process-in-flux, a “power-laced process” (Haraway, 1997, p. 136) can be oppressive but identifying ways in which difficult spaces materialize identity production and hierarchies can open spaces for exploration and dis/ruption (Barad, 2007). The safespace/unsafespace binary-affirming processes entangling with the research conversation are knowable only through a linear developmental discourse; reaffirming Josh’s Otherness as his mattering persists in doing timespace ‘elsewhere’ (Rose, 1993). This space ‘elsewhere’ is the unrepresentational space beyond representational developmental expectation/developmental delay binaries (Rose, 1993). The ‘elsewhere’ is found in the rupture of the binaries; walking at the expected age/still crawling or age appropriate speech/delayed speech are binaries becoming un/done. Occupying this impossible unrepresentational space between is understandable as operating with/in Rose’s “paradoxical space” (Rose, 1993, p. 235). Becoming open to the possibilities of these spaces is a demand for a shift elsewhere than representation and to acknowledge the limits of our languages and grammar systems as part of far more complex world(s) (Rovelli, 2018).

Re-turning to trouble and expose the power-systems that uphold these becoming-(un)binaries, iiii (re)turn my thinking with Rose’s (1993) discussions of feminist oppressive spaces, the public space in this disability context is enfolding with normative developmental expectations to enact exclusions by the enforcing of McRuer’s (2006) compulsory able-bodied/mindedness. Consequentially, as these exclusions matter with Tom and Josh, the spacetime purports as fixed oppressive and unpleasant social timespace. At their worst, “this feeling can result in a desire to make ourselves absent from space. It can mean that we acquiesce in being made invisible, in our occupying no space. We participate in our own erasure” (Rose, 1993, pp245-246). Home is re-turning, together with social-public spaces. Confinement is not ‘safe’ but a direct consequence of social space enfolding exclusions and social erasure (Rose, 1993).

The notion of ‘safe’ and ‘unsafe’ spaces in Tom and Josh’s mattering makes explicit the ways in which identities are produced with and through space in the ways that it materializes as ‘difficult’ for some identities and as comfortably inclusive for others.

Space affords agency to developmental discourse and entangled normative expectations with and through the public spaces and those materializing in these timespaces (Barad, 2007). It is with these complex entanglements that Tom's seemingly fixed definitions of "socially acceptable" are reified through the unwanted stares and comments directed at Josh's crawling and not-talking identity. These stares and comments are re-turning not as moments of individualised wilful materializations of oppressive space for Josh and Tom but as a part of the much greater material arrangements of which we are all a part (Barad, 2007). This is not to deny any response-ability on the part of the unwanted spectators and the developmental commentators who are a part of these encounters but to make explicit that these stares and comments are discursive-materialisations of developmental and neoliberal dominant discourses and entangled naturalised expectations (Barad, 2007).

The response-ability for the material-discourses we are a part of enfolded is means making explicit the ways in which discourses materialize with us and the part they play in producing our shifting identities. The oppressive and exclusionary spaces developmental and neoliberal discourses matter with is becoming something violent, something sinister: the mattering of erasures from public spaces. Such is the oppressive and discomfort of these spaces, confinement at home has materialised in this context as a re-turning 'safe space' (Rose, 1993). This is not to comment on Tom's home *per se*, but to denounce the invisible ways in which dominant discourses enfold reinforcements of safe private space as directly oppositional to the 'unsafe' and difficult public spaces experienced by Tom and Josh. Hegemonic material-discursive space production must be opened to re-turning and the developmentalism and neoliberalism held to account for the hostile ways in which these discourses protect themselves (Braidotti, 1991). Safe and unsafe spaces demand a re-turning towards intra-relational ongoing productions and negotiations of safe and unsafe spaces in-flux (Rosenfeld and Noterman, 2014). An ongoing task of negotiating fear and comfort, exclusions and inclusions, and safe and unsafe material-discursive timespaces for the thick and troubling present (Haraway, 2016a).

## *Troubling Normal with Quantum Indeterminacy*

Quantum indeterminacy is not a form of unknowingness, not even a kind of formlessness; rather it is a dynamism that entails its own undoing from within.

Barad, 2018, p.62

There is non-linear troubling of 'normal' with and through the re-searching conversation. Time does strange things with Josh/Tom/Normal/Seizures and the topologies that enfold are experimentally re-turned to trouble any classical understanding of representational closure around 'normal' and doing 'normal' time (Barad, 2018). Normal is becoming undone through cyclical topology's. Classically understood 'normal' in a child-developmental context inhabits Tom and Josh's normal; simultaneously Tom and Josh's 'normal' inhabits classical developmental representations of 'normal' (Barad, 2018). An im/possible topology to be making trouble with:

Tom: There's a bit of uncertainty. Just um, what became our normality. It was like soft play, baby groups and then seizures and ambulance and ICU. That's a really crap drawing of a black hole but time just disappeared.

Tom and Josh's enfolding feels cyclical. Play-seizure-ambulance-ICU-play-seizure-ambulance-ICU. Normative expectations of moving from one event to the next in linear succession dis/jointing.

There's very much a level of acceptance though and trying to be as normal as possible, just becoming absorbed in this special needs world, you know?

It just became our new normality that Josh is in intensive care.

Normal is re-turning, becoming un/done. Any pre-determined representations of normal inhabit Tom and Josh's 'new' normality. Tom and Josh's normal simultaneously inhabits classical representations of developmental 'normal'. Disrupting, the 'special needs world' that has been marginalised by the mainstream world is disrupting any safeguarding of what normalcy might represent (Barad, 2012). Normalcy expanding, in-flux. This is not a re-turning to re-define the problem of 'normal' and its entanglement with classical notions of time and development and citizenship but to bring it "back around to questions of the nature of human" (Haraway, 2018, p.86). The possibilities are not to be found in re-defining singularities but through the exploration of ongoing

doings/un/doings of relationally constituted becomings and differencings (Barad, 2018) Normal undoes normal undoes normal. Ongoing, Embracing incompleteness (Barad, 2018).



### 8.11 Chthonic Apparatus: Red Book Mattering, Disability and Reproductive In/Justices



*Figure 16 Chthonic Temporalities Apparatus ↔ Liz ↔ Diffracted*

#### *Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching-Dis/Orienting*

The Red Book  
 Ripped out  
 A violent enactment of material-discursive exclusion  
 Tearing out a child before they materialize as graph(s)  
 Inserting special graph(s), checklists  
 Affirming exclusion from normative developmental-time  
 Accommodating, differentiating

Representational 'normative' Down's Syndrome time (Goodley, Runswick-Cole and Liddiard, 2016).

"An essential, authentic core" (Trinh, 1988, p.1)  
of linear trajectories persist, silent.  
The doctrine of the norm (Haraway, 1992).  
The doctrine of the red book  
Too small for the multiplicities of the world.  
Too full of pre-determined time.  
Too small for Natasha's enfolding worlding.  
Shaken, emptied, making spacetime  
For filling child/book materializations  
enfolding differencing within (Trinh, 1988).

### *Paper Inserts Materializing 'Otherness'*

The Red Book. "The personal child health record (PCHR) is a booklet given to new parents in the United Kingdom" (Walton, Bedford and Dezateu, 2006, p.269) as a means for parents to record developmental milestones and chart a child's growth and vaccine uptake (Walton *et al*, 2006). For children born with Down's Syndrome, there is a specific insert to replace the normative charts that make accommodations for slower developmental time yet persist with an idea of a linear norm 're-purposed' for Down's Syndrome (Goodley *et al*, 2016) and entanglements of pre-determined universal and linear time (Kafer, 2013). The exchange of inserts into Natasha's red book invoked a Chthonic sense-event that iii began to feel had enfolded long before the re-searching conversations and was one that entangled with me, demanding my attention in its ongoingness with the world:

Liz: The red book. I always remember the red book. I always remember her [health visitor] taking out the normal graphs and putting in the Down's Syndrome graphs because there are special graphs. It made me feel, yeah okay, I know there's something wrong with her but does it need to be plotted on this? I remember her tearing out the normal and like 'we'll need this one for Natasha'. Blah did blah, I mean, do we ever look at that now? We don't, do we.

iii repeat 'tearing out' again and again. iii cannot stop, spitting the words out. There is an urgency, a demand for response-ability for the tearing out of the normal. iii want to tear out the narrow representation of normal but not from Natasha's red book. iii want to tear it out of the material-discursive practices about which iii write and learn and live. There is a violence in this act that entangles red book/Liz/Natasha/health visitor/me/medical growth charts/developmental milestone charts/normal/Down

Syndrome. This entanglement is crashing intra-actively, inciting my own furious response-ability as it enacts inclusions and exclusions. It is a normative-time centric apparatus that extends but does not afford agency to Natasha/Down Syndrome/Liz to affirm an equitable worlding practice (Barad, 2007). The norm persists in subjugating a slower time with and through a paper-insert-materializing-Other-identity (Barad, 2007). As a dis/continuous time experience through *iii* am entangling with the ongoingness of this material-discursive event from Natasha's early life as baby; linear calendar years ago yet mattering into this thesis now. A thick now of dis/jointed time through which Liz's question "does she need to be plotted on this" is repeating, becoming-collective demand for an ongoing troubling through response-ability (Barad, 2018).

### *Re-turning Dis/Development with Agential Cuts*

Natasha's red book is becoming multiplicity of red books and Down's Syndrome inserts in academic writing. Suggestive of re-orienting possibilities towards "a focus on DisDevelopment" (Goodley *et al*, 2016, p. 778) yet maintaining an inflexible normative time-to-development as central (Goodley *et al*, 2016). The red book is becoming 'mainstream' and the inserts a segregated Other. To think with the concept of agential cuts requires a new mode of documentation that affirms difference from within (Barad, 2014). Im/possible material-discursive practices to enfold *with* the child not "in the context of a certain ideology of dominance" in the matterings and differencing(s) that materially constitute childhoods intra-actively with timespace (Barad, 2014). A book of mystery for kin to come that even with dis/jointed time we cannot pre-determine as though they are only knowable in advance (Barad, 2007). Dis/development becoming knowable as agential cut, affirming difference from within (Barad, 2014). If "all real living is meeting" (Barad, 2007, p.353) then there are openings towards other ways of (re)imagining the ways in which children are materialised with kin and book/scheduling matter.

### *Diffracting Red Book Im/Possibilities with Ethical Picture Book Practices*

Murris' (2016) posthuman provocations with picture books in classrooms make an unexpected intrusion into my thinking and evokes (re)imaginaries for materializing book-health-care-child entanglements-to-come. Murris (2016) chooses picture books as tools for "combating ontoepistemic injustices" (Murris, 2016, p. 205) as a means of ethical pedagogical practice that allow the meanings of books to be generated by children, not imposed by adults/teachers (Murris, 2016). The children are liberated from the high stakes demands of having to summon 'correct' pre-determined and adult-defined answers (Murris, 2016). I am intrigued by im/possibilities for health/care/worlding books that are materially-discursively generated by the children with whom they enfold. Books that might not only liberate disabled children from their subjugation by developmental norms but might also offer unique and wondrous insights into the multifaceted worldings of kin differencing from within.

### *An Experimental Re/Marking of Disability/Reproductive In/Justice(s) Through Dis/Continuous SpaceTime*

The entanglement of disability and reproductive rights, as a troubling entanglement of ongoing in/justice(s) re-turn with and through me, I am captured, a part of this tentacular squirming tension. A Chthonic sense-event that gathered speed in the researching conversation with Liz and continued, through various patterns of diffractive mattering with me, demanding not to be forgotten or ignored:

Liz: Such a huge shock, a big shock here [pointing to picture mapping]. We had the test and at the time the midwife said 'well you're not high risk' so there was no question of having the, what do you call it? The amnio.

In Iceland, I think is it Iceland? They terminate all babies with Down Syndrome and there was just one and she's actually a public speaker now. What sort of message does that send to people growing up with Down's Syndrome? That they're not wanted in society, it's just heart breaking.

As dis/continuous Chthonic sense-event, Liz's conversation was made to matter at dis/junctures of time that are experimentally plotted but not as singular spacetime events and not as linear trajectory. They are dis/continuous in what is understood as continuous spacetime but made themselves matter with and through me as a different



dis/jointed quantum topology. Events that somehow became “unmoored – there’s no given place for them to be” (Barad, 2018, p.248). Yet they appear here through an experimental unfolding.

### *Un/Choosing Disability I*

Provocation: Collectively in the white Western world, we go to such lengths to un-choose disability.

We un-choose disability in hundreds of ways...and rarely question the ethics of disability-selective abortion.

Clare, 2017, p.129

*“SpaceTime Coordinates: Untimely” (Barad, 2018, p.258): iii am pregnant with my second child/writing my thesis/conversing with Liz/transcribing with Liz/Re-searching with Liz/browsing Twitter/having a coffee break with BBC News Online/a nineteen-year-old undergraduate at university.*

Liz talks about having a pre-natal test for Down Syndrome when she was pregnant with Natasha. She told me she was not ‘high risk’. Low risk of having Natasha but still Natasha arrived. iii am talking to a genetic counsellor to find out who else in my family might carry my son’s epilepsy gene, just curious. iii refuse an amniocentesis for my second baby. To accept a test feels like too much un/acceptance of my firstborn’s way of doing life; actively choosing disability. iii am sat alone in a clinic. It’s all so quick and iii stumble back to the student house iii share, in a pool of tears, blood and shame. Nineteen years old; actively choosing reproductive rights. There are a lot of angry parents on Twitter. The television programme Emmerdale is running a story about a couple finding out their baby has Down Syndrome and choosing abortion on that basis; actively unchoosing disability. There is a Twitter backlash, angry tweet, comment, repeat. Angry tweet, comment, repeat; collective activism, actively choosing disability. iii am transcribing my re-search conversation with Liz and wonder what has happened in Iceland or whichever country it is; a country actively unchoosing disability. iii am browsing the BBC news online, sipping coffee and skimming news articles without any real purpose, there is a new non-invasive test for Down Syndrome. iii read the comments, discussing costs to the NHS of having children with Down Syndrome and ‘reducing risk’; actively unchoosing disability. Liz: “she’s just a lovely child, she’s got her life there”; actively choosing disability.

An Intra-relational entanglement of ethical tensions across a timespace that made itself matter with and through me. A fraught timespace at the im/possible dis/juncture between disability justice(s) and reproductive justice(s) for women (Kafer, 2013).

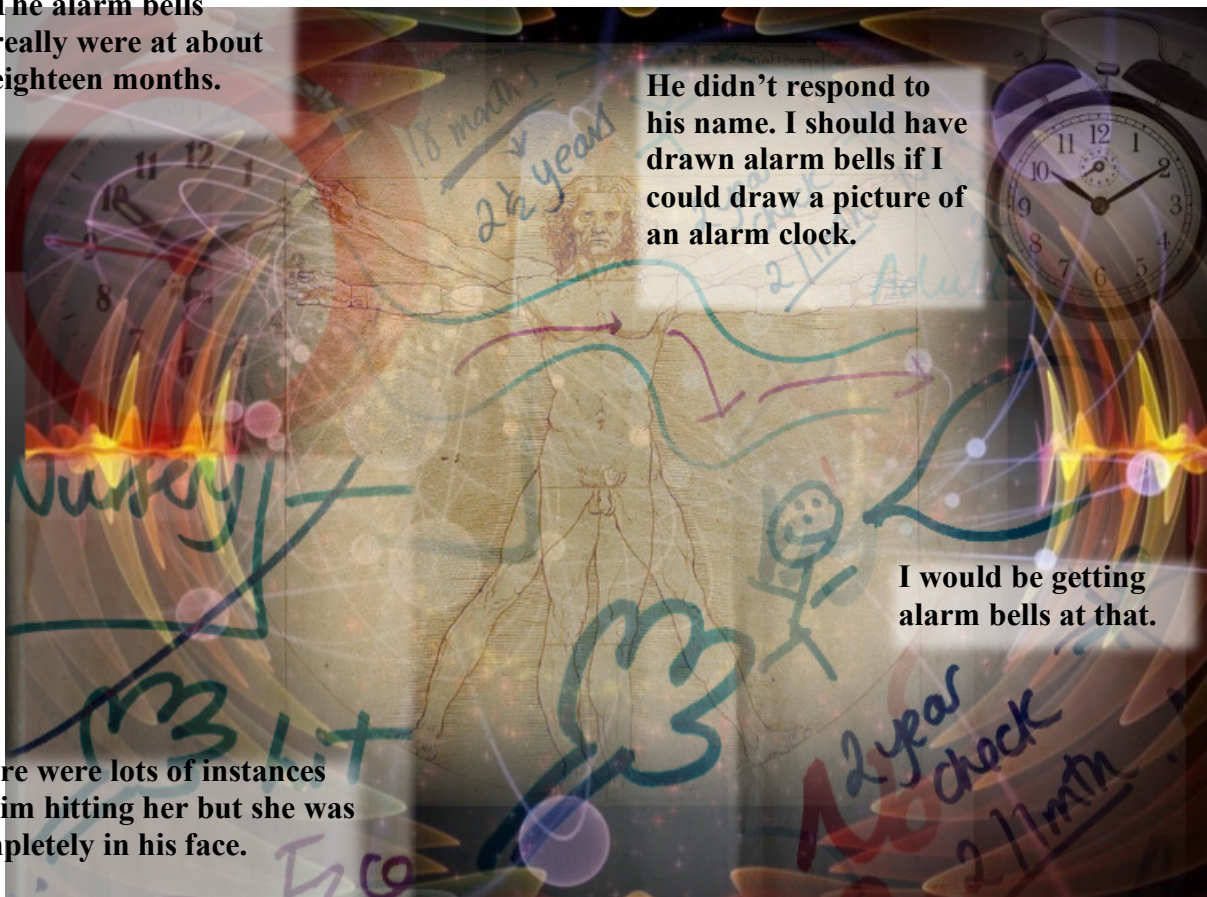
### *Un/Choosing disability II*

Prenatal testing and associated terminations of pregnancy is a highly charged emotive entanglement and one that has made plenty of trouble for attempts to establish a mutual coalition of disability reproductive justice and feminist reproductive rights (Kafer, 2013). A major challenge highlighted by Kafer is the compromising of perceived choice for women by narratives of ableism through which “only certain choices are recognized as valid choices and only certain choices are socially supported (Kafer, 2013, p.162). The issue is far more complex than any pro/anti-abortion binary would suggest and is intrinsically entangled with the ways in which ableist and neoliberal discourses enfold desires for able-bodied citizens-for-the future (Kafer, 2013). Kafer (2013) suggests there is much re-turning to be done to ensure reproductive justice for women whilst re-mattering what it means to birth and parent a disabled child beyond the limiting and deficit-focused narratives that are produced through neoliberal and developmental discourses that have hidden their agendas so covertly in current constructions of ‘free’ choice (Kafer, 2013). Choosing and un/choosing are becoming a production of the material-discursive timespaces in which they are produced rather than constituting any notion of unadulterated ‘free’ will or choice (Barad, 2007).



## 8.12 Chthonic Apparatus: Challenging Behaviours Spaces ↔ Diffracting Milestone Alarm Clocks

The alarm bells really were at about eighteen months.



There were lots of instances of him hitting her but she was completely in his face.

Figure 17 Chthonic Temporalities Apparatus ↔ Vivian ↔ Diffracted

### Tentacular Thinking-(Re)searching-Dis/Orienting

Busy hands have been stilled,  
No hitting! No climbing! No Throwing!  
Vivian: "He was fiddling with the window,  
to see how to get out"  
The hands re-turn.  
Hands reaching out,  
iii want to grab hold, pull them out.  
Hands reaching out of timespaces  
that perform exclusions  
denying the performative agency  
of disabled child bodies materializing spacetime(Barad, 2007).

### *Re-Turning Challenging Behaviours Spaces*

At dis/continuous moments of the re-searching conversation, the stilled hands in the picture-mapping extend, becoming tentacular. They pull timespaces together and get busy re-turning with and through the spaces that busied Johnny's hands. Times in which his hands and body became engaged in what Ryan (2005) called "busy behaviours" (Ryan, 2005, p.68); behaviours that became "problematic or challenging" (Ryan, 2005, p.68). Behaviours that are deemed 'challenging' are understood in national policy as behaviours that defy sociocultural norms and may or may not present danger to the safety of the individual and/or others (NCCMH, 2015). Whilst there has been a rhetorical shift in national policy away from individualising blame for challenging behaviours and the role of the environment is acknowledged and explored, the focus of exploration remains human-centric (NCCMH, 2015), denying spacetime matter agency in intra-active worlding. I am becoming curious as to the agency of spacetime matter, beyond a human-centric gaze in the vignettes through which Johnny's hands busied and challenged:

Vivian: I remember going into this room for his two-year check and it was the speech and language therapist's room and him [Johnny] seeing this pirate ship and playground outside. And he sort of like wanting, I'm not joking, he literally was trying to climb out the window. He was fiddling with the window to see how to get out. She kept showing him this box of building bricks but he just wasn't interested.

The childminder was really frustrating. He was proving hard work and she just didn't want all that in the house because she just wanted to do arts and crafts and he wasn't interested in doing that, he'd throw the stuff around. She was due another Ofsted and I don't think she wanted to lose her Ofsted Outstanding.

### *Opening to Agential Possibilities Beyond Busy Hands*

These vignettes diffract through an agential realist re-patterning and begin to read as spaces filled with pre-determined boundaries, expectations and representation. My thinking entangles with Barad's provocation that through an agential understanding of the world the bounded human 'child' and 'adult' subjects and associated hierarchies of power are not pre-determined prior to their intra-active entanglements (Barad, 2007):

Humans do not merely assemble different apparatus for satisfying particular knowledge project; they themselves are part of the ongoing reconfiguration of

the world. Which is not to say that human practices have no role to play; we just have to be clear about the nature of that role.

Barad, 2007, p. 171.

Play is assembled together with associated expectations and pre-exists Johnny's intra-active becoming as a part of this apparatus. Building bricks and arts and crafts are pre-determined and defined play material with a particular child-response expected by the 'adults' who have assembled them. Whilst 'free choice' in early childhood play is a valued characteristic of play opportunities (Wood, 2014), difficult tensions persist as policy goals constrain and intra-act with and through play encounters (Wood, 2014). An agential realist framework troubles the agency of Ofsted inspection report(s) and the Two-Year Health and Development Review, including the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (iHV, 2015) in these vignettes as re-producers of practices that are not ongoingly response-able to the differential ways of dischildren worlding. Practices that are becoming insufficient for meeting the ethical obligations toward dischildren's differential worldings through excluding dischildren's agency in the apparatus(es) they are a part of (Barad, 2007).

Johnny's hands becoming busy, entangling with unsafe climbing and escaping attempts, throwing craft materials are becoming understandable as consequences of the exclusions of his mattering. His agency to play freely, beyond bricks and crafts is denied as adults attempt to pre-define apparatus to satisfy their purposes and goals of completing assessments and achieving inspection goals; goals that are themselves pre-determined and removed from the actual worlding of the apparatus(es) they are supposedly created to 'assess' (Barad, 2007). Thinking with Chesworth (2019), I can feel the resistance of busying hands, scrambling against the adult-determined limitations for play-possibilities. Busy hands are seeking something else; possibilities for new stories that may unfold through intra-active productions of play that chase indeterminate "mutual curiosity" (Chesworth, 2019, p.7) and open space for Johnny's indeterminate interests beyond the rigidity of developmental assessment goals (Chesworth, 2019). Understanding the ongoing and differential agency of spacetime-matter opens to new possibilities for understanding beyond pre-determined individualism or pre-determined passive environmental spaces and passive child-

bodies whose subjectivities can be pre-defined and forcibly shaped through adult expectation and policy demands.

### *Pirate-ship-Playground Power*

What exists beyond the window for Johnny can be read as an example of what Bennett has termed “thing-power” (Bennett, 2010, p.20). That is to re-position the pirate-ship and playground as agential material becomings in the ongoingness of the therapist-room-apparatus. The pirate-ship and playground in this context work against the human attempts to pre-purpose the room-as-environment-for-assessment (Bennett, 2010), a powerful example of un/doing human-centric agential power structures (Barad, 2007). The pirate-ship and playground intra-actively wield material power through these vignettes and there is a becoming-sense that they are enticing Johnny, becoming possibilities to satisfy busy hands (Bennett, 2010) and provide play-beyond-bricks which are becoming dull materializations of play im/possibilities with Johnny.

### *DiffRACTing with Milestone Alarm Clocks*

Clocks becoming visible again as enforcers of normative developmental-time. Re-turned through Vivian as urgent clocks, alarming clocks:

Vivian: You look back and sort of see where you first trigger um, well alarm bells really. I should have drawn them if I could draw a picture of an alarm (laughs). I think the alarm bells were really at about eighteen months. Honestly, I remember my mum saying 'he doesn't respond to his name'.

For me, if I was a health professional and a child was not engaging with what she wanted, I would have been getting alarm bells at that.

The clocks alarm as Johnny produces dis/time and threatens the developmental norm. The bells reverberate through my thoughts at the inflexibility of developmental time to meet the world in all its differential temporal materializations. An alarm that rings to remind me of the ongoing exclusions that deny disabled children the right to world their destinations and achievements with and through their own time(s).



### 8.13 Intrusion: iii Martina

Each time I trace a tangle and add a few threads that first seemed whimsical but turned out to be essential to the fabric, I get a bit straighter that staying with the trouble of complex worlding is the name of the game of living and dying well together.

Haraway, 2016a, p.116

Haraway's words resonate with and through me, a sensing of the heavy and complex task of tempting new temporalities for the ethical worlding of the youngest dis/kin. What is becoming reimaginable is nevertheless enfolded into the world, a meeting of possibilities toward im/possible new worlds. It is a heavy task that at times can seem whimsical; chasing a monetary fleeting thought that intrudes or following that which goes against the very grain of modernist time, beyond classical physical materialisation or re-turning developmentally constrained understandings of childhoods. The task is not one to reduce to conclusion but to invite ongoingness, exploding the confines of representational possibility and grabbing the threads of possibility, however whimsical they may, through a classical gaze, appear. The limited temporalities through which developmentalism and neoliberalism can be understood are re-turning as insufficient for the task of meeting each moment of ongoing and diverse childhood(s) with ethicoontoepistemological justice. It is the discourse that leaves a sense of deficiency, not the children.



## Plateau 9... A Lively Invitation to Ongoingness

I am committed to the finicky, disruptive details of good stories that don't know how to finish. Good stories reach into rich pasts to sustain thick presents to keep the story going for those who come after.

Haraway, 2016a, p.125

### 9.1 Ongoing Stories ↔ Ongoing Dis/Continuities

This plateau operates at the (im)possible agential boundary of cutting together-apart; stopping and ongoing, concluding and opening (Barad, 2014). iiii am still here yet part of me is now elsewhere, never absolutely in/separated from this re-searching-thesis-apparatus that has enfolded itself into the world. Absolute in/separability has been un/done through the re-patterning of this agential-realist thesis and its busying agential cuts (Barad, 2014). A thesis always re-turning and understood from *within* (Barad, 2014). iiii have learned to live, write and theorise between worlds, attuning to the possibilities of each moment whilst resisting the habits of duality and humanism (Barad, 2007). The task, iiii have felt, is one of ongoing response-ability for becoming dis/ruptive with the persisting modes of differencing that assert duality and consequently re-turn marginalizations and Othering of disabled children and their entangled parents.

The task has always been an ongoing intra-active entanglement of “making with” (Haraway, 2016a, p.58) as sympoiesis. Thinking with Haraway iiii liken this thesis to “a carrier bag for ongoingness, a yoke for becoming-with, for staying with the trouble and inheriting the damages and achievements” (Haraway, 2016a, p.125) of a damaged world and the in/justices that intra-actively persist. This process has not been one wrapped up in Utopian dreaming but rather asserts the ethical response-ability for meeting the world and opening to all its possible (re)configurations. This has meant de-centring humanism and its neoliberal-ableist and psy-developmental discourses; there are other truths to be enfolded and other worlds to come to matter (Barad, 2007). These worlds have not been for me to assert as yet another absolute truth but have become worlding practices of curiosity, (im)possibility and relational connectivity that iiii set out



as an invitation to think differently *with* (Haraway, 2016a). This thesis-apparatus, this carrier-bag of sympoiesis is becoming a place to visit and to visit means getting carried away by the performative choreography of new boundary-making practices of differencing (Haraway, 2016a).

To get carried away then and dance with this plateau iii offer here a slowing. iii chase and trace relational points of intense (re)configuration that made themselves matter with and through the departure points for this inquiry. iii offer my contribution to knowledge with and through this thesis in the context of invoking agential dishumanisms and in the context of sympoiesis beyond methodolatry (Daly, 1973). iii then address the limitations of this re-searching-apparatus before offering a middle place from which to keep the theory-practice-activism of this research-apparatus alive.



## 9.2 Un/Doing Dominant Discourses ↔ Re-Turning Departure Points

This thesis-apparatus set to work as a trouble-making intra-active entanglement with and through the dominant discourses of neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism in the context of parenting disabled children. With and through lively tentacular practices of provoking and becoming response-able with and for the world(s) made, these discourses faltered and shuddered as they re-turned through an ontoepistemological framework (Barad, 2010). Dominant discourses dynamically re-pattern as indeterminate discursive-materialisations that are entangled in the “continual reopening and unsettling of what might yet be, of what was, and what comes to be” (Barad, 2010, p.264). This re-patterning un/does the individualism that underpins both of the contested discourses, affirming the integral nature of multiplicity, entanglements and ongoing intra-active discursive-material productions as a part of agential dishuman worlds (Barad, 2007). This critical engagement is a commitment to ongoing transformative activism that resists the desire for linear progress and pre-determined goals through the urgent ethical commitment to maintain response-ability in the thick multi-directional temporality of the now (Moss, 2014).

The possibilities for new and kinder worlds of relational response-ability *are* possible, but they need far greater entangled-disciplinary stories beyond the confines of humanism's binaries to re/turn the injustices that persist in the lives of parents and their disabled children. To live and becoming response-able with and for agential dishuman kin is a practice of responding to what kin "evoke from and with each other that was truly not there before" (Haraway, 2016a, p.7) rather than pre-determined responses formed about what children or parents are expected to do. New relational parenting practices are possible beyond the individualised and precarious demands imposed by neoliberal-ableism's dominant discourse. Children resist and unfold beyond the constraints of psy-developmentalism, challenging its normative discursive-materialisations of child-identity re-production. This thesis reaches out tentacles, seeking companions in its becoming a part of an ongoing collective contestation of dominant discourses. Dynamic companions are found busying with the re-turning of post-human, dishuman, new human and agential human scholarship(s) (Goodley *et al*, 2020). Companions re-turning themselves as new possibilities spontaneously interrupt, unexpected strangers becoming new story, diffracted kin (Barad, 2014). As stories diffract and open beyond the confined of the narratives that reign, the 'value' of all kin enlarges (Haraway, 2016a) beyond the economic and normative worth of neoliberal, psy-informed citizenship.

Entangling with the quantum worlds, the very nature of separation and duality becomes un/done, the science of the quantum un/doing the scientism of the psy-disciplines (Barad, 2014). Dominant discourses then un/doing themselves "as well as the notion of" themselves. Each re-telling of stories bigger than humanism encourage the rhizomatic production of new worlds, dis/rupting the assertions of linear developmental progress (Barad, 2014). Stories extend as rhizomatic tentacular creature, feeling and provoking beyond humanist linear time. Haraway (2016a) demands that the stories that are written in the sympoiesis of worlding new possibilities are written for the cultivation of strengthened relational commoning, beyond human exceptionalism. *iii* have, through this thesis, stitched and weaved new stories with the strangers and the unexpected guests to my thinking-practices (Haraway, 2016a). An urgent task for strengthening commoning of agential dishuman kin set into the world from the departure points that ignited the momentum for this inquiry:

- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring neoliberal parenting beyond individualism towards possibilities for relational agential dishuman commoning.
- Becoming response-able to possibilities for re-configuring disabled childhoods beyond neoliberal-ableist developmental expectations.

In experimentally becoming response-able and through learning from within the process how sympoiesis unfolds, new stories have begun to weave themselves into the world. iii offer here what Haraway (2016a) has termed a “speculative gesture” (p.136) that works together the departure points of inquiry, what came before and the ongoingness still to come. This is an indeterminate gesture and one of many possibilities. It is not a fixed summary of findings as that is not the agential realist writer-thinker-inquirer’s way. This is a moment of ongoing sharing, speculation and reaching out for others to carry the speculations away (Haraway, 2016a). Share with me the ongoingness, “every story asks readers to practice generous suspicion by joining in the fray of inventing” (Haraway, 2016a, p.136) agential dishuman kin in Chthonic worlds.

### *9.2.1 DisPolitical Love Stories of the Feminist DisParenting Commons*

People today seem unable to understand love as a political concept, but a concept of love is just what we need to grasp the constituent power of the multitude. The modern concept of love is almost exclusively limited to the bourgeois couple and the claustrophobic confines of the nuclear family. Love has become a strictly private affair. We need a more generous and more unrestrained conception of love.

Hardt and Negri, 2004, p.351

Through the writing and weaving together of what iii re-turn again and again as dispolitical love stories, the contested individualisation and neoliberal-ableist expectations of parenting in the context of disabled childhoods diffracted with and through this thesis. The socio-political force of a re-turned phenomena of love is centrally re-configuring, a catalyst for re-patterning and transformation (Zembylas, 2017). Love as a political transformational force for justice in childhood disability studies and parenthood has re-turned beyond its representational confines.

Traditionally, love has been confined to the representational realms of private lives and intimate relations (Toye, 2010). Representationally, love's association with "the realm of women, the home, the apolitical" (Toye, 2010, p.41) has led to its marginalisation as a 'serious' force for social justice (re)theorising and (re)patterning (Toye, 2010).

Unfurling with this thesis however, love has made itself matter as a theoretical force in the symposium of new stories and openings to other worlds-to-come (Haraway, 2016a). This is not a speculative gesture towards pre-defined notions of representational love, but an ongoing entanglement with a re-configured love-phenomena as an ethical means to meet the possibilities of each re-patterning moment of the world response-ably (Barad, 2007). Staying with the trouble of individualism and precarity in parenting through the thick present is becoming a relational activism of love (Berlant, 2011). Love re-turning to entangle as un-fixed practice of unfolding ethical response-ability, fleeing representation or absolute definitions in favour of a deep ethical commitment to becoming response-able for the ways in which injustices persist in the entangled lives of parents and their disabled children (Zembylas, 2017).

A collective, relational activism of love as an un-fixed practice of ethical response-ability is inextricably entangled with an ethics of relational connectivity. Love re-patterning, becoming a collective means to learn to flourish together; "a moral and strategic compass for...collective actions towards transformations" (Zembylas, 2017, p.24). Love in this context appeals to an ongoing orientation towards kin and *kinder* ways of becoming together beyond the neoliberal-ableist gaze of economically defined citizenships and pre-defined idealised identities (Haraway, 2016a). In the context of parenting disabled children this provides a force for unsettling the neoliberal-ableist assumptions of individual and private response-ability for parenting that are currently woven through dominant discourses of parenting and entangled government policies (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). Love becoming a political agential phenomena is not pre-determined but is produced through intra-actions and entanglements that diffract the boundaries of private and political lives, spaces and temporalities; the private and the personal becoming inextricably entangled (Barad, 2014).

Cultivating a political love-phenomena requires the ongoing and strengthening of an agential realist identity framework affirming the process of differencing from within

that never allows absolute separation. A love-phenomena unfolds and makes tentacular connections for commoning as a mode of re-turning the neoliberal political site of 'good parenting' towards an ongoing site of 'good commoning' (Jensen and Tyler, 2012). Through this re-configuration, the moral compass of ethical response-ability is made to matter, dis/rupting neoliberal ideals of economic productivity and pre-determined normative ideals. Political love is becoming a commitment for solidarity, affirming our collective response-ability for provoking kinder worlds and un/doing injustices that persist through our entanglements with unjust dominant discourses (Jensen and Tyler, 2012). As *dispolitical* phenomena, love demands a collective response-ability to the im/possible economic and developmental-intervention demands placed upon individual parents of disabled children by a neoliberal-ableist discourse (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2018). The 'dis' in this political concept celebrates the parenthoods that collectively nurture disabled children and disrupts any notions of normative parenthood before they can settle (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2016).

"Where is the love?" (Nash, 2013, p.2) has been a politicised slogan at the intra-sections of black feminist activism since the 1970s (Nash, 2013), as a re-turning plea it demands the situating of political love as the ongoing middle place from which activism tentacularly provokes and diffracts (Nash, 2013). As intra-secting companions in the realm of the 'not-I', excluded from an idealised and demanding 'I', iiii am asserting *dispolitical* love's place in the ongoing theorizing of a feminist disparenting commoning politics: Where is the love? In meeting every re-configuration of the world, of parents and of their children, where is the force of *dispolitical* love? For where it rumbles and connects there are glimmers of worlds-to-come beyond the oppressive discourses that seek to deny their possibility and seek to absolve us all of our collective response-ability for dishuman kin to flourish. The rumblings of *dispolitical* love as an ongoing phenomena have made themselves matter with and through this thesis. Love-phenomena is demanding to be seen through the relational stories tentacularly woven through the lively practices of becoming response-able to the world's we participate in (re)configuring (Barad, 2007).



### 9.2.2 Agential Dishumans Worlding DisTemporalities

Characterization of time is perhaps one of the most intimate expressions of the meaning of life – the meaning, that is, of living a life.

Levy, 2016, p.215

The nature of time and being were together remade. No longer an independent parameter relentlessly marching forward into the future, time is neither a continuum nor a series of discrete moments that follow in succession. Time is diffracted...and directly linked to this indeterminacy of time is a shift in the nature of being.

Barad, 2019, p. 528

Disabled childhoods as held in unilinear time and measured against pre-determined expectations, milestones and psy-demands diffracted (Burman, 2017a). A re-configuration of resistance-waves ripples through this thesis/world; agential dishuman kin asserting their production of *distemporalities* (Barad, 2007). The rippling is ongoing, a re-patterning enfolding into the (re)configurations of ongoing worlds. Distemporalities resist the lure of representation and the “major ontological and epistemological assumptions” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p. 14) that persist even in post-structural and contemporary critical theorizing (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Drawing upon the inseparable ontoepistemology that is always *undone*, in the sense that there is an ongoing commitment to resist telling of what the world is but rather remaining dynamically committed to ethically reconfiguring possibilities through engagement *always within* the world (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).

This ontoepistemology re-theorizes temporalities via a quantum theoretical opposition to the Newtonian or *classical* physics through which the Western world and the ontological basis for much social theorizing has stemmed (Barad, 2019). A classical articulation of matter, space and time relies on assumptions of pre-determined and fixed matter moving through universal space in universal time (Barad, 2019). A quantum re-orientation undoes this absolute ontological separation of matter-time-space, re-configuring these notions as dynamically indeterminate (Barad, 2019). What exists beyond mattering, that which is relegated to a void of ‘nothingness’ in classical physics, is brought into theorising as a space through which indeterminate possibilities

may be experimentally entangled and new intra-active phenomena made to matter. Crucially, this void is not 'nothingness' but a rich dynamic space brimming with new possibilities for knowing-in-being (Barad, 2019).

In social discourses of marginalisation, this void has been deployed as “a crafty, insidious imaginary, a way of offering justification for claims of ownership... and the particular notion that untended, uncultivated, uncivilised spaces are empty” (Barad, 2019, p. 529). In the context of disability, the void has been deployed by psy-developmental discourses as an insidious site of lack, deficit and delay that denies truths about becoming-human that fail to fit into the pre-determined “reductionist essentialism” of dominant psy-developmental discourse (Barad, 2019). That quantum theory asserts that this void depends upon a classical ontology of the world to hold, affirms the void as a space that *does* matter, a space that is rich rather than empty begins to unravel the Othering and marginalizing that is done by discourses theorised through classical ontological frameworks (Barad, 2019).

As matter is becoming indeterminate and the void with all its possibilities brought into theorising, so too is time as an essentialised, continuous thing becoming un/done (Barad, 2018). Time is made to matter, or rather an inextricable spacetime, through ongoing reconfigurations of the world that are neither pre-determinable nor neat successions of linear trajectory (Barad, 2018). Challenging conventions of time through a quantum theoretical ontoepistemology opens to possibilities for affirming other ways of doing time as valuable ways of becoming dishuman beyond the confines of psy-developmentalism and its classical ontology (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). It is through this challenge and assertion of non-linear, indeterminate and dis/continuous time that this thesis entangles distemporalities as a valid spacetimemattering through which to reconfigure and celebrate the distemporalities of disabled childhoods. Thinking through an ontoepistemological lens, we (dishumans and non-humans) have always been doing distemporalities but theorising these temporalities is ontologically im/possible without an undoing of the classical ontologies that essentialise spacetimematter and underpin a unilinear notion of developmentalism (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).



### 9.3 Contributing to Knowledge ↔ Opening to Possibilities

iii slow here to offer my contribution, as entangled part of this thesis, to the ongoing discursive-materializations of theorising parenting in the context of disabled childhoods. iii set my knowledge-making contribution out so that it will diffract and re-turn, enfolded but not ever stabilising as truth. A tentacular morphing curious-ever-searching creature iii chase and have run with but can never claim as only mine. Ever-search becoming a useful companion to re-searching, to try and tangle the momentum of knowledge-making from within into my writing. This curious-creature and iii are Thesis; enfolded dynamically into the world, opening to moments of possibility for re-turning the entanglement of social injustices that persist in these entangled lives, beyond the oppressive neoliberal-ableist regime and the scientism of psy-developmentalism. iii re-turn with the “radical potential” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.14) an agential realist framework offers in seeking new possibilities for equitably valued material-articulations of disabled lives as agential dishuman lives. iii re-pattern this potential to then attend explicitly to the possibilities for agential dishuman commoning in relational entanglements with disabled children; dis/rupting any attempts to sediment an exteriorised and precarious parent-disabled child dyad (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019). iii then express the challenges this thesis provokes to the monster methodolatry (St. Pierre, 2015) through the dynamism of an ongoing re-searching apparatus and sympoiesis as a staying-curious theory-practice for the (re) making of worlds (to come) (Haraway, 2016a).

#### 9.3.1 Agential Realism's Dishumanisms

Agential realism has offered a means for theorising, chasing and spinning webs within and only ever as an ethically-implicated part of the world (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). The representational assumptions and binaries that hold together humanist truths have become un/done (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Barad's agential realism has offered glimpses of possibilities for worlds that re-turn “underneath thought” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.17); that is to tend to the modes of differencing that are in dynamic intra-play underneath the representational truths that work to limit possibilities and deny the world its agency in its re-constituted ongoingness (Barad, 2007). This framework tends to the world in its intricacies, there is no generalizable theory of the



world or its multi-species set to work or sought, only an addressing of the spacetime-matter with which we are entangled (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Provocatively and in response to concerns regarding a posthuman disjuncture from the ongoing human injustices and marginalizations that persist (Goodley *et al*, 2020), the “point is not to get *beyond* the human, but to ask the prior question of what differentially constitutes the human - and for whom” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.18).

iii have offered here as curious ever-searching thesis-creature-writer an articulation of agential dishumanisms as a means of staying attuned to the ongoing trouble of humanism whilst provoking ways of thinking and writing worlds to come that are denied through traditional ontological separability (Barad, 2014). The human is an entangled part of theorising, not the gravitational centre around which theory should orbit (Barad, 2007). The ethical questioning of ‘for whom does this differencing serve?’ is an ongoing matter of response-ability and becoming response-able for the differencing(s) we participate in enacting (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Parenting and disabled childhoods have been re-imagined and possibilities for *kinder* worlds to come that value relational-response-ability for nurturing young *diskin* enfolded have made themselves matter. The cuts of difference are never given and the thinking that shapes thinking about agential dishumans is an ongoing matter of discursive-materializations to come (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). The intra-active productions of agential dishumans and how differences are materially made to matter is an ongoing and indeterminate part of the world(s) (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).

### ***9.3.2 Differencing and Agential Commoning as Theory-Practice***

Embracing the infinitude of indeterminate (im)possibilities for differencing through an agential dishuman framework un/does any attempt to settle at the individualised and idealised ‘I’ that has sedimented in the dominant discourses of neoliberal-ableism and psy-developmentalism (Barad, 2014). This un/doing disrupts the parent-child dyad and the “oppressive individualising practices of austerity parenting and the psy-disciplines” (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019, p.243); the ‘I’ does not precede the relational entanglement but is always diffracted with and through the human and non-human relational multitudes in every re-mattered encounter (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). This opens the parent-disabled child dyad up towards an ongoing and diffractive relational

re-configuring of response-able multitudes that resist any dyadic settlement (Murriss, 2016). Opening the parent-child dyadic site up in this manner emphasises the relational intra-dependence of worlding kin/worlding commoners (Runswick-Cole and Goodley, 2019), entangling response-ability as shared with the ongoing materialisations of education, health and social care phenomena.

Emphasising this common response-ability opens and re-turns beyond any pre-determined and essentialised psy-notions of what children *should* be and insists on (re)thinking relational practices as always in production *with* children. Agency has been re-configured and afforded a considerable space in an agential account of worlding commons and articulates a desire for discursively-materialising the space for embracing and celebrating the timespaces worlded by and with disabled children (Barad, 2007). The response-ability shifts from the repeated exteriorised applications of psy-demands to meeting worlding disabled children as collaborative agents in the (re)configuring of the world(s) (Lenz Taguchi, 2010).

This deeply ethical redistribution of agency opens all modes of relational entanglements with children to an ongoing response-able questioning of the representational barriers that inhibit the celebration of all modes of indeterminate differencing (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). These barriers are not metaphorical but “matterphorical concerns. It is a matter of what gets sedimented in the repeated use of certain modes of thinking because these modes wind up making walls to thought” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.55). These walls to thought perpetuate the ongoing materialisations of devalued and Othered young disabled lives. They are matterphorical walls that can, collectively, be un/done with agential realist modes of thinking-practicing (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). The un/doing glimmers with infinitudes of im/possibility for re-patterning world(s) at each moment, our response-abilities matter and play a part in re-patterning the materializations of the dischildren we are becoming with.

### **9.3.3 Method's Metamorphosis**

This Thesis-creature offers lively experimental tentacular modes of re-searching beyond Daly's “tyranny of methodolatry” (1973, p.11). As a Chthonic creature becoming response-able to St. Pierre's (2015) qualitative monster, it has enlivened re-search as

un/tame(able) (Haraway, 2016b). *iii* have practiced becoming with and of this creature, resisting the habits of “seeking to cut and bind everything in our way” (Haraway, 2016b, p.295). This has been an experimental becoming of ‘un-forcing’ data/myself, allowing for an unchoreographed dance with theory, diffracting and (re)generating in ways that resist the methodological urges to reduce, code and order worlds that are always re-turning (St. Pierre, 2015). The paradoxical (re)generation/(re)destruction of data... beyond methodolatry “sprouts from and remains entangled with” (Barad, 2018, p.65) that which has come before. Thus method entangles rather than separates but its representational foundations are un/done. *iii* feel method as a haunting tracing, entangling through my persistent desire to re-turn and make anew(old) with data...(Barad, 2018). Sympoiesis has not entangled separating from somewhere entirely new, but from the re-making of analytical modes of inquiry that have come before. Sympoiesis and the making with data...is not pre-determined, it is many tentacular creatures (Haraway, 2016b). Creatures that are not obedient to the ideas of linearity, human-centric progress or pre-determined procedural engagements (Barad, 2018).

The rhizome *iii* began with and its botanical metaphorical origins have long since squirmed through metamorphosis, *iii* /thesis becoming rhizomatic Chthonic creature(s) with im/possible tentacles as “feelers; they are studded with stingers; they taste the world” (Haraway, 2016b, p.295). The movement *iii* have offered through the data... is diffractive: “fluid, formless, and shapeless, to surge up in one spot, quickly dissipate, only to re-emerge with intensity elsewhere” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.54). Embracing the not-yet-knowable diffracts re-searching as an uncontainable entanglement through which the human-re-searcher-companion is compelled to face the curious voids of not-yet-knowable *and* “not-yet-knowing how to research” (Holmes, 2016, p.676). Doing re-searching with data otherwise matters if there is to be sustained resistance, in all its entangled and multiple diffracting monstrous forms, for un/doing the injustices and habits of knowing that have been “sedimented in the repeated modes of thinking because these modes of thinking wind up making walls to thought” (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021, p.55).



## 9.4 Apparatus Limitations

iii entangled with this re-search before its agential dishuman kin intra-actively re-configured with me. Claiming to be agential realist re-searcher, as if a representational re-naming can act like armour to protect this thesis-creature from the lure of humanism, denies the ongoing struggle that becoming ever-searching companion has entailed. Thinking otherwise against powerful narratives of developmentalism, neoliberalism and the ontologically separate time and spaces they work in is a demanding and ongoing task. So habitual is the reference to linear time in the governing of lives and our grammatical structures it can hinder the writing of stories that might be possible with other dis/continuous temporalities for there is no adequate language for the lives and stories exceeding the confines of representationalism (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021).

The habits of researching processes are deeply ingrained and iii faltered at times, worrying about the examination of this thesis and the pre-determined institutional criteria it must satisfy (St. Pierre, 2015). There is no complete abandonment of traditional process as they (re)configure(d) my early post-graduate becoming-self and there is no absolute separation from the histories that enfold with and through us (Barad, 2018). There is rather an ongoing diffraction and re-configuration of curious thinking-practices, weaving and spinning lively and ever-searching apparatus(es). The thesis structure becomes alive as iii imagine it morphing between the continuity of linear plateaus and the non-linear potential entanglements that might be intra-actively produced by the reader (Coleman and Ringrose, 2013).

Throughout this thesis humanism's human has been decentred and iii have been challenged by and entangled my thinking with the concerns that posthumanisms and new humanisms run the risk of side-lining "humanism as an old fashioned relic of modernity" (Goodley *et al*, 2020, p.8). In shifting from an articulation of posthumanism to agential dishumanism, iii have theorised in a way that stays attuned to not only the ongoing inter-sections of marginalisations but opens dis/continuous timespaces up for possibilities of becoming response-able "beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead" (Barad, 2018). Tracing, mourning and re-remembering wounds inflicted

and done to human identities is an ongoing business that is desperately calling to be taken forward (Barad, 2018) and stirs trouble in my thinking as iiii continue wondering and theoretical wandering with and for justices for disabled children who have lived, who have died and who are still to come beyond the timespace of this thesis. My writings to come remain committed to agential dishumanisms that do not deny the “dehumanising times: marked by deep and widespread inequalities” (Goodley et al, 2020, p.16) but stay with the troubles of diffracted times (Haraway, 2016a).

## 9.5 (Re)Configuring iiii

There is so much this thesis-creature-apparatus has left to say and there is communicating to be done beyond its relational entanglement with me. As the human is de-centred, so too am iiii de-centring as iiii acknowledge the myriad of possibilities for knowing and re-configuring the stories within and beyond these pages. iiii am curious as to the thoughts, sense-events or imagery that are provoked and stirred for the reader-thinkers entangling at the dis/continuous junctures of spacetime when this thesis re-configures itself (Barad, 2018). With this in mind, there is no sedentary point offered and this re-search has resisted the humanist demands for transferability, universalisation or generalisability (Braun and Clarke, 2013). What iiii offer to entangle as response-ability with this point as my thinking re-configures again and again with Barad’s agential realist framework, is that there is an ethical dimension to the resistance of universalisation and generalisability through dynamic indeterminacy (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021): dominant discourses falter when their truths are dynamically un/done (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). Psy/scientism, humanism and those discourses of the political regimes that impose limits upon thought and intra-actively limit the meaning of materializations of lives can be un/done (Barad and Gandorfer, 2021). The un/doing is an ongoing commitment to becoming response-able with, to and for our kin, not a quick fix for a messy and troubling world.

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## Appendices

### Appendix I. University of Sheffield Ethical Approval



Downloaded: 30/01/2018 Approved: 30/01/2018

Martina Smith  
Registration number: 140105863  
School of Education  
Programme: EdD/Early Childhood Edu (DL)

Dear Martina

**PROJECT TITLE:** Silencing the Neoliberal Meta-Narrative in Early Childhood: Reimagining Quasi-Humans with Special Educational Needs and Disability within a Dis/Developmental Paradigm

**APPLICATION:** Reference Number 016671

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 30/01/2018 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

University research ethics application form 016671 (dated 07/12/2017). Participant information sheet 1037978 version 1 (07/12/2017). Participant consent form 1037979 version 1 (07/12/2017).

The following optional amendments were suggested:

*All reviewers agreed that the application should be approved, and all had recommendations for aspects of your research to consider carefully as you progress with your fieldwork. Specifically, reviewers are asking you to consider: - it is worth checking ethical guidance about use of social media as data. There are a number of ethical issues associated with this and this will need discussing in your work. - What will you do if more than five parents respond? How will you choose participants if you get lots of responses? The criteria for this needs to be transparent, with an outline of how you would deal with a lot of responses to participate, and thus having to say no to some parents. - the potential variety of participating parents is vast, more specifically, the variety of children. Even though you are focusing your research on parents - have you considered the children in the way you are seeking consent? The children will undoubtedly feature in the thesis, and there is an opportunity here to explore (very much dependent on the families you end up working with) notions and limitations of consent in this context, from a critical perspective. - while sharing common ground is a unique researcher position, which definitely needs to be discussed, this also could potentially lead to difficulties when a*

*similar attitude among participants is assumed - or if being a parent yourself may lead you to certain types of participant more than others. Work closely with your supervisor to discuss these implications, and be aware of your own emotional needs, making sure you have somebody to turn to, should the need arise. All of these are aspects to discuss with your supervisor, and to consider as you move forward, they are intended to give you additional, critical insights into your proposed work. Good luck with your research!*

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt  
Ethics Administrator School of Education



## Appendix II. Parent (Participant) Information Sheet

### Participant Information Sheet:

## **Researching the Experiences, Expectations and Thoughts of Parents of Young Children Identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disability**

### **An Invitation**

You are being invited to take part in a research project that will be submitted as part requirement for the Doctor of Education Programme at the University of Sheffield by Martina Smith. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please do not hesitate to ask me if there is anything you are not clear about or would like further information on. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

#### **1. What is the project's purpose?**

I am a parent myself to a young child who has been identified as having special educational needs and disability (hereafter SEND) and am currently a parent-carer to my son whilst also studying for a Doctor of Education in Early Childhood Education at the University of Sheffield. This research project has been designed to create a space for the stories of 4 parents of young children identified as having SEND, focusing upon parental experiences, hopes and expectations. These stories will be considered in relation to the political agendas and current education systems in England and how these systems might have influenced and shaped our parenting stories. It will then be experimentally considered whether it might be possible to imagine stories outside of these influences and how social, education and political systems might be reimagined in regards to parenting and young children with SEND.

#### **2. Why have I been chosen?**

You will have identified yourself as a parent with a young child who has been identified as having SEND.

#### **3. Do I have to take part?**

Absolutely not! Even if you do decide to take part now and later change your mind that is absolutely fine, you can withdraw at any point.

#### **4. What will happen to me if I take part and what do I have to do?**

We will discuss what suits you best in terms of whether to have our conversations face-to-face, via Facetime, Skype or even via email or messenger. I am very aware of the time pressures on all parents so would like to fit in as easily as possible into your schedules.

We will meet to discuss the research and to ensure you understand the implications of consenting to take part. I will explain the first part of the research which will involve you drawing a picture 'mind map' (called a rich picture map) to try and represent through pictures everything that is important to you about your experiences of parenting a young child identified as having special educational needs and disability.

We will then arrange to have a conversation (approx. 45 mins to 1 hour) about your picture. This will be an opportunity for you to reflect and explore the content of your picture and add to it where necessary. I will have no prepared questions as I want to ensure it is your experience we are focusing on. This conversation will be recorded with an audio recorder, the content of which will be deleted as soon as I have transcribed it.

I will take either your original picture or an electronic scan/photo of it and transcribe our conversation and analyse it to try and identify themes and to organise what we have discussed. We will then meet again (approx. 30 mins to 45 mins) to discuss my analysis, take out anything you are not happy for me to include in my research and consider whether you can imagine any ways in which these experiences might be different if the education and political systems (as you understand them and have experienced them) in England were different or whether you are content with the systems as they are.

### **5. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?**

Yes. If we meet face-to-face or talk via Skype or Facetime I will record the conversation(s) using a Dictaphone. These conversations will be written up as transcripts (so word for word and including any non-verbal cues such as sighs, laughter etc). Once I have a written copy I will delete the audio copy. Transcriptions will not have your real name, but made up names we have chosen together.

### **6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

There is a potential that some of the stories might feel very emotional and personal to you. You do not have to share anything with me that makes you upset or unduly emotional if this does not feel comfortable.

### **7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

There are no immediate benefits for parents participating in this project.

### **8. What if something goes wrong?**

If you are unhappy about anything at all related to your taking part in this research project you may in the first instance contact me directly. If this is not felt by you to be appropriate or you wish to make a complaint, please contact the research project supervisors Professor Dan Goodley and Professor Katherine Runswick-Cole at the University of Sheffield. If after following this procedure you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, please contact the University of Sheffield Registrar and Secretary. A list of contact details can be found at the end of this information sheet.

### **9. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?**

All the information that I collect about you during the course of this research will be kept strictly confidential. The only exception to this is if I have reason to believe you or someone else is at risk of harm. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications and neither will any family members or professionals involved on your life who may be part of stories that you share.

### **10. What will happen to the results of the research project?**

The results of the research project will be shared with you via your chosen mode of communication. You will be provided with your own copy of the analysis, discussion of results and conclusion. The results will form part of a written thesis and will be submitted in part requirement for the Doctor of Education. The full text thesis, upon successful completion, will be available online in the University of Sheffield's repository and in the British Library thesis repository. You will not be identifiable in any report or publication of the thesis.

### **11. Who is organising and funding the research?**

I am a self-funded student, no company or organisation is sponsoring or funding this research.

### **12. Who has ethically reviewed the project?**

This research project has been ethically approved via The School of Education ethics review procedure at the University of Sheffield.

### **13. Contact for further information**

#### **Researcher:**

**Martina Smith**

Email: [mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk)

Mobile: [REMOVED FROM FINAL THESIS APPENDIX COPY]

**Supervisors:**

**Professor Katherine Runswick-Cole**

The School of Education,  
Edgar Allen House  
University of Sheffield  
241 Glossop Road  
Sheffield, S10 2GW  
Email: [k.runswick-cole@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:k.runswick-cole@sheffield.ac.uk)  
Telephone: 0114 222 8180

**Professor Dan Goodley**

The School of Education,  
Edgar Allen House  
University of Sheffield  
241 Glossop Road  
Sheffield, S10 2GW  
Email: [d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:d.goodley@sheffield.ac.uk)  
Telephone: 0114 222 8185

**Thank you for taking the time to read this.**

**If you are happy to proceed, thank you so much for taking part. You will be given a copy of the information sheet and a copy of the signed consent form for your own records.**

### Appendix III. Consent Form

## Researching Experiences, Expectations and Thoughts of Parents of Young Children Identified as having Special Educational Needs and Disability

Name of Researcher: Martina Smith

Participant Identification Pseudonym for this Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above project and have had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss the project.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason via: Martina Smith (researcher) Email: [mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk) or Mobile: 07921821063.

3. I understand that my responses will be anonymised before analysis. I give permission for the researcher and supervisors Professor Katherine Runswick-Cole and Professor Dan Goodley to have access to my anonymised responses.

4. I understand that my anonymised direct quotations and drawings will be used in conference papers and journal articles.

5. I agree to take part in the above research project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher                                  Date                                  Signature  
*To be signed and dated in the presence of the participant*

Copies: 2

## Appendix IV. Creating Your Rich Picture Map (Instructions)

### Creating your Rich Picture Map

#### **The Purpose of Creating Rich Picture Maps:**

The purpose of this exercise is to try to represent through drawings as much as you can about your own experiences of parenting in relation to your child who has been identified as having special educational needs and disability. We are thinking about the early years of your lives together as parent and child (up to the age your child is now or 7 years old if they are older at the time of drawing).

The pictures are called 'rich pictures' because they are *rich* in their representations of everything to do with your picture's subject including not only people, places and 'things' but also emotions, conflicts and ideas. They are thought of as 'maps' because of links that might be found between the drawings and ideas in your picture.

#### **Instructions:**

You will need the sheet of A2 paper and the coloured pens and pencils provided (use whatever you feel most comfortable drawing with). Allow yourself time to think and to draw, around 20 minutes should be plenty but do feel free to take longer if needed.

It's important that you don't worry about how the finished picture looks to anybody else. It's not about your artistic abilities and can be as messy as you need it to be! There is no one right way to do this and you really can't get it wrong.

**Tips:** Here are a few tips, in no particular order, to help you get started:

- Give your picture a date.
- Give your picture the title: A Rich Picture of \*insert your name\* as Parent to \*insert name of your child\* in the Early Years  
*Note: We will hide your name and your child's name (and any others that might appear in the picture) once we've finished discussing your picture so nobody will be identifiable.*
- Make sure you represent yourself in the picture.
- Try to represent through pictures as much as you can about your experiences, include ANYTHING at all that matters or mattered to you in relation to you being parent to your child in the early years of their life.
- You can use stick figures but try to include them in action or in context, not just as labelled people.
- Link things together if you want to.
- Don't exclude anything because you think it isn't relevant, if you're thinking of it in this context it is relevant for you and that is what matters!

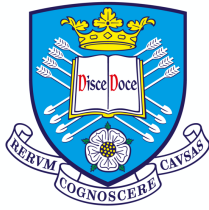
**Rules:** The only rules (you can break if you want to though!) are:

- 1) Don't use too many words.
- 2) Don't plan to structure the picture, think of it more as a mind-map of pictures.

**And remember:** this picture doesn't have to make sense to anybody else. We will use this picture as a basis to discuss your experiences and you can add to it then too if you want. Stop if you feel over-whelmed or find the picture making process distressing.



## Appendix V. Sample (Anonymised) Feedback Letter to Parents



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

Martina Smith  
School of Education  
Programme: EdD/Early Childhood Education  
Email: [mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:mesmith2@sheffield.ac.uk)  
Mobile: [NOT INCLUDED IN THESIS]

29<sup>th</sup> March, 2021

Dear Naomi

I wanted to write to you firstly and foremost to share my gratitude to you for sharing with me your experiences as a parent to Sophie. Your generosity of time and conversation has been invaluable to this doctoral research project. Please find below a summary of the research project and findings. I hope this will be of interest to you and a useful insight into how our conversations and your picture maps became data and were analysed and shared in the context of my doctoral thesis.

There was a word limit for this thesis so the areas of conversation not explored here will be further explored in forthcoming academic writings that I hope to extend from this project. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your right to withdraw your consent to your anonymised data being used in this way so please don't hesitate to contact me with any concerns surrounding this. Please be assured the stringent commitment to maintaining anonymity is ongoing.

### ***Research Aims***

The research was designed to create a space for parents to share their experiences parenting a young child who has been identified as having special educational needs and disability (hereafter SEND). The dominant social and political stories that shape and influence understandings of individualised parenting in the context of childhood disability were explored and challenged. This was done together with the stories that emerged through our conversations and your picture maps to imagine possibilities for new stories of parenting disabled children. These stories looked beyond rigid developmental 'norms' and sought to assert the parenting role as a valued and inter-dependent part of communities.

### ***Data Collection***

You were tasked to create a visual picture map of you parenting experiences and did an amazing job! The maps proved to be a wonderful tool for gaining insight. You shared your stories with me and I recorded our conversations using an audio recorder. I downloaded these recordings and transcribed them. All files are password protected and only accessible to me. You were given pseudonyms and I was careful to remove any information such as place names or any other identifiers that might have compromised your anonymity.

### ***Findings and Implications***

I spent a lot of time listening to the recordings, exploring the transcripts and the visual maps together with relevant academic writings and theories. Two big points emerged around which I centred my own writing and theory: 1) parental love as an ethical political concept and 2) the shared experiences of children 'doing time' in their own way.

#### ***Parental-Political Love***

Parental love became something much more than any 'hallmark card' idea of love and emerged as a site for discussion around widening our understandings of love. Parent love is traditionally understood as a private and personal matter, separated from the logic and reason that underpins the ways in which a wider society and politics makes decisions and talks about parenting and disabled children. I have argued that a political concept of love takes the ethics of caring for and upholding disabled children's rights beyond private spaces. Love is re-situated as an ethical basis for re-working community solidarity with parents and as a basis for caring for disabled children. An ethics of love demands disabled children's equitable rights as a responsibility for *all* society. Cultivating a wider understanding of love in an ethical society is discussed as a way of affirming community citizenship, in such a way that disabled children and their parents are always included. This is presented in the research an important ongoing task. A collage was created with your picture map from which this discussion was started:



Collage that provoked discussion of parental-political love

I explored your discussions around the over-use of the word ‘mum’ and challenged how it positioned and isolated you in various situations on your journey as a parent. This was particularly poignant in your stories that told of how the focus and responsibility was often placed directly on you in relation to Sophie’s acquisition of certain skills. I followed the story of the red boots and troubled how you had to assert her right to her first proper shoes. I troubled the references that were made by professionals in regards to your early feeding choices and Sophie’s later diagnosis of Autism.

### *Disrupting Development and Time*

The second point was concerning time and specifically time in relation to a child’s development. I have argued that often children who have labels of special educational needs and disability ‘do time’ in their own way and at their own speed. I have argued the case for not pathologizing other ways of living and doing childhood by virtue of ‘developmental’ speed. I have challenged these ideas by affirming the unpredictability of childhood and celebrating diversity of life. The very concepts of time and psychology as human-created have also been challenged. Rather than always measuring children against a certain expected pace of living, developing and meeting childhood milestones, I have argued the case for expanding understandings of childhood beyond developmental psychology’s expectations. A second collage was created with your picture map from which this discussion was started:



A collage that disrupted ideas about development and time

From these pictures and the associated conversation, I troubled the way in which the naughty chair was used at school and the time Sophie spent in it in the corridor. The story shifted the focus to the chair as the site of ‘naughtiness’, moving the problem firmly away from Sophie. I explored Sophie’s beautiful journey as she became a ballerina. I was moved by the image of the tears and your description of Sophie hiding hers under her ‘mask’. I listened to the song ‘Tracks of my Tears’ that you had spoken about and as promised in our conversation! It became the background music for me as I did this writing with your stories so thank you for that inspiration too.

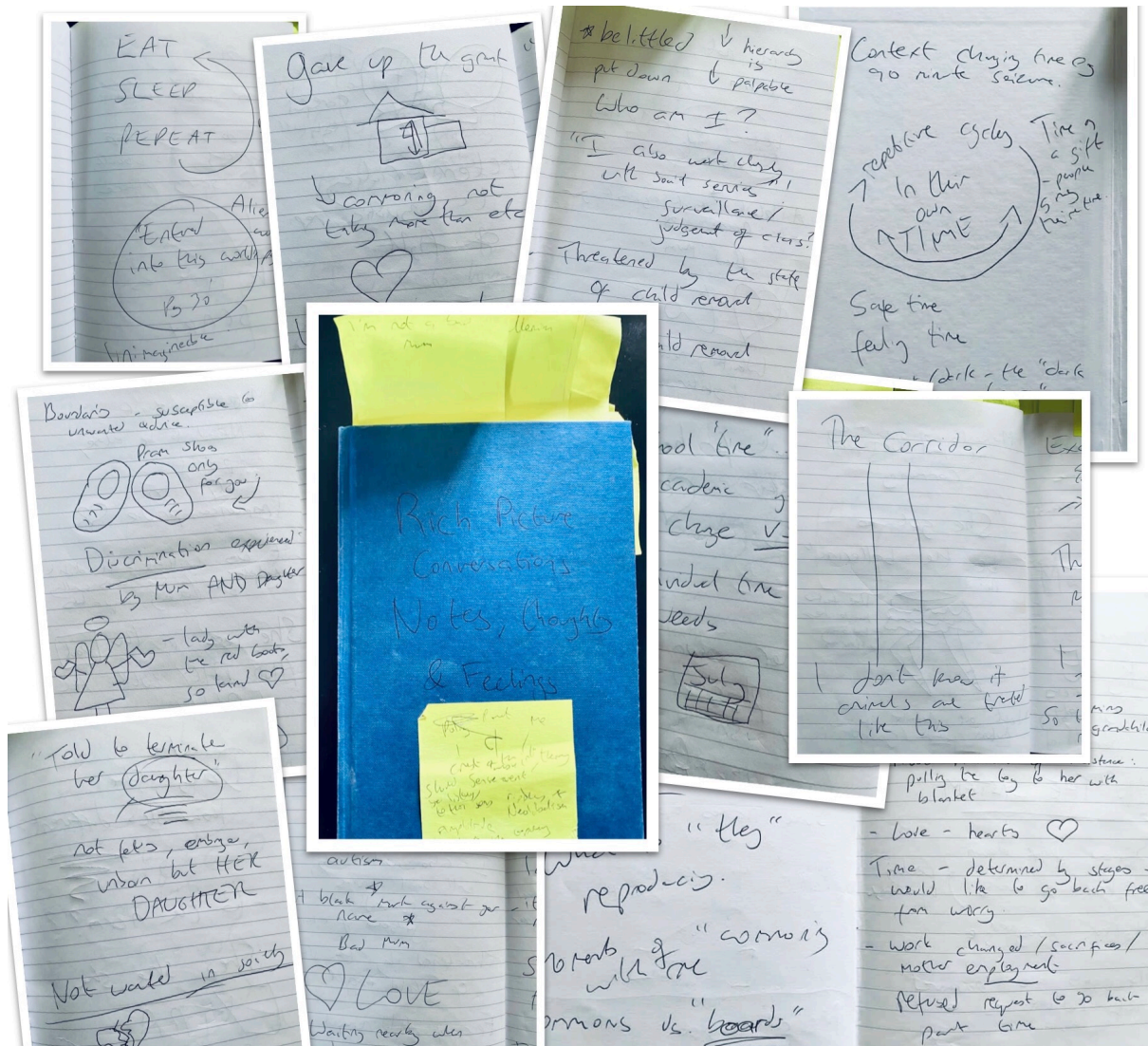
### *And Finally...*

I am happy to discuss the content of this letter further with you or answer any questions at all that you may have at any time that is convenient. My contact details are at the top of this letter so please do feel free to get in touch.

It has been an absolute privilege to have had the opportunity to work with you directly and to be trusted with your story afterwards, please accept my sincere and ongoing thanks.

With warmest regards,  
Martina Smith

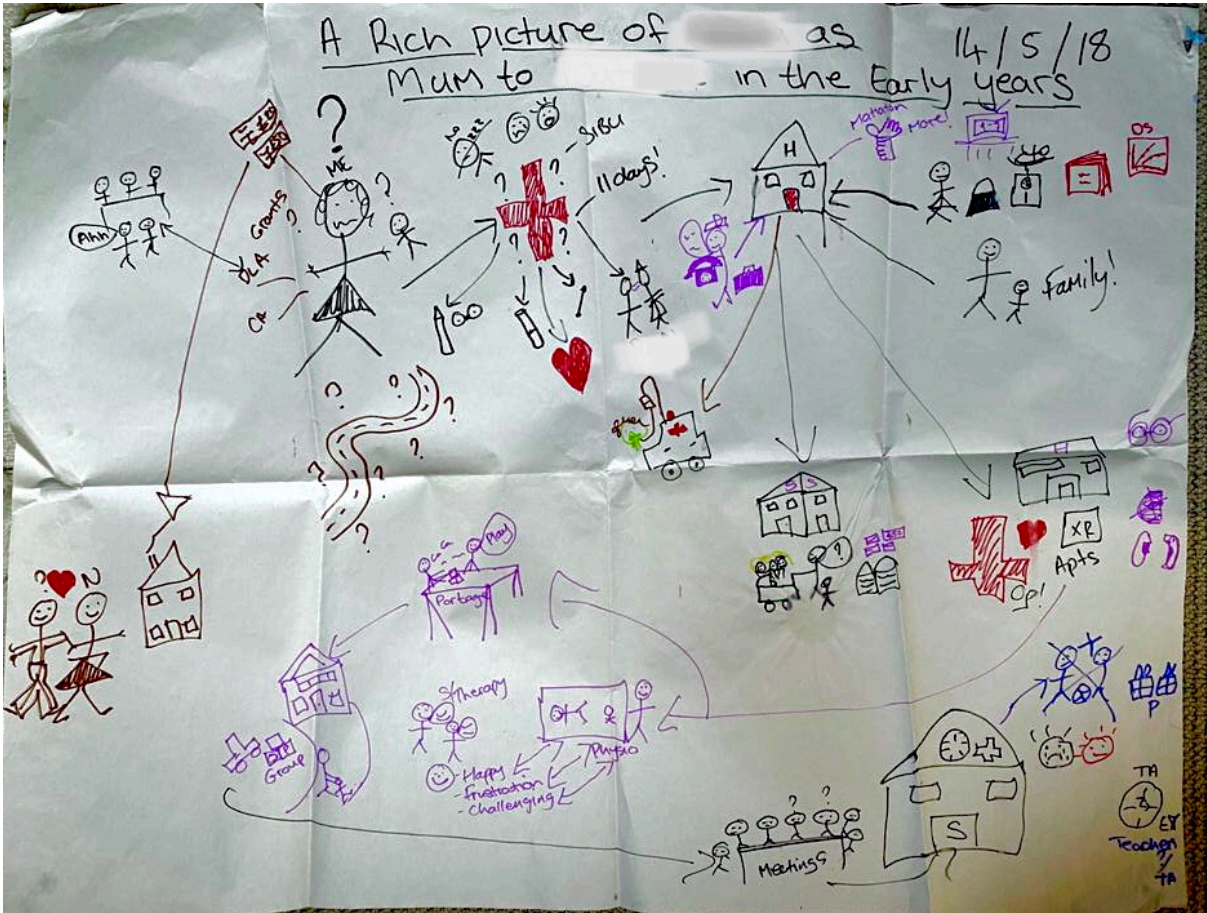
Appendix VI. Notebook Collage (Sample Pages Created During Symposies)



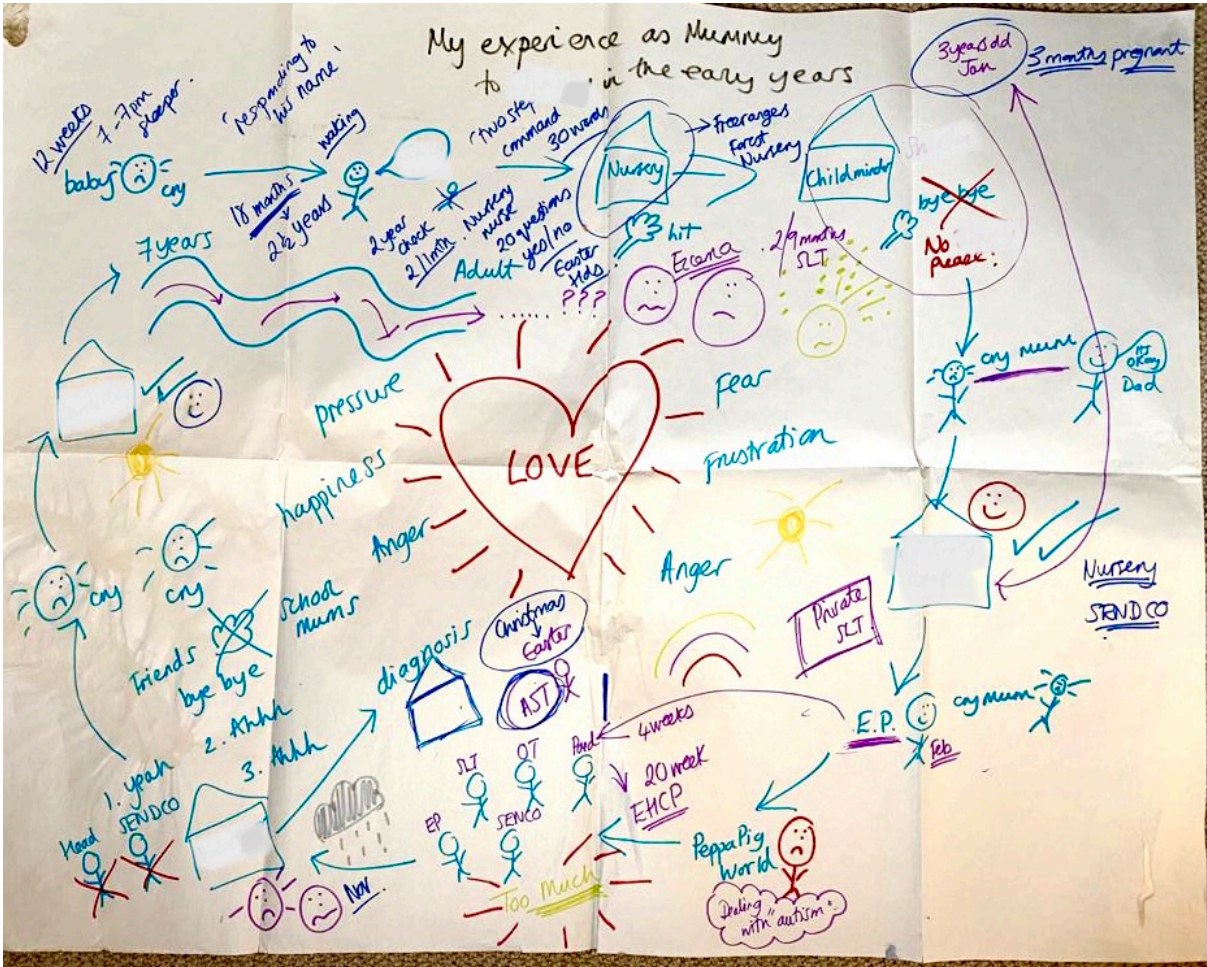
## Appendix VII. Performative Picture Maps (Originals)



*Naomi's Performative Map*

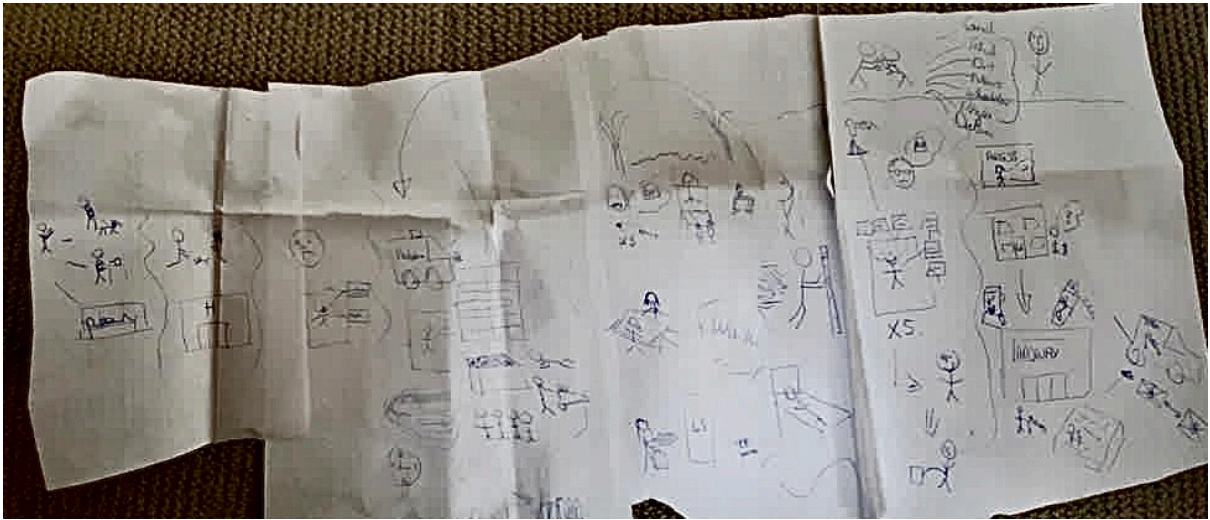


Liz's Performative Map

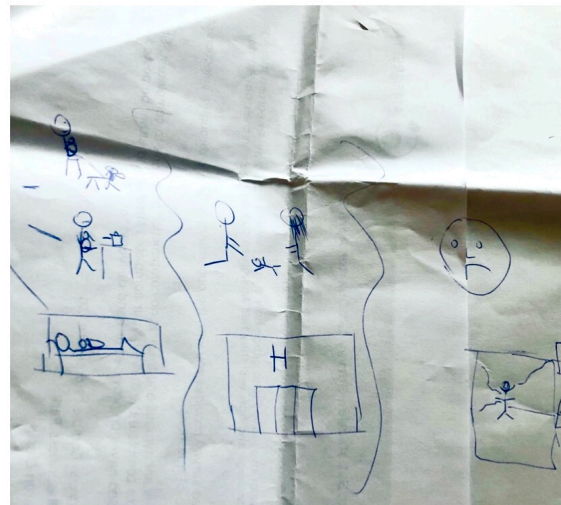
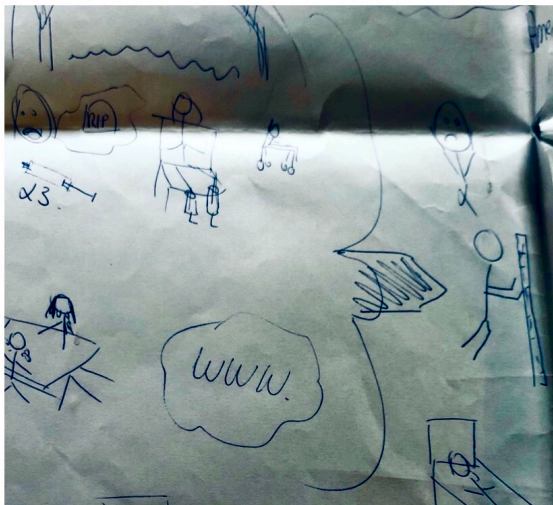
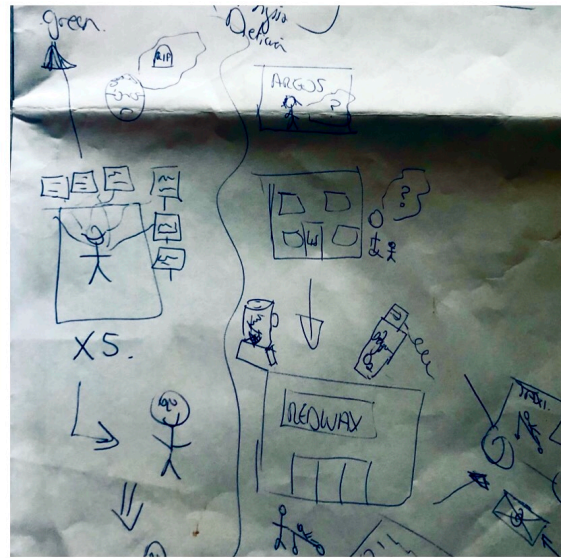


Vivian's Performative Map





**Tom's Performative Map (Panoramic View)**



**Tom's Performative Map Close-Up Collage**