

The art of/in educational research: assemblages at work

Ninni Sandvik

**Østfold University College/Norwegian University of Science and Technology,
Norwegian Centre for Child Research**

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to challenge the present western policy to control and tame educational research practices. It suggests a research methodology approach inspired by Deleuzian immanent ontology and the concept of 'assemblage'. Based on my PhD-project 'Assemblages of desire in pedagogical practices: Inspirations from Deleuze and Guattari' the article draws on the overlaps between research, philosophy and art. After a brief introduction to Deleuzian ontology of immanence, arguments for a decentering of the researcher as a subject, and the idea of a research assemblage are suggested. To accelerate the production of thoughts in the research analysis a piece of artwork is included in the assemblage, to make possible an investigation at the sensations produced when paintings, field notes and the researcher work together as a 'thinking-machine'. The assemblage is here put to work by investigating different circular and horizontal movements in the process of analysis.

Introduction

This article is written in times where the governmental desire to control and tame educational and research practices seems overwhelming and paralyzing. The proclaimed blessings of simplifying the processes of learning and knowing invades both academic and pedagogical practices at the cost of methodologies and practices that open up to complexity, contradictions and messiness (Rhedding-Jones, 2007). Such simplification ignores the embedded knowledge and traditions of pedagogical professions (Sandvik, Kolle, Larsen & Ulla, 2008). Unnoticed this may 'silence, seduce and disintegrate the professions' (p.24, my translation) pushing them towards unification and standardization. Confronted with such a policy, MacLure (2006) argues for 'an errant, eccentric (ex-centric) movement (after for example, Derrida, 1990) within the space of qualitative method, to open new, unpredicted issues and questions' (p. 729). Her concept of 'productively irritating' research methods is both provocative and appealing and encourages research practices that work with openings for 'education's occulted Other' (MacLure, 2006; 730). Engaging in 'productively irritating' research methods is however no easy pathway to explore. It is not for the timid but for those committed to what has a chance of happening, yet might not (Rhedding-Jones, 2008). MacLure's call seems highly appropriate in Norway, as educational research related to Norwegian *barnehager*, (pre-schooling) is a young discipline. Until recently qualitative inquiries such as phenomenological, descriptive and/or interpretive approaches have been privileged over critical methodologies (Alvestad et al 2009). Although current research methodologies have brought valuable perspectives to the field the time has come to go beyond the comfort of the already known and be open to possibly irritating approaches. This will involve engaging in daredevil activities¹: setting habitual/citational practices (see Davies, 2008) at risk.

This article is an example of *thinking with*² Deleuze & Guattari's philosophy of immanence. Especially it explores the concept of 'assemblage' and investigates 'circular and horizontal movements' in the analysis (Lenz Taguchi, 2009). The starting point of this article is a briefly presented ontology of immanence. Later on a re-conceptualization of the idea of a researcher is explored. I also suggest a re-conceptualization of educational research analysis by exploring the relationship between research material, art and philosophy. Instead of positioning a researcher as a separate unity *outside* the material, researchers are seen as parts of an assemblage or 'thinking machine' which includes the body/mind of the researcher and of the various materials. I shall explain and show this a little further into the article. To smooth the space so it becomes easier for unexpected thoughts to create themselves along the way I bring in a piece of visual art to the assemblage I create. Then I investigate further whether the concept of sensation is fruitful in relation to this. At the end of the article, I put this assemblage into work and explore its speeds, intensities and flows by slowing down and speeding up the analysis in circular and horizontal movements (following Lenz Taguchi, 2009). As my methodology develops as it goes along, my conclusions are temporary and wobbly. It is therefore important to have in mind that experimental dizziness is a main issue when working with this kind of methodology.

Researching within a philosophy of immanence

A Deleuzian philosophy of immanence focuses on life as an infinite plane, without substantial or consistent division between the various elements of the world (Deleuze, 2002). Instead it 'emphasises connections over forms of separation. But this connection must itself be a connectivity between of relations and not between identities' (Williams, 2005; 126). Thus identifying the various elements of the world is of less interest than exploring the relatedness between them, whether the elements are human or non-human. Instead, as Massumi (2002a) says 'there is only the process of *their passing into each other*' (p. 8-9 original italics). Hence, immanence in Deleuzian terms challenges the familiar anthropocentric gaze and goes beyond the human/nonhuman divide. Here Deleuze & Guattari understood our existence as a co-existence with the rest of the world. Relatedly Lenz Taguchi (2009; 15) writes 'There is no hierarchical relationship between different organisms (human and non-human) and the material world around us, when we think in terms of immanence.' Instead immanent philosophy acknowledges matters biological (as in respiration), emotional (as in the potentials of a beautiful sunset to pass into the human body as sentimental moods), ethical (as in the demands passing into the owner when a kitten's eyes beg for food), and physical (as in the pain that makes the body move when sitting in an uncomfortable chair) as interventions between human and non-human elements. Poetically Deleuze & Guattari put it like this: 'Climate, wind, season, hour are not of another nature than the things, animals, or people that populate them, follow them, sleep and awaken within them' (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; 290). In other words: matter, space, time, temperature and smell pass into the human body/mind in various and unpredictable ways and the human body/mind passes into matter, space, time temperature and smell, bearing in mind that the privileged relations in Deleuzian philosophy are relations *in* something rather than relations *to* something (Williams, 2005)³.

Plugging all this into educational research methodology, a researcher relates *in* the field materials (such as field notes, photos, videos) instead of just relating *to* them. Researchers following all of this recognize the passage of variously distributed matter into the work of analysis instead of denying their existence. Simultaneously a total consideration is impossible as life is much more complicated and messed up than research analysis appears to make it. In the following I will explore one possible way to relate *in* the research analysis. My methodology is inspired from everyday experiences as a teacher in Early Childhood Studies, where a passing through of seemingly irrelevant material often interferes with my lectures/writing/thinking: a song, a picture, a poetic line, the temperature in the classroom, the season,

the time of day. Whenever I hook up on these interferences, more productive learning/writing/thinking processes seem to evolve. Such experiences encourage me to explore the potentials when analyzing research material as I now attempt to show.

Research assemblage

What follows suggests a concept of 'research assemblage', and addresses some implications of this regarding my selected researcher methodology. For Deleuze & Guattari 'assemblages' are functional conglomerations, not unified elements or self-identical entities or objects. In each assemblage the particles, intensities, forces and flows of components meet with and link with the forces and flows of the other components: the resultant distribution of these meetings constitutes the assemblage (Currier, 2003; 325). Deleuze & Guattari speak of assemblages as human and non-human machineries that work through flows of intensities, affects and speeds. In line with this Grosz (1994; 165) argues that the concept of assemblage presents:

'an altogether different way of understanding the body in its connections with other bodies, both human and non-human, animate and inanimate, linking organs and biological processes to material objects and social practices while refusing to subordinate the body to a unit of a homogeneity of the kind provided by the bodies subordination to consciousness or to biological organizations'.

In other words we have to move towards a decentring of the researcher as a subject and start engaging in the flows, intensities and speed that emerge from different parts in the machineries in action (human and non-human). This opens up a whole range of processes that create possibilities for a variety of elements to have a say in the research analysis, as I shall now show after the next explanations.

The daughters of chaos: science, philosophy and art

As said my aim is to make a smooth space for irritating and uninvited thoughts in the work of analysis. Here Deleuze & Guattari's (1994) work on philosophy, art and science as the daughters of chaos presents a valuable contribution. Philosophers, artists and scientists all struggle with chaos in various ways, simultaneously sharing an affinity with it. Chaos is not to be denied or resisted, as it is a creative force. There is, however another and more important struggle, according to Deleuze & Guattari: the fight against opinion (which in its turn claims to protect us from chaos). Humans usually try to transform chaos into order, by making sure the ideas are linked in various ways through recognition, resemblance and causal relationship. This urge for order works as closures in thinking processes, rather than as openings. This is because any novelty is reduced to a sameness that does not move anything; rather it seeks unity. Thinking with Deleuze on the other hand aims to contribute in ways that increase educational methodology diversity. Here the concept of sensation is highly relevant.

Following Deleuze & Guattari (1994), art seeks to create sensations and sensations that are, if they are complicated and interesting enough, capable of generating thought. According to Bogue (2003), Deleuze claims that 'genuine thought only begins with an external violence to thought, a jolt that forces thought out of its ordinary habits. That jolt is a fundamental encounter, a disequilibrium or deregulation of the senses, "that can only be sensed" (DR⁴ 182:139)' (Bogue, 2003; 178). Sensations produced when the artwork passes into the body/mind of the researcher seem to entail far greater potential than working within a strict academic regime. I will develop further this concept of sensation by plugging into Massumi's writing on sensation and the thinking-feeling of what happens. Massumi (2002b; 8) claims

that sensations are the actual registrations of affects as: ‘the passing awareness of being at a threshold — and that affect is thinking, bodily — consciously but vaguely, in the sense that is not yet a thought. It’s a movement of thought, or a thinking movement. There are certain logical categories, like abduction, that could be used to describe this’. Massumi introduces the concept of abduction to describe the effects of sensation claiming that sensation produces a sense of being more alive. ‘It might force you to find a margin, a manoeuvre you didn’t know you had, and couldn’t have just thought your way into. It can change you, expand you. That’s what being alive is all about.’ (Massumi, 2002b; 8)

When abducted by the ‘sensations’ and intensities of a piece of art, a whole range of possible thoughts is produced as thick and rich potentials. The sensations created by such artwork claim priority on the cost of conscious and academic reflections and work in favor of a capacity to let go of discursive and habitual stratification of thought. This is also how paintings work, as powerful flows and ruptures in the creation of thoughts, providing the assembled research machinery with even more fuel so to speak. Here a painting opens up to uncertainty and complexity, in ways that make the feeling of dizziness bearable, whenever thought evolves without references and loses its foothold. Thus the margin of maneuverability increases by sensation, as what multiplies is ‘where we might be able to go and what we might be able to do in every present situation’ (Massumi, 2008b; 3). What happens is that space opens to resist the tendency to seek recognition, sameness and causal relationships. Hooking up on the energies, intensities and speed in an assemblage can then be a research strategy to explore an alienation from our usual expectations.

Chopping up the assemblage

In this section I elaborate further and deepen my previous arguments on a research assemblage by chopping up the assemblage into different parts: even though the parts in themselves are not the points of interest. The separations are made to create a space where different parts can be discussed according to their specific features, and allow further elaboration on their contribution to the assemblage. The subheadings that follow are indented to show how the assemblage is chopped.

The artwork in the assemblage

I have chosen one painting from the Norwegian painter Lars Elling’s rich production. Selecting Elling from a myriad of other options is partly because of how his paintings affect me personally. The paintings of Elling (Elling et al, 2006) are figurative in a non-allegorical kind of way. They offer suggestions and thereby they diminish tendencies to restrict the possibilities at hand. When it comes to choosing one painting, my choice was made almost randomly. This is in itself a major point, as I did not want the painting simply to illustrate my field notes and thereby to enrich them. Instead I wanted the painting to invite the notes to explode into the unknown. Thus the relevance of the chosen painting is of no relevance, actually; but it could be argued that it connects rhizomatically, after Deleuze and Guattari (2007). Following rhizomatic logic (Alvermann, 2000; Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Mac Naughton, 2005) heterogeneity is one of the features of rhizome. Although artwork is different from a written text, and therefore already serves the demand of heterogeneity, a random choice increases the potentials of the heterogeneous and the unpredictable, bringing multiplicity to the table. The painting tears the field notes apart, as it activates a multiplicity of potentials. I will return to the painting when I present it as vignette 2 and then discuss the sensations created by this particular artwork.

The body/mind of the researcher in the assemblage

As I have argued earlier, a Deleuzian philosophy of immanence engages in life as an infinite plane, without substantial or consistent division between the various elements of the world (Deleuze, 2002).

This, of course has radical implications when it comes to the image of the researcher: 'You are longitude and latitude, a set of speeds and slownesses between unformed particles, a set of non-subjectified affects. You have the individuality of a day, a season, a year, a life (regardless of its duration)--a climate, a wind, a fog, a swarm, a pack (regardless of its regularity).' (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004; 289) The radical shift of focus from the subject (here the researcher) as a unity inscribed in and inscribing her/himself discursively, towards a decentered subject immanently related to matter, time and nature, passing into the various elements and objects, opens up to an overwhelming complexity. The individuality of the days, seasons and years pass through the researcher whenever s/he reads and writes. So do the sunrises and sunsets that continuously light up and darken my desk. Additionally I as researcher pass into the chair on which I sit, the sound of the computer keyboard when my fingers touch the keys, and the little lamp on the desk plugging into memories of smells in *barnehager* (Children's Centres) and then colours of a painting. It is not, however, possible to write this multiplicity into an academic article. Yet the consciousness of immanent connectedness and relatedness affects the researcher in ways that bring hope and trust to the process.

The field notes in the assemblage

My research material grows from various sources, more or less like a bricolage⁵ (Berry 2006; Kincheloe & Berry; 2004, Kincheloe, 2005). I have been collecting data from various sources participating in the everyday life of different groups of children in Norwegian *barnehager*⁶. My data from this participating practice consist of field notes written in retrospect. I also conducted conversations with three pedagogues who work every day with young children. The conversations are fully taped and transcribed. Finally I participated in a student-teacher project '*Arenaer for utforskning*'⁷ at Østfold University College in a provincial city in Norway. Here too I conducted a conversation with a group of students related to their experiences in the project. In this article I only refer to a tiny part of my field notes concerning a small incident called 'the arrival of the researcher'. The elaboration of a tiny vignette shows the potentiality of the research methodology proposed. I will now present two vignettes: the first vignette is a 'the arrival of the researcher' and the second vignette is a documentation of a painting by Elling. I present these without comment between them. Then I discuss them.

Vignette 1: The arrival of the researcher

I present what follows anecdotally. The morning I came to the *barnehage* the children were playing without the practitioners interfering. I sat down on a chair just watched the children play, since I was unfamiliar to the children and the children were unknown to me. My intention (taking-for-granted the hegemonic discursive idea of small children's security needs and their lack of capacity to relate to new people and situations) was to give the children a chance to get used to me at a distance before I initiated contact with them. A one year old boy called Henrik looked at me thoroughly for a short while and then he without words left the room. The other children continued their play seemingly not aware of the situation. No comments were made by them. I wanted to acknowledge Henrik's right to make himself invisible to the eyes of a researcher (Gillund, 2006; Viruru, 2001) and stayed in the room for some minutes after he had left. Subsequently I decided to try to locate him and went into another room where some children were playing and there he was. I entered the room and placed myself nearby Henrik yet not at all beside him. He recognized my entrance and continued to play until I noticed that he had lost one of his slippers and spoke to him by pointing at the lost slipper. He then looked at me, took the slipper and turned backwards towards the door opening. Because he did not see his way through the door, he ran into the frame of the door and hurt himself, so he started crying.

Vignette 2: Lars Elling's painting

This painting is for the time being presented without its title, as I was unaware of the title when I first chose the picture. I will return to the title later as it provided a horizontal movement in the analysis.



The obvious element of the painting is a running girl nearby a building painted in a brown/beige/black tone with a hint of yellow. At first sight this might seem like a totally harmless painting since the motif is not at all stirring or breathtaking. Nevertheless this painting struck me as a sensation. Looking at the painting I could vaguely sense how it affected me in a downward kind of movement, letting flows of distress and discouragement pass into my body, as if I was abducted (Massumi, 2002b) by the painting into a darker space. As I did not at all welcome the effects of these flows I found myself struggling with an urge to escape into more cheerful or at least more neutral landscapes. Consequently I immediately tried out an academic approach, searching in the picture to see if there was something specific to understand, something the painter had left inside the pigments, between the strokes of the paint brush and/or in the composition. Perhaps my task was to discover and pinpoint his intentions. I thereby inscribed myself in the hegemonic discourse of representation, searching for 'the essence' (Deleuze, 1994: 55-56). Approaching the painting from such a modernist angle (as wanting essentialism) did not move anything; although it might work in mediating ways.

Putting the assemblage to work

The problem with my doubts as a researcher, confronted firstly with Henrik's disappearance and secondly with the riddle of Elling's painting had to be addressed by exploring an experimental approach to the machinery of the research assemblage. To avoid a one-dimensional and linear outlining of some of the thoughts that came to mind while putting the research assemblage to work, I will now use the concepts of 'circular' and 'horizontal' movements (Lenz Taguchi, 2009) to inform the processes of analysis. Lenz Taguchi underlines the intertwining and simultaneous quality of the two movements. Hence a separation of the two may construct a binary which is not functional. However, I separate them to make visible their different ways of contributing to the analysis. Following Lenz Taguchi (2009; 96) we are more willing to engage in 'circular movements' of re-enactments and counter-actualisations than to

enact 'horizontal movements' of invention and creation. Engaging in 'horizontal movement' seems in this way like a 'daredevil' feat.

Circular movements in the research assemblage

Circular movements deal with reconsiderations (criticizing, deconstructing, rethinking) concerning the documentations (Lenz Taguchi, 2009). Moreover they offer opportunities to challenge the taken for granted, making the researcher active and conscious of habitual ways of thinking. Such movements slow down the speed in the process of research analysis and leave open a space to think/live the events once more. Lenz Taguchi (2009) speaks of a delay between perception and thinking/acting which 'brings us away from the immediacy of our inevitably ongoing intra-actions with objects – the messy mixture of the present – and establishes a distance but also an important *indeterminacy*, which allows perceptual images to be assessed (2009; 97). Circular movements are thus a way of flattening out the documentation of the events. Slowing down the speed in the analysis of the text/painting machinery makes the thickness and materiality of the event visible. Thus, the examples from my analysis serve as suggestions of what might happen following these pathways by showing how the circular movement of slowing down and flattening out the event works as a resistance towards the hegemonic discourse of the linearity of body movements. Later on another effect of working with circular movements, namely a challenging of seeing body movements as re-presentation of feelings and thoughts, will be addressed.

Letting the painting pass into the field notes immediately constructs a connection between them, first of all the movements *away from* and/or *towards* something come to the forefront; as Henrik and the painted girl both are on the move. In everyday language, movements are often constructed as movements from one point to another, operating in a linear fashion as if there is one single starting point and one specific and predestined goal. However, the painting works in destabilizing ways in relation to such a linear approach. As the painting in a way presents a fixed moment separated from the beginning and end of an unknown incident, it becomes obvious that a discussion of the starting points and destinations of the movements is not possible, and perhaps not even relevant. Leaving the habitual desire to pinpoint the movements in beginnings and endings makes a shift in the reading of the field notes and pulls Henrik's movements away from linearity and into uncertain terrains.

Having the Deleuze (1994) critique of the idea of representation in mind, I will now explore how circular movements within the research assemblage may work to challenge our habitual idea of representation. The face of the girl on the painting is blurred and thereby excludes the possibility to interpret her facial expressions as representation of her feelings and thoughts. Thus, the painting's performative agency (Lenz Taguchi, 2009) does not allow the viewer to repeat a habitual logics of representation. Instead of regarding this as an obstacle or failure in the analysis, I will connect this to Deleuzian philosophy and claim that the movements do not *re-present* any specific feeling or thought. The movements simply present themselves to the world or rather, as the material feminist Barad (2007) says, they present themselves *in* the world, being *of* the world in onto-epistemological terms. Reading such movements as presentations, rather than as re-presentations, brings forward the limited access to understanding children's intentions, feelings and desires. This is a radical thought: a rupture in the segments of modernist educational research; as the latter stresses the importance of understanding children and promoting empathy as a core value. Critical voices of the empathy regime have been heard, for instance Douglas Crimp (2009) who argues that 'empathy only gets constructed in relation to sameness, it can't get constructed in relation to difference' (p. 263). The painting is in line with this critique of empathy and acknowledges the restraints and limitations of politically proclaimed understandings, pulling the focus

into a terrain of difference instead of sameness, and opening for a welcoming of the 'gifts of our doubts' (Jipson & Paley, 1997).

I have now, as an example, explored two of the many ways the circular movement of slowing down the speed may work; focusing on a challenging of the researcher's taken-for-granted ideas on body movements and a habitual interest in interpreting body expressions. Even though it is possible to investigate other critical issues within the circular movement, I will now accelerate the speed and engage in horizontal movements in the analysis.

Horizontal movements in the research assemblage

Horizontal movements are 'about speeding up the movement of the flow of events – as in *thinning* and *smoothing* out and creating a *smoother space* to enable transformation and change in a new event emerging' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, in Lenz Taguchi, 2009: 99). This smoothing of space makes the letting go of habitual thoughts and practices easier. Following this I now focus on how a horizontal movement in the analysis that accelerates the speed in the production of thoughts. Strangely enough the connection is made by the political issue 'Duck and Cover'. This is where I address the title of the painting. Googling the title reveals that 'Duck and Cover' among other things refers to a previous politics in the USA. 'Duck and Cover' was a suggested method of personal protection against the effects of a nuclear detonation, which the United States government taught to generations of United States school children from the late 1940s until the 1980s. This was supposed to protect children in the event of an unexpected nuclear attack which, they were told, could come at any time without warning. (Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duck_and_cover).

This political turn of thoughts may at first glance seem as a movement irrelevant to educational research and pedagogical practices. It is possible though, to create a reverse connection between the USA policy and educational research by re-thinking the researcher's presence in institutions not from her good intentions, but as an attack out of the blue in the everyday life of the youngest children. What kinds of ethical responsibilities does that leave the researcher with? Rhedding-Jones (2005; 86-87) encourages us to take power into account as researchers and practitioners, and although my presence did not seem to disturb the children in serious ways, this 'Duck and Cover' method of the USA government illuminates an important ethical dimension when doing research in toddler groups. Indeed, this shows how power works and brings to the fore the unprivileged position of some, and the ignorance and arrogance of some others in powered positions. The USA government tried to calm their inhabitants with worthless advice: a policy easy to ridicule and criticize in 2010. Looking at the entrance of the researcher as the actual attack makes a shift towards irony.

At least the USA politicians had decency enough to inform their citizens of a possible danger (regardless of the political implications); while the researcher in 2008-2009 comes to the institutions without warning: as far as the children are concerned. They were not informed by adults beforehand, as we took for granted that young children are incapable of understanding the time schedules of a researcher. Letting the sensation of the title of the painting pass into the body/mind of the researcher makes it easier to reflect upon the need to inform the children beforehand in order to prevent that the presence of the researcher works as an attack. In retrospect the information should be given independently of the taken-for-granted ageist expectations on behalf of the children's understandings. Simultaneously we have to keep in mind that simply to inform the USA inhabitants beforehand in case of a nuclear attack would not have removed their terrible experiences whenever the attack became a reality. The connections between the USA policy, on training their inhabitants in case of nuclear attacks and a

research practice, may seem a bit farfetched following the argument that a nuclear attack would be much more damaging than the entrance of a researcher. Additionally there is no point in overestimating the dangers presented by the researcher, as children themselves are constantly moving to and fro and do not always notice another, and unknown, adult body. The point here is neither that there are differences in the elements of risk concerning the USA inhabitants and the Norwegian children in the *barnehage*; nor the fact that many children's seemingly unproblematic encounters concern unfamiliar adults. Rather I want to focus on the dangers of ignoring the power productions in privileged/underprivileged positioning. Here the power productions became clearly visible when the title of the painting passed into the field notes and into my body/mind as a researcher.

This brings an ethical issue to the forefront: the researcher's interests, intentions and taken-for-granted ideas cannot be dealt with as innocent and unproblematic. Following Deleuze (1990:149) ethics is all about 'not to be unworthy of what happens to us' (Deleuze, 1990: 149). Lenz Taguchi (2009) follows Deleuze here by pointing at the necessity of being aware of 'intra-acting with, and doing justice to *what is happening in each event* and being inventive of what is to come. It is about allowing yourself to become anew with each event, and to be affirmative of learning as a state of transformation' (p. 94). Letting the painting and the field notes pass into my body/mind whenever the research assemblage was put to work, and at the same time letting my body/mind pass into the painting and the field notes, transformed all three elements in the assemblage in unpredictable ways. The idea of a research assemblage brings to life the Deleuzian ethical demand of being worthy of what happens to us (the painting/the painter Lars Elling, the field notes about Henrik and the political aim to explore 'productively irritating' research methodologies). Mere existence within a research assemblage forces a researcher to descend from the traditional pedestal position. Being a part of a research assemblage a researcher has to let go of his/her desire to control and conduct the whole process from above and outside the material. Instead we acknowledge the performative agencies of the material, be this field notes, video tapes, photographs or whatever irrelevant elements (as for example paintings) are included in the assemblage. Simultaneously researchers still have to critically investigate the various power productions in research processes (Larsen, 2007) and to construct research that works in decolonizing ways (Andersen, 2005; Otterstad, 2007). I suggest that the obligation to contribute in movements towards diversity is increasing, both regarding pedagogical practices in *barnehager* and research methodologies, and that this is an ethical as well as a political issue.

Summing up

This article has discussed some of the rich potentials of the idea of a research assemblage, by focusing on the Deleuzian concepts of immanence, assemblage and sensation, and circular and horizontal movements. The forces, intensities and speeds within the assemblage have been a key issue of the article. A methodological approach such as this destabilizes the idea of the researcher (as a unity in her/himself) controlling and independently constructing the research process (Larsen, 2007; Massumi, 2008; 2009; Rhedding-Jones, 2007). In addition it has vital and joyous potentials as it allows thoughts to produce themselves almost artistically as they come along. Here Olsson (2009; 38) follows Deleuze and Guattari and says: 'When we really think it is like being struck to the ground only to find that you are falling through it, since it does not exist anymore. It concerns a kind of vertiginous feeling of losing one's references. But at the same time it is a very joyful and affirmative affairs, since it can give us access to universes we did not know anything about'. Being aware of the possibility that some of the thoughts turn out to have little or no relevance in the analysis and have to be rejected, does not seem to reduce the productivity of thinking. Moreover it seems to make the production of thoughts easier; whenever a thought creates itself there is always more to be created. The potentials of the methodology explored in

this article are not at all depleted in the act of writing this article. Instead the sense of restlessness which is discernible in Deleuze & Guattari's work (Sutton and Martin-Jones, 2008) inspires further explorations of daredevil approaches, without evidence-based approaches as tranquilizers. I trust that restlessness will work as inspirational powers for future writings.

End notes

¹ The phrase 'daredevil research' is used by Jipson and Paley, N. (1997) which refers to a kind of joyful recklessness of the researcher.

² The expression to think with is taken from Mazzei (2009). She herself refers to a seminar at Manchester Metropolitan University presented by Redwood, who uses the expression to 'think ethics with Levinas'.

³ The ontology of immanence connects to Barad's onto-epistemology and concept of intra-activity (2007, 2008), but this connection will not be further developed here. For interested readers I recommend the work of Lenz Taguchi (2009) who combines the two approaches.

⁴ DR= Deleuze's book *Différence et répétition*. Presses Universitaires de France, Paris (1968) as distinct from its English version (1994) which is in the reference list for this article.

⁵ Bricolage is a kind of do-it-yourself construction of knowledge from the research 'data', which is collected in an apparently random way with whatever comes to hand. In France a small shop called a bricolage is where you buy your hammers and nails, your things to fix what is in your home.

⁶ I participated in the toddler groups occasionally from October 2008 till May 2009.

⁷ 'Arenaer for utforskning': Arenas for investigation is a student project in the Early Childhood Studies at Østfold University College. The aim of the project is that students and teachers learn from children under three years of age when they investigate and use various objects placed in a room by the students. The adults (students and teachers) are supposed to interact with the children, but not to control or define the children's actions. From this project I have as research data a recorded conversation with a student group, approximately 300 photographs and several video sequences.

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