

## The political child

# An essay about life, philosophy, the political and science

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### Abstract

This essay is an attempt to write an unruly force field in sustained expansions about the political child, life, philosophy, policies, and science. Unruly as in messy and stammering but open. Unruly about the political child as a force and carrier of immanence, unencumbered, and as an expression of a future. It implies a view of the child born with inalienable rights as a political subject and force of material and social transformation, and temporalities of writing being transformational techniques. Writing ultimately treated as an ecological practice and method that facilitates the production of collective subjectivities. Thinking the child, life, science, and the world politically means thinking with Chantal Mouffe's (2015) concept *agonism* in combination with *writing* as continual Deleuze and Guattarian (2004a) becomings, active in life itself. There are thin walls between realisms, dreams and fabulations, and this essay is an attempt to strike a blow for freer, humorous, more philosophical, and political mindsets in our pedagogical sciences and imaginations. Therefore, there are also unruly words and sometimes not yet present.

**Key words:** The political child; agonism; writing; collective subjectivities; pedagogy as a scientific subject; geophilosophies of education, organization; the affective turn; evaluating ontology.

### Let the child laugh

This essay is an attempt to write an unruly force field in sustained expansions about the political child, life, philosophy, policies and science. Not the politically created or staged child, nor the

innocent, holy or pure child, but the political child, becoming child. The child as a force and carrier of immanence, unencumbered, and as an expression of a future. Not a child prone to educative, pedagogical measures and methods, but a child with inalienable rights as a political subject and force of material and social transformation. The child as *a metaphysical being* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b, p. 52), a crowded connectable multiplicity and *knowing and knower of affect* (Massumi, 1995; Reinertsen, 2020, p.7). Highlighting education as a non-competitive inter-intragenerational activity and life responsibility being my focus. And paraphrasing Massumi (2014) when he investigates *what animals can teach us about politics*, I investigate what a child can teach us about politics subsequently pedagogies? I try to follow up on Massumi's focus on *the flourishing of animal play* at a level that *necessitates theorizing wellsprings of sympathy and creativity, the qualitative and even the subjective, everywhere on the continuum of animal life* (p. 3). Or rather, I substitute his focus on animals with children and child life and instead of playing and play, I focus on humour and laughter. So, when I ask what the child can teach us about politics and pedagogies, my answer is: teaching us to laugh. And if I cannot laugh at least the child can, and paradoxically I think laughing is what I need a child to do. And as far as the unruly writing is concerned; this is writing with oneself as a *stammering*, restless exercise, but without loss of knowledge. On the contrary, it is writing that contributes to increased insights and competence (Wyatt, 2008). Have we forgotten that education is also an affective embodied present? Come on catchup...

And of course the e.g. universal UN Convention on the Rights of the Child <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention> – the politically created child – is pivotal, formalizing the Rights of the child that is, and ultimately what I write. Because for the convention to formally work, it must be written, proceduralized or '*wellspringed theorised*' through paradoxical particular/universal political relations lifting us out of mimesis from '*everywhere on the continuum of [...] life*'. Nothing imitating us back, and in the name of foresight, looking towards something that liberates our attention to make the Rights work. Looking towards potential in humour, sorrows and joys, in hope and despair, in care and brutality, in exclusion and inclusion: in *reciprocity and hostility* (Mouffe, 2015, p. 9). That is the potentials of life, the real and the being/becoming human and education. Asking the very hard question that is, about how in this world we think that the Rights of a child can function effectively in today's standardized and established frameworks? That is the paradox. The concept of Rights – and the child – through standardization being in danger of being stillborn unless wellspringed politically. Effect becoming an actualization of affect so that affect is seen as real and is attributed importance in/for policies and pedagogies. Mouffe (2015) continues:

*The mistake of liberal rationalism is that it ignores the affective dimension that collective identifications set in motion, and that it believes that these supposedly archaic "passions" will inevitably disappear with the rise of individualism and reason. [...] A democratic polity<sup>1</sup> cannot be limited to creating compromises between interests or values or practicing*

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<sup>1</sup>. Chantal Mouffe makes a distinction between the political and politics. While politics is in the realm of governance including policies, the political is related to antagonism and is associated with affectivity.

*deliberation for the common good. It must take a real hold on people's desires and imaginations.* (p. 12, quotation marks in the original. My translation from the Norwegian edition to English)

Mouffe (Ibid) creates the concept of *agonism* as opposed to antagonism as a third relation and ability to think the world politically. Agonism refers to a we/them relationship in which (conflict) partners realize that there is no rational solution to the conflict, but where they at the same time recognize the opponent/the other as legitimate (Ibid. p. 27). It implies breaking up dichotomies, either/or thinking, and discourses as simplified power relations. And since this paper is about thinking the world politically, the political child but also subsequent pedagogies, I write agonism in relation to what Lars Løvlie (2016) calls the *pedagogical paradox* in the general term of celebrating the fact that children and young people are capable of autonomous – here political – moral judgment, but simultaneously take for granted that the teacher is the one who determines how they should practice that autonomy:

*In general terms the pedagogical paradox arises when a teacher declares that education should foster autonomy in the sense of a free essence, expression, or decision of the student – the Selbstbestimmung of a person who acts according to her best lights – but on the authority of the teacher.* (Ibid. p. 2, italics in the original)

I add the concept and authority of the systems or organization to that of the teacher: systems or organizations declaring that education should foster autonomy and self-determination. These are declarations that conceptually permeate our systems all the way from law and regulation to curriculum and practical pedagogies. The teacher however, having limited possibilities to declare anything at all. The teaching professions generally speaking are more or less governed today through globalized, digitalized, goal and market oriented educational systems and discourses (Sæverot et al, 2022, Reinertsen & Thomas, 2023). Claiming to be against autonomy would be breaking doxa and not what anyone would want or dare say. But if we continue to - following Mouffe (2015) above - ignore affective dimensions of systems, pedagogies, and pedagogical discourses, we de facto deprive both systems, teachers, and the child of autonomy. Not only reducing the ability of thinking the world politically – the paradoxical importance and implications of autonomy and the political child – but lulling education into being a silent excluding instrumental meritocracy. Agonism and the pedagogical paradox eventually being about and concerned with *teaching difficult and a choice* we have (Reinertsen, 2014). A choice of acknowledging the importance of not forgetting affective aspects of political workings within organizations and educational systems.

And as my own *refrain* and humming *to summon the strength for the paper I hand in* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, p. 343), I combine(not) Mouffe's deconstructivism within a liberal democratic framework with Deleuze and Guattari's (2004a, p. 345) request to *think through* the always vibrating environment (*milieu* in original). Thinking through the environment as that of taking a chance on an opportunity/possibility that binds us according to making *genuine* choices (William James cited in Stengers, 2022, p. 133). A *refrain* being a *territorial assemblage* (Deleuze and

Guattari, 2004a, p. 344) bringing together familiar milieus through mundane acts that create new mixtures through a form of *transcoding* (Ibid, p. 345). Becoming as that of having to territorialize functions – as child and as educator both – through the creation of child and educator-refrains. The assemblage accordingly actualized as democracy, which is a joint work between- here teachers and children.

And here I offer a theoretical detour and additional comment on using deconstruction originating from the works of Jacques Derrida (1939-2004) in combination with the re-deterritorialization of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) and Félix Guattari (1930-1992). Despite differences *they agree on the irreducible role of illocutionary force in culture and language* (Nealon, 2003, p. 163, underlining replacing italics in original). Nealon (Ibid.) further argues that Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari are in agreement that the meaning effects of language are beholden to a field of forces and style that is *asyntactic, agrammatical [...] language is no longer defined by what it says, even less by what makes it a signifying thing, [...] but what causes it to move, to flow, and to explode – desire* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004b, p. 145). And with reference to style; Lambert (2003) - also with reference to style, argues that for both Deleuze and Derrida, the renewal of philosophy is *linked to the question of writing* (p. 120). The comparison includes the critique of representation and the phenomenon of the double(d), the phantasm and simulacrum and inside outside relations making writing both method and means for newness, and what the current unruly writing is all about.

Stengers continues to explain what genuine choice might be: *a living choice or a choice that presses on, which is important and above all binding – we must take a chance on it, because to abstain is to take sides against the possible* (p. 133). This is another way of saying that democracy is not democratic because there are laws. Rather, acting or doing democracy entails the territorialization of democracy-milieu, education-milieu, and child-milieu through the production of education and teacher-refrains. Education through this is turned into a democratic field of change in binding enabling but paradoxical reciprocity. Choice and responsibility are connected in an immanent perspective to life itself and is about influencing and being influenced in and through the events that occur (Deleuze and Guattari, 1997). Events that are complex, unpredictable, diverse and complex; fictional as life itself - is my song I sing to myself as I *marshal the antichaos forces* of my writing... lalala-haha (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004a, p. 343).

Autonomy thus as a fluid concept turned into a ‘mutual tool’ to reclaim education, and capable of putting the child back in. It is a view of the child as a force in its own right, an enactor of its own fluid, relational autonomy. The child being/becoming its own person owned by life itself. Every child having its own version of the world inside. Let it laugh. I need it to laugh – for life, and for being pedagogue/educator/teacher. The concept of autonomy thus as that of political worlding of education and organization both, and *self-assessment as system assessment* (Reinertsen, 2008). Ultimately making concepts like teaching, teaching goals, interventions, pedagogies, didactics, manuals, programs, levels, and hierarchies less assumed, defining, compartmentalizing, and excluding. I speak of lived politics in education. In my worlding, writing imbalance as results of conceptual and pedagogical processes is worth its weight in gold. I sing. If there is a crack in

everything, does the light get in or out? Is a crack a problem or not? Is politics a law, an intervention, a responsibility, or a language? Is politics the tomato, the vinegar, the sugar, the salt, or the spices? How important is it to laugh and mashed tomatoes crossing a road? Massumi (2015, p.56-7) writes:

*Politics, approached affectively, is an art of emitting the interruptive signs, triggering the cues, that attune bodies while activating their capacities differently. Affective politics is inductive. Bodies can be inducted into, or attuned to, certain regions of tendency, futurity and potential, they can be induced into inhabiting the same effective environment, even if there is no assurance they will act alike in that environment.*

It is a new thinking of and for technologies of the self, immanence, and non-hierarchical relations where productive tensions lead to futuring possibilities. The notion of the political child requires that we do not understand human lives as divisible into chronological stages. Further, that rather than focusing on an inherent human reality, we need to ask questions beyond the human and to the very emergence of life and life's capacity to compose questions regarding life. Not working with declaring autonomy but working with the concept of relational autonomy as a sensation and a force which can open movements towards inclusive fluid less assumed educational organisations and spaces. It is urgent to politicise the concept of autonomy because it is too easily presented as a taken for granted and assumed concept and buzzword in education and too readily minimised and defined as a personalized goal and responsibility. Rather, what I advocate is a view of autonomy as a collective force turning all involved into collaborators and able to mould futures together. Life thus suddenly turned into a tomato sauce and relational catching up.

To sum up before moving on and a warning: affect-based education and science is aimed at rethinking what kind of knowledge we need to further develop and foster our practices. Affective research and methods enable inclusion of immediate and somatic experiences. At the same time, this provides opportunities for collective sharing of experience. Affective methods thus enable the follow-up of dynamic engagements and creations and contribute to the development of more adapted and responsive pedagogies. But affect-based education, science and research can also be turned into a manipulative force via fear and the staging of possible catastrophic futures with performative effects for governing and modelling behaviours. Even more important is therefore working with autonomy while securing the child's rights to inaccessibility as a notion that something/someone can and should be protected from 'realities' and thus be able to have his/her inner (and pure) laughter available, for him/herself - and for others. Paradoxically this is what might save education as a public institution hopefully preventing the marked soon to be the only educational actor left.

### **Writing education beyond problem solving**

Working with/in paradox ultimately implies not only a reclaim of education, but simultaneously a

reclaim of science, or more precisely what we teleologically<sup>2</sup>, ontologically<sup>3</sup>, epistemologically<sup>4</sup> and axiologically<sup>5</sup> build our sciences subsequent research on. In short, pushing and pulling the boundaries of how we think education, teacher, child, and organization, to potentialize more and other in our workings of autonomy as a relational and political concept; thus, *educational spaces and organizations seen as multi-versed and multi-versing entities* (Reinertsen & Thomas, 2023). Accessing human judgement and assessment, not revealing what it is but that it is, that it exists and happens as an open-ended machinic *ontology and normative framework within which to describe and evaluate movements or processes* (Patton, 2000 p. 136). Such evaluating ontology implies the abilities and commitments to constantly question and revise goals and plans that decide current borders of individual and public sensibilities in education. Here this means asking questions and revising concepts, goals, plans, practices, and subsequent policies of research, knowledge, and inclusion: ultimately learning and democracy. Building on the *geophilosophy* of Deleuze & Guattari (1994), and with Mouffe's (2015) concept of agonism, this constitutes an evaluating ontology of deterritorialization as a practice of relational power, where the exercises of power can be *reciprocal and mutually beneficial* (Patton, 2000, p. 136). What is it to remember a feeling? What utility value might a joke and a laugh have, and can a tomato fly? – and what might play become?

Here, I want to make a short detour with the concepts of assessment, judgement, evaluation, and critique, being critical and critical thinking. Or rather, I speak of immanent critique and immanent critique practices. These are critique practices finding the criteria for critical judgement in society's own normative support points, turning education and pedagogies into an agnostic territory. Thus, the task of criticism is to judge whether certain life forms are good, rational, or successful according to the values to which they orient themselves. Immanent criticism is- and as we have already seen referring to the pedagogical paradox, concerned with internal contradictions and tensions, and asks whether society lives up to its own notions of itself, and whether key values such as freedom, reason, self-determination, autonomy, and justice are realised, and if not; what is stopping them? And as you would expect by now, I do not know what it does and what it is, other than being some sort of thought or idea that something is evaded – and must be – from the domain of the invasive state. Leaving us to deal with the paradoxical structure of complexity and the limits of collective intentionality.

Continuing to move with autonomy as a political and relational concept; aiming at operating affect-based, with humour and with/in paradox, hence, to be able to work with alternatives to what is, we should ask how we can become more than one/someone who primarily follows recipes and routines? How to look beyond mimesis, the creation of echo chambers, or rather how can the child become more than an object of our pedagogies and created politics? As educators, we often ask ourselves questions about how to reach the child? What about asking how the child can reach us?

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<sup>2</sup> How we view humans and intentionality

<sup>3</sup> How we think

<sup>4</sup> How we think knowledge is produced

<sup>5</sup> Values and what we think is important

What do we want with the child? We have created problems of childhood, and it seems that now we want children to take part in solving them. Think of climate change and sustainability for example. It is not fair. And could it be that it is a liberal, commercialized, short-term western view of the individual child and identity policies that causes the need for thinking about inclusion/exclusion processes in the first place? Are our beliefs in dialogue creating a view of the child as an equal and interesting interlocutor, a politically created voice and conversational partner leaving us as much in danger of underestimating as overestimating the individual child? Have we de facto obstructed the availability to the child? And have we as educators become so alienated and governed that we need absolution to dare teach? Teach difficult, that is, teach awareness, the beingness of engagement, *thus turning pedagogy into a human social science capable of redefining the possible again and again; redefining the possible and/or potentiality, ultimately the practicality of possible lives* (Reinertsen, 2014, p. 26).

Such questioning puts the teaching professions in an awkward position and sheds light on the fact that less and less young people chose teaching as their livelihood<sup>6</sup> today. Why do we talk about risk, risk taking, risktakers and the risks of education even if named *beautiful* (Biesta, 2017)? Do teachers have enough support from their systems to actually teach? What if education and pedagogy were to sense and note in the moment what constitutes good learning, and what would such a view do to open access to good practices? Practices of creating wellsprings and environments of miracles, of enabling arenas and spaces for the potentialities of the child: the political child, the child being politics, the becoming child and me. Can you think of a flying tomato and teaching? Elsewhere I have called this *lemonpedagogies* (Reinertsen, 2019) in which I theorize the teacher role through thinking myself other. Teaching as an ontologizing practice to meet with the need for constant deauthorized knowledge and nonknowledge production for life. Teaching becoming eventicized and teachers become data – tomatoes and lemons – philosophers through writing. The enigmatic and strength of the teacher being equally distance and/as presence. Teaching involving a continuous, active, and instant (reading and) writing of encounters, while also including capacities for acting on and with them. Teaching that requires an organizing gaze, gesture, voice, pose, emotion, thought and breathing with material expansions and extensions. Teaching that requires arranging the affectively charged complexities in institutional space. As teacher, here researcher I therefore place and sing myself in the world as if that is the meaning of life itself and drift (fr. *dérive*) along with data, and every step I take remains in my body as a map in which I am the scale, with consistencies and smells, tastes, colours, and noises, and the patterns that are formed gradually embrace more and more of the globe, almost in intimate ways. It is a teacher/educator/researcher turning into a relational activist reader and writer; a constant *reactivating of common sense* (Stengers, 2022).

In the case of the *lemonpedagogies* my teacher colleagues and I experimented with electrical components and Techno Lego with five-year-olds. From a simultaneous STEM and pedagogical perspective, we worked with mechanical principles of energy, energy transfers, generators and

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<sup>6</sup> [Strategi for rekruttering til lærerutdanningene og læreryrket 2024–2030 - regjeringen.no](#) (Retrieved 13.02.2024)

production of electricity, heat, solar cell physics, air, sound and light movements, electromagnetism, etc. Sometimes we offered models for the children to study and copy if they wanted to. Sometimes we did not. Sometimes we distributed the equipment and components to different tables, benches, and corners of the room. We elaborated arrangements based on STEM structures and thinking. Sometimes we did not. Instructions were only given if we were asked for them by children. No words were spoken, no direct learning goals expressed. Only thoughts about what could possibly be learned with these things and sets of possible goals. Short term, long term. Affirmative experimentations. As teachers we did not discuss division of tasks or expertise. We experimented with sensations of affects from different knowledge backgrounds and levels of loss of control, different knowledges, and lack of knowledges: vulnerable, open, sometimes mashed but being becoming thinking myself other to catchup.

The politically particular/universal laughing child is what I write, teacher researcher becoming child. Put differently, I try to write, sing and live in line with Marina Garcés (2022) third hypothesis of the *western humanistic tradition having to leave the expansive universalism and learn to think of itself from a mutual universality* (Ibid. p. 92, own translation). It is thus a writing on the preconditions for expansion, offering affirmative and generative possibilities embracing the intrinsic and poetic qualities of matter (selves/things/materials). Being human and education seen as collaborative activities. Expanding the empirical basis we think and perform education *with*, writing becomes both a form of activism and an aesthetics, a deep thinking from within swirling together ontology, epistemology, political perspectives, and ethics. Another elsewhere, I have called this *riddling the real and ridiculous of academia and knowledge forced open* (Reinertsen & Thomas, 2024, p. xvii). Writing as continual becomings hence that of giving something of oneself up, simultaneously possibilising and creating knowledge com-positionings beyond simplistic knowledge and power relations, always active in life itself and more interested in relations between knowledge and freedom.

Paradoxically this Deleuze and Guattarian (2004a) view of writing implies lifting the (importance of) subject positions turning us all into each other's pivot points and possibilizers as we *nomadically* move, act, and become with/in *smooth and striated* space (Ibid. pp. 523-551). The subject is seen as decentred and: a) physically, chemically, and biologically enmeshed and dependent on the environment; b) moved to action through subject and object inter- and intra-actions that generate affects, habits, and reason; and c) possessing no attribute that is uniquely human but is instead made up of a larger evolving ecosystem. Writing with this thus seen as life performance and democratic change-field all the way, ultimately science as kindergarten laughter and play, not tendered and cultivated. In nomadological writing there are thin walls between realisms, dreams and fabulations, and material and social realities are about realizing individual potential. The individual and individualism is conceptualized as non-binary bodily variations. The knowing political child is seen as a complex structure of affectivity for becomings in procedurality: as "*multiplicity, process and becoming*" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 211). To underline; this represents a view of subjects as decentred and consisting of assemblages of layer upon layer of voices, plural and voices in the plural. It is a subject and subjectivity open to flux and possessed of an urge and



curiosity for constant expansions of the exploratory mind, be it one's own and that of others. It implies a reconfiguration of the notion of subjective freedom and what a constructive developmental interiority might entail: becomings *with* that which emerges, movements and qualitative changes, continued variations, gestures, and movements in our experiences and thinking. Further, that there is no cognition without affect.

Deleuze and Guattari (2004b) provide us with a theory of the production of subjectivity through a procedural desiring-machine connecting desire to reality, de-individualization (anti egoism) and deterritorialization through humour not power: a materialistically and experientially based analysis of 'breakdowns' and 'breakthroughs'. Guattari (2008) further developed a schizoanalytic approach to social formations, extending the three syntheses into a more general account of *three broader ecologies* that are differentially enacted by environmental, social, and mental technics. Subjectivity thus as a "*futurist*" and "*constructivist*" *opening up of the fields of virtuality* (Ibid. p. 26, quotation marks in the original).

Rahel Jaeggi (2023) further provides- and in accordance with Caputo (1997) the *cold eyed and sober* (p. 85), practical and everyday take on subjective freedom, agonism, paradox, alienation, and autonomy that I need to machinically write. Alienation, not seen as a paralysing force, but as a special form of loss of *positive freedom*. The positive meaning of the word 'freedom' springing from the desire to be one's own master, to be subject not object, to be someone, to be an autonomous person:

*Understood in this way, the concept of alienation thematises the complex conditions that underlie placing one's own actions and desires (or more generally: one's own life) in connection with oneself, being able to attribute them to oneself and make them one's own. The same goes for the many obstacles and distractions that affect one's own actions, desires, and life. One is not always "oneself"; it is not always self-evident that one's actions and desires are "one's own", and one's relationship to one's social and natural world is as constitutive as threatened. (Ibid. p. 95, own translation)*

An autonomous non-alienated life (and teaching practices) is not a life (and practice) in which certain values are realized, but a life (and practice) that is lived and practiced or performed in a non-alienated way – in 'reciprocity and hostility'. Thus, the conviction that everyone should be able to live his or her own life does not contradict alienation as loss of positive freedom: *On the contrary, the absence of alienating obstacles and the ability to acquire both oneself and the world, without being prevented in any way, is the very prerequisite for freedom and self-determination* (Ibid. p. 96, own translation). Affect is ultimately a positive intelligence of thinking not calculating, hence letting the negative work. This multiverses and beyonds us towards politics and pedagogies freed from connotations of the 'immature', 'innocent', 'lack', 'wants' or 'helpless' state of child and the accompanying presuppositions about prevention, intervention, resilience, rights, learning and even help permeating modern educational thinking and politics. It brings us to and brings to life the sensational aspects of our relational autonomies and gives meaning to what it might politically imply to have a voice and to be seen and heard: a view of voice, language and words as material

and practises of using words and language as heuristic and philosophical tools allowing for political explorations, moving beyond short-term individualistic identity and problem solving. Rather, showing how every word consists of multiple *neighbouring* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 90) meanings and conceptualizations, *trajectories and becomings* (Deleuze, 1997, p. 67). Every word only makes sense as it emerges politicized in collective situations, allowing shared moments of instant understandings and equally uncertainties, a simultaneous thrust to move on. Every concept and word seen as method and means to approach the sublimities of human and more-than-human fluid autonomies, decision-making becoming processes and relations.

When I was child  
I wonder  
Why I didn't have wings  
Like other birds  
and if I am no longer a child  
It amazes me anyway

Nils Aslak Valkeapää (1990, my translation)

### **What does a child say: autonomy and the political nature of language**

In an autonomous non-alienated life, a word is constantly shifting and therefore enabling. A word is simultaneously critical, a method for more and therefore an action. One that keeps things open and moves between. Not to find clarity and definitions, not to decide once and for all, but to explore and be part of the exploration together with others, other words and forces. Words as forces as concepts acquiring collective indefinite meanings that goes beyond the individual without erasing individuation. Words as forces as concepts enabling more about what it means to be human, what gives us value and what it means to become a force and 'control' one's own actions and knowledge processes in the communities we take part in. This is what children do, and children say, what children can teach us about politics and what becoming child entails. Children as carriers of immanence expressing futures: *Children never stop talking about what they are doing or trying to do: exploring milieus, by means of dynamic trajectories, and drawing up maps of them* (Deleuze, 1997, p. 61).

Through the present infinitive mark or the indefinite article **to** plus a name, we obtain a verb in its indefinite form, such as to read or to write, to see or to hear. This constitutes the basic chain of expression that correlates to the least formalized content from a semiotic standpoint that has freed itself from both formal meaning and personal subjectivity. Deleuze and Guattari (2004a) write:

*Indefinite article + proper name + indefinite verb constitutes the basic chain of expression, correlative to the least formalized contents, from the standpoint of a semiotic that has freed itself from both formal significances and personal subjectification. (p. 290, italics in*

original)

First, the verb in the present infinitive is in no way detached from time, but expresses fluent and non-pulsating time, thus the pure *event or creation* (Ibid. p. 290). No one would argue that you see nothing when you express something that involves seeing. "I like to watch the birds." At that point you see birds, but undecidedly which, how many, when and where. Perhaps one sees the birds in one's inner eye (see haeccity below, virtuality), indeterminate yet determined. Second, the name does not indicate a subject, nor does the verb absorb the value of a name as a function of a form or species but is part of the becomings as a force in a present infinitive. The force and power of seeing, hearing, reading, writing. The force and power of *birding*. It may not be a verb or a word at all, but I know something somewhere about what it can probably entail and do:

*The proper name fundamentally designates something that is in the order of the event, of becoming or of haeccity. [...] The proper name is not the subject of a tense but the agent of an infinitive. It marks a longitude and a latitude. (Ibid. p. 291)*

Third, the present infinitive mark and the indefinite article are no more indeterminate than an infinitive. That is, they lack something definite only if they are applied to a form that is itself indeterminate, or to a definite subject. It happens if *birding* is understood as flying. Then something happens because, as you know, humans can't fly. In any case does not like a bird. However, the mark or article lack nothing if they introduce an event or virtuality, a type of individuation that does not pass into a particular form and is not the effect of a subject:

*The indefinite then has a maximum determination: once upon a time; a child is being beaten; a horse is falling... Here the elements in play find their individuation in the assemblage of which they are part, independent of the form of their concept and the subjectivity of their person. (Ibid. p. 191)*

Children already can and still *bird* alone and with others. Children *do themselves together* as Sunniva (4) has shown us (Reinertsen, 2016). Not speaking grammatically correct but possibilizing both of us to best light laugh tomato, affirming our powerful relational autonomies affective transitions catchup. Repeatedly in their articles and books, Deleuze and Guattari have pointed to the reach and power inherent in children's use of the indefinite: *Children use the indefinite not as something indeterminate, but on the contrary, as an individuating function within a collectivity* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004, p. 291). Perhaps as an adult and researcher I should *bird... tomato... lemon?* In any case, I should do *myself together*. *Birding* as doing myself together with more and other, as something sublimely different uncertain possible. *Birding* is my use of the indeterminate, uncertain as an individuating force in collective contexts. And paraphrasing Mouffe (2015) about reciprocity and hostility above, there are many sublimes: *The sublime should be multiple, in the strong sense of there being many different sublimes, each one understood as a source of different and transformative value, stemming from a tension between attraction and repulsion* (Williams, 2019, p. 180). Throughout their works, Deleuze and Guattari give systematic preference to the concepts of movements or processes as processes of absolute deterritorialization: becoming-minor over being majoritarian, smooth over striated space, metamorphosis over capture,

deterritorialization over reterritorialization. Absolute deterritorialization being like a reserve of freedom of movement in reality or on earth that is activated when relative deterritorialization takes place:

*Thinking consists in stretching out a plane of immanence that absorbs the earth (or rather “absorbs” it). Deterritorialization of such a plane does not preclude reterritorialization but posits it as the creation of a future new earth. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 88)*

Such absolute deterritorialization draws our attention to the basic distinction between relative and absolute deterritorialization corresponding to the distinction between the two dimensions of non-actualized/actualized events of *birds* referred to above. The non-dualistic actualization of the topic of autonomy and writing. Sublime knowledge encounters in sociomaterial spaces, sublime encounters with oneself and knowledge. A liberated anarchist sublime of no superior values developing between a self, between minds – minds that touches mind. Minds that act as open intra- and interconnected portals for the other. And with reference to laughing, becoming child and science: the body – and that is not a new piece of knowledge – might be a more reliable listener and viewer than thinking. Williams (2019, p.180) continues:

*This anarchist sublime should also be critical, not only of other versions of the sublime with their unequal, repressive and violent tendencies, but also self-critical, seeking out those same negative aspects within itself. This goes further however since each sublime should be self-destructive, only a passing transformation, rather than the foundation for eternal values and permanence.*

There is a point in such multidimensional coordinate systems in which we can meet or get close to one another. Autonomous celestial bodies or virtual bodies without purpose and meaning, but with an essence developed by direction and speed. Each in its own direction, each in its own speed. That's all, and we don't even have to want it. The point comes anyway. And sometimes its absence is more present than its presence. It creates landslides and black holes. The only thing we occasionally sense is that which we simply do not sense with our senses. Bodies without purpose passing by, yet as potent transformations of the self, and with life itself as a reference point. Bodies that pass as normative emancipatory affirmations and a geophilosophy that achieves this ambition by creating new concepts or, rather, *by a pedagogy of the concepts* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 16) and processes and proceduralities as becoming a becomer (Ibid. p. 171). Becoming child and what they can teach us: becoming one that laughs beyond the eternal states and affective transitions of the lived and teaching us to laugh.

### **Laughing, birding, futurisms and constructivisms**

Each concept is a medium for constant iterative production of knowledge. Enjoying not knowing or even knowing about a stop but believing in it and keep going. Knowledge is sometimes the deadly enemy of dormant possibilities. The legacy of Deleuze and Guattari's thinking about the political and an evaluative ontology lies in the idea *of a philosophy which aims at new and creative forms of*

*counter-actualization of the present* (Patton, 2000, p. 137). A philosophy that *counteracts* the present, in other words. Laughing and birding as a counteraction tool to keep going. The concept of politics thus in the sense of life ability and pedagogy as a life science. Turning language into bodies without purpose passing as processes through intense sublimates to reclaim knowledge, autonomy, education, life... Knowledge viewed as mutually reinforcing iterations in inter- intra-actions and mutually beneficial, language seen as acting through operational speculation. Language embedded in life and containing life in its inner self; lived abstractions, lived concepts. I am my own sensory apparatus, knowing the course of events as a thinking sensation in what happens through putting the child back in, or what Massumi (2013) calls a *lived abstraction semblance*. And through this acquiring an understanding of the *primacy of relations* (James, 1996 in Massumi, 2013, p. 34), as an attempt to approach the imperceptible tendencies and potentialities, the inaccessible plasticity, and the intangible aspects of what is constructed, created, formed or futued there and then. Lalala. Hahaha. It seem to me that such lines of transversal laughing are more pertinent than ever for thinking through becomings and subjectivation processes in the milieus of major normalizing and regulating forces of our educational institutions, and also of governance and digital media ecologies, the changing technological spheres engendered by hyper automation, algorithmic governance, and increasingly systemic forms of disempowerment, de facto refuting knowledge, justice, inclusion... instead of producing it. - and if I am no longer a child, it amazes me anyway.

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