

A non-conformism The Force of Art, Disobedience and Learning

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This presentation is set against a background of increasing government prescription and inspection of learning and pedagogic practice in schools in England and elsewhere. It is not an attack on teachers and their practices but a critique of the educational frameworks within which teaching and learning are constituted as such by Government policies. It is also a challenge to the increasing emphasis placed upon STEM subjects and the subsequent marginalisation of the arts in schools. The presentation assumes that a central purpose of education is to enable the ontogenesis of life in its variety and not solely the preparation of learners for economic ambition.

The first part considers some disobedient practices in art

The second part considers pedagogic work and the idea of disobedience

Abstract

In common parlance disobedience refers to resisting or protesting authority but it may also be used as a leitmotif for a non-conformism of speculative and inventive processes of engagement and experimentation, particularly in the face of increasing measurement, audit and standardization. Disobedience can be a motif for creative processes of learning in the sense that events or encounters of learning throw us against assimilated ways of knowing and practice and open up new pathways or potentials. Merleau-Ponty uses the term 'dehiscence' whilst Hannah Arendt the notion of 'natality' to describe such processes. We have always known this but have been encouraged to disabuse ourselves of such sensibilities in recent decades due to the power of the neoliberal economic gestalt and the conformist attitude of 'we know best.' This presentation will consider art practices and learning through the notion of events of disobedience that contribute to building or forming a life: an emergent morphogenesis. It will proceed to inquire into the idea of disobedient pedagogies in contrast to the increasing conformity, regularization and prescription that pervades pedagogic work in many contexts today.

Introduction

In the film, *The Dead Poet's Society*, the main character, the maverick teacher of English Mr Keating, played by Robin Williams, challenges his affluent students to 'seize the day' (*carpe diem*), to embrace the present and *make their lives extraordinary*. His pedagogical aim is to encourage his students to become independent thinkers and not just to accept established ways of thinking and doing. At the beginning of a literature

lesson he instructs his students to take their textbooks and tear out the initial pages of instruction. Bewildered, tentative and bemused they begin to do so and deposit the pages in the litterbin, as though they had committed a minor crime. I think the importance of this scene lies not in the students 'ceasing the day' but in the *event of disobedience* through which they might begin a new pedagogical journey. It is the event of disobedience that seizes them and generates a potential in some, not all, that might open up new vistas, new questions new modes of practice; a new ecology of learning. Seizing the day presupposes a 'subject who seizes' whereas the event of disobedience precipitates a potential for a new subjectivation.

It tends to be the case however that in our daily practices we try to 'seize the moment' according to our pre-established patterns of thought, categories of understanding, assimilated experiences, codes of conduct, fantasies or ideals. These constitute the different gestalts that hold us. Such forms of categorization circumscribe 'the moment'. They constitute hylomorphic forces. I am using the term hylomorphism to refer to the imposition of form upon passive matter. This notion will be developed later in the presentation. However, it is not uncommon to find that in new or unfamiliar situations, when the moment seizes us, sometimes with anxiety, uncertainty, hesitancy or puzzlement (its disobedience), such predetermined frameworks fail to provide a satisfactory resolution to issues with which we are confronted. Take the case of student teachers in their initial and continuing struggles to learn how to teach where their ideals of 'the good teacher' or their ideological 'calling' to be a teacher tend to fall away or are shattered in the heat of experience, or such ideals become obstructions to the very task of learning how to teach. The pedagogical task therefore is not to allow the sedimented hylomorphic power of concepts (abstractions), categories or established practice to totalize our understanding of experience so that these concepts or established practices *become* experience, but to allow the 'wonder' of *experiencing*, or we might say, its disobedience, to challenge our thinking, to generate alternatives and opportunities and create new modes of thought and practice. This open or experimental stance toward experiencing has profound implications for pedagogical work.

Disobedient objects, disobedient pedagogies

A recent exhibition at the V&A (2014) in London entitled *Disobedient Objects* displayed a wide range of artefacts, objects and practices produced by individuals,

collectives, communities, resistance and protest groups. They included trade union banners, peace movement banners, the pan lids of striking farmers in Buenos Aires, umbrellas, barricades, photographs, tents, pamphlets for resistance tactics, lock-on devices, puppets and masks, magazines, posters, placards, badges, Chilean Arpilleras and more. Such disobedient objects have a long social history of protest, resistance and challenge. The exhibition illustrated the material cultures of these objects, their making and the range of object-based tactics and strategies that movements adopt to help them succeed.

The exhibition prompted me to think about disobedient pedagogies, disobedience in learning, disobedient teaching, disobedient museologies, and more generally, the disobedience of questioning, thinking, making.

I felt that the notion of disobedient objects and practices has a kind of resonance with teaching and learning contexts where you frequently come across what might be called disobedient objects and practices in art studios, laboratories or other spaces of learning. Of course these practices and objects are not intentionally disobedient, they are not objects of protest or resistance but as objects or practices they may be resisted or rejected by the grammar or dominant gestalts of established pedagogical criteria or frameworks within which they appear to be disobedient or a-grammatical. Such objects or practices may violate the pedagogical norms, particularly of prescribed pedagogies, that frequently create, in Judith Butler's terms, "the viability of the subject, its ontological and epistemological parameters." I frequently experienced such objects and practices, for example, in the form of children's drawings and other practices that did not fit my pedagogical expectations. We often witness such objects or performances in the world of contemporary art practice, but to repeat, I don't think they are uncommon in school or college art contexts.

The notion of disobedient pedagogies therefore relates to an advocacy for a pedagogical ethos that does not anticipate a prescribed ontological or epistemological subject (teacher or learner) which is likely to invoke an ontological and epistemological invalidation of those practices that do not fit the prescription. A disobedient ethos is not guided by transcendent principles or values but tries to remain open to the immanence of 'that which does not fit' established frameworks of pedagogic work. In England and

elsewheretoday the pedagogical subject of prescribed pedagogies is conceived almost completely in terms of productivity relating to economic ambition and competition: a rampant meritocracy. Within this specific onto-epistemic prescription (gestalt) of learning and teaching art practice fails to register little significance and is therefore viewed as superfluous to requirements, hence the proposal to exclude art in secondary schools from the proposed English Baccalaureate. In this context art education faces a struggle for survival.

We might say that disobedient pedagogies, those that attempt to value modes of thinking and making that lie outside the boundaries of accepted practice, that recognise the constraints that such practices invoke, adopt the Spinozan notion that we don't really know what a body is capable of or what thoughts are capable of being thought coupled with the notion of a pragmatics and ethics of the suddenly possible. Such a pedagogical ethos when confronting disobedient objects, aberrant, simply different or a-grammatical ways of learning/practising may open up new possibilities for practice and new ways of understanding learning, new ways of understanding art. It seems important therefore to ask, *for whom is the practice of learning relevant*, is it the learner, the teacher, the government...these imply different agendas. This negotiation of relevance or the morphology of relevance is important I think in asking how something matters for a learner. Different agendas assume different ontological, epistemological, ethical and political grounds and different kinds of knowledge.

Thus the notion of disobedience is something I have been working on recently in relation to the idea of disobedient pedagogies in my own context of school art education and teacher education in England. Before I talk more about this I will just mention a few more *disobedient practices* in contemporary art, with which you may be familiar. They are relatively old now and it would be good to hear your examples if you accept the spirit of this presentation. The first is the intervention made by Fred Wilson in 1992 at the Maryland Historical Society entitled *Mining the Museum* (1992) in which he subverted the idea of the truth of the museum exhibits by 'questioning' whose truth was being displayed. In the installation entitled *Metalwork 1793-1880*, the usual display of silverware was 'disrupted' by a pair of iron slave shackles. Though this intervention challenged underlying racist attitudes inherent to museum displays and the visibilities that they perpetuate, by juxtaposing objects of wealth and affluence with objects that

made such affluence possible, it also had I think a more affirmational aspect that pointed beyond the displayed objects to a possibility of a world and people yet to come, a possibility still yet to arrive in this world.

A second disobedient practice, (which actually led to some tricky ethical issues) is the work of Andrea Frazer entitled *Museum Highlights* (1989). It involved her posing as a museum tour guide at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 1989 under the pseudonym of Jane Castleton. During the performance Fraser led a tour through the museum describing art works in traditional aesthetic discourses but then also using similar discourses to describe a water fountain or an exit sign or a gallery café.

Both of these disobedient interventions problematized a particular ethos, set of discourses, identities and dispositifs of institutional practices.

A third art practice I want to mention was produced a few years ago by a Master's student for his final exhibition at Goldsmiths University of London. The work consisted of a giant assessment pro-forma measuring about two by one metres. Such pro-formas are commonplace in secondary school art department assessment and evaluation processes but are usually no larger than a single page. This giant exhibit gently mocked the power of audit that is so pervasive in schools in England whereby the device of assessment replaces, almost sublimates for the audit system, the actual living and experiencing learner. In displaying this apparatus of assessment the student was also in a way challenging his university tutors to assess him. Again the primary force of this artwork I think is not its power as a critical object, though this is obviously not to be ignored, but its *provocation for thought*, generating a disobedience towards the power of audit, of assessment and commodification in educational contexts and a pointing towards the possibility of a different kind of pedagogical world, of learners and teachers.

We can read this work in more general terms beyond the domain of art education as pointing towards the inherent technicity of current educational practices in England and elsewhere, the fact that learners and teachers are assumed to be intrinsically calculable and commodifiable as a resource for current and future employability in the world of

economic ambition. The technicity of educational practices therefore produces specific pedagogical relations grounded in measurement and audit. Krzysztof Ziarek writes:

When beings come to be disclosed as “resources,” natural, mineral, human, or otherwise, it means that they are constituted in their very essence in terms of power, that is, as intrinsically disposed toward being manipulated and (re)produced and thus articulated as part of the general flow of power, or, in other words, as pre-programmed to take a form or a value that “makes” them what they are by virtue of “making” them participate in the intensification of power (Ibid, p. 62,).

This power takes the form of the neoliberal semiotic gestalt that structures the world according to a specific epistemological, axiological and ontological framework that allows us to ‘see’ whilst simultaneously occluding anything that does not fit the gestalt.

A final illustration of disobedience manifested in an art practice is the *Rogue Game*, which I often use in these presentations to reflect upon how we might proceed effectively in situations where our established parameters seem to fail us. *Rogue Game* raises for me a number of issues including: the tensionalities between the known and the not-known, identity, the tactics, politics and ethics of becoming-with. The work takes place in a sports centre, outside area or a gallery, where the markings that designate different games such as badminton, basketball or five-a side soccer overlap. Participants for three or four games are asked to play their respective game simultaneously on the overlapping game areas. They have to negotiate playing their game while trying to manage interruptions and interventions from the other games that inevitably invade their territory, this management of disruption constitutes the *Rogue Game*.

Each game abides by its code or rules of practice through which player identities are constituted. Each game is prescribed by a designated playing area that regulates the space of play. In the *Rogue Game* however players also need to respond to the intermittent disruptions from other games. Thus in the *Rogue Game* players’ identities are less well defined, there are no rules or conventions. Players’ identities become reconfigured according to the new relationalities and tactics that emerge as the *Rogue Game* develops. The *Rogue Game* forces constant reterritoralisings of practice; it involves collisions and negotiations of space and rules, whereby the games interweave. It is as though new rhythms of play emerge and re-configure and this makes it possible to view the playing area according to new horizons of playing together. As Can Altay (2015, p.208,) states, “*Rogue Game* posits the struggle of a ‘social body’ within a set of boundaries that are being challenged.”

To be a player in the milieu of the *Rogue Game* is to learn how to become in a rather uncertain world of becoming, where individual (psychic) and social becomings are entwined, where the relations between 'I' and 'we' are precarious and constantly being renegotiated but also where the horizons of cohabitation are expanded.

The pedagogical aspect of *Rogue Game* concerning its dissensual dynamics (a term from Jacques Ranciere referring to a rupturing of frameworks of representation), whereby heterogeneous games collide in the same space, encourages us to reflect upon the architectures, divisions, regulations and boundaries of pedagogical spaces, to consider the 'rules and relations of existence' that regulate and legitimate particular epistemologies and ontologies. In education the 'games' or *dispositifs*, of subject discourses and practices and their specific organisation and regulation of knowledge can be contrasted with the collection of heterogeneous ontological worlds of students and their respective ways of thinking, feeling, seeing and doing. The homogeneous organisation of knowledge and curriculum content can be contrasted with the heterogeneity of the living realities of students.

What interests me in the artifice of *Rogue Game* are the evolving issues of relevance and obligation for each player as a player within an evolving milieu, in which the idea of practice or of a player changes. We might draw some parallels here with the dynamics of classroom or studio practice and how what it means to be a teacher or a learner changes as issues of relevance and obligation change. I am thinking of the relevance a learning encounter has for a learner and how teachers inherit this relevance, how they are obligated to it. I will come to these points shortly.

The art project *Rogue Game* is concerned essentially with disobedience, that which is unexpected, that which runs counter to our established framings of experience but also that which may open up a potential for new modes of practice and social engagement. New modes that will develop their own forms of obedience which in turn become challenged.

Having discussed art's force of disobedience, its provocations of feeling and thought, I want to reflect on this notion in the context of pedagogic work in art education where we often experience processes of learning that lie beyond established grammars or

logics of practice and comprehension. In this context we might view the disobedience of the force of art as leading to a re-creation or transformation of the learner. An important contention is that the force of disobedience (~~or a grammaticality~~) can be viewed as central to the ethology and ecology of events of learning. And such events that might lead to the building of a life may not 'respond' to established parameters because they will 'miss' the event.

We can witness the force of consensus and the police in the increasing control and regulation of education by government in many countries and I don't want to go into more details of this here but the effects and affects of such control are profound in determining our understanding of education and its purpose. Furthermore, we can also witness the force of control and transcendence in the different framings of art education as these have developed over decades when new forms of practice have been developed which have expanded our ideas and practices of art education establishing discourses, parameters, controls and criteria through which we conceive and thereby understand art education. I am using the term transcendence to refer to those forms (concepts, practices, rules etc.) that act as arbiters of value.

In contrast to the problematic of transcendence and prescription can we view the practice of pedagogic work as a process of adventure, a process of experimentation *without criteria*, that attempts to draw alongside the immanence and difference of ways in which learners learn, some of which often lie beyond or are disobedient to our established parameters of pedagogic and artistic practice. It seems to me that the challenge when facing such uncertainty is to view it as an opportunity to experiment, to try to develop what I have called *pedagogies against the state*, that is to say the state of being, the state of knowledge and the state of political control. Another way of conceiving this is to think of such pedagogies as disobedient pedagogies. Disobedient not in the sense of being awkward or rebellious simply for the sake of it but in terms of a non-compliance and speculative process that opens up new ways of thinking and acting. In this context new ways of understanding what learning is or what art practice is. (*This point raises the big question: how can we subvert the power of compliance to prescribed pedagogical practices in order to implement pedagogical practices that are disobedient? Perhaps we might do this with what Alfred North Whitehead called the*

speculative practice of propositions that provoke thought, entice thought into new ways of thinking, valuing and acting)

Aside

Before I continue the notion of ‘without criteria’ I have just used above requires some elaboration. It is a term that resonates with the phrase “I prefer not to” offered by the scrivener Bartleby, in Herman Melville’s short story who refuses to carry out the tasks his employer demands and continues to ‘refuse’ until in the end he dies of starvation. The attitude of Bartleby does not display laziness or opposition but can be viewed as an active capacity for ‘not acting’ (rather than being unable), not judging. According to Tyson Lewis (2012) Agamben calls Bartleby’s refusal ‘impotentiality’, denoting a state of not acting that enables proficiency through sustained reflection or imagination. It denotes a flow of becoming that opens up potential to be other or to act or think otherwise. So Bartleby’s refusal to act preserves a potentiality, a space in which practice can be conceived beyond the rules and grammars of established practices, a space in which practice can be re-imagined and reconstructed. The act of ‘preferring not to’ can be conceived as a state of creative suspension, of rules, formulas, prescriptions; it has the potential to invoke transformation in the immanence of the present. Bartleby does not destroy rules and regulations but suspends their efficacy in a state of creative suspension that enables thinking and acting otherwise, beyond established orders of thinking and making, where the slightest difference can make a difference. This is the sentiment behind my notions of ‘without criteria’ and disobedience.

Thinking a little more about the ontological state of being suddenly confronted with a learner’s practice that does not fit and the need for a disobedient ethos in pedagogic work in order to try to remain open to the possibilities or potential of the learner’s practice. We might view such confrontations as effecting in the teacher a hesitancy on the edge of a developing present, a creative moment on the edge of something-to-come, that precipitates possibilities for inventive action. The ancient Greeks used the term ‘kairos’ to denote such moments of becoming, moments on the edge of time that precipitate a force of invention, a creative opening towards an unforeseen future. We might also think more generally of the uncertainties and restlessness, the frustrations and delights, the disobedience of events of learning that sometimes, not always, produce leaps beyond already existing patterns and values of being. It would seem then that from

both a teacher's or a learner's perspective a disobedient ethos towards practice involves a pragmatics and an ethics of the suddenly possible.

Tim Ingold (2015, p. 97) seems to be describing this orientation of *kairos* when he writes about the artist, and in our case the teacher, "standing forever at that sliding moment," when the world, "is on the point of revealing itself, such that the perpetual birth (of the artist's or teacher's awareness) is, concurrently, the perpetual birth of the world (my bracket)." We experience, we learn, *with* the world, which might be a pedagogical relation, a walk in a landscape, a storm, a social occasion, and so on. We can think about such moments of *Kairos* and their potential in each learner's processes of learning and how these might be supported.

But what are the implications of this notion of disobedience, a notion common to the actual and virtual force of art but which may be quite strange to pedagogic work and raise ethical, political and aesthetic issues? I want to deal with this question through exploring the notions of **ecology**, **hylomorphism**, **relevance** and **obligation**. Events of disobedience as discussed above do not presuppose a prior subject; a pedagogical subject such as a teacher or a learner, or a prior set of rules or codes of practice but, on the contrary, such events may actually precipitate subjects and practices. Thus events of disobedience do not presuppose an established ethics (axiology) or a set moral code, or a left-right politics (or a pedagogy) but rather these domains of practice emerge from the force of such events, they *become as practice as such* through such events.

We know that hylomorphism in simple terms refers to the imposition of form upon passive matter; so, for example, the artist imposes an expressive form upon paint, clay, stone or wood. But hylomorphism is pervasive and persistent in many social practices. For example, when we impose a theory, a theoretical framework, a concept or abstraction upon human behaviour or human development so that the latter is understood in terms of the former. When we set out a pedagogical framework that stipulates particular methodologies for teaching and learning and which, by implication, produces particular expectations regarding learning practices, we are subjecting teaching and learning to a hylomorphic force within which particular forms of teaching and learning are recognised. We can witness such hylomorphic force in the forms of government educational policies through to curriculum content and guidelines and

teaching methodologies and assessment practices. We might want to contrast the *closure* of hylomorphic forces to the *disclosure* of events of learning that arise from the disruptions of encounters that sometimes rupture or stand outside of the hylomorphic framings of established practices.

In the worlds of human co-existence with other humans and non-human entities events in the form of *encounters* may rupture established frameworks and ways of functioning and as a consequence create new or modified ways of thinking, seeing, acting and feeling. It is when we are confronted with the event of an encounter, its disobedience, that we may be forced to reconstruct the way we think or act. Deleuze (2004, p. 139,) states “[s]omething in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*.” In an encounter with a challenging artwork or practice established ways of thinking *about* art, are often redundant for they negate the idea of encounter through a cloak of representation, rather the encounter challenges thought to think. That is to say it disrupts any previous ways of thinking and speaking *about* art so that we are placed in a position where, referencing Deleuze, we have to think without image, that is to say beyond the force of hylomorphism. Such encounters may lead to experimentation and the invention of propositions or questions that transform habits of functioning and thus make available new modes of becoming. In a strange way such art objects or practices *object*, they constitute a recalcitrant or disobedient force that may precipitate the invention of questions or propositions that in turn may generate new and unpredictable ways of thinking, seeing and acting. Thus to avoid the force and closure of hylomorphism we have to try to proceed *without criteria*, without established conceptions or the closure of what is possible or expected. These established framings constitute a *paradigm of relevance* closed in upon its own boundaries. But this closure is what the recalcitrance or disobedience of a learning event seeks to resist. A pedagogical imperative therefore would be not to orient the pedagogical inquiry towards a pre-existing framing of practice but towards the question put by Alfred North Whitehead, “*how is it here that something matters?*” thus exposing pedagogical inquiry to an unknown of learning and perhaps the potential expansion of what learning can become. *This unknown may constitute an escape from the grip of established epistemological and ontological framings that make what might be possible inconceivable.*

In contrast to those hylomorphic processes and forms that capture, regulate and inform thought and practice such as pedagogic work, we require modes of questioning or speculation that recognize the constraints of such capture but then proceed to try to be open to ‘other’ modes of thinking and making. In opposing the force of hylomorphism where established form is imposed upon passive matter, we might focus, as did Whitehead, on the developing relations of how something matters for a learner in a particular learning encounter.

To work with how a learning encounter matters for a learner is therefore to engage in a pedagogical adventure, that does not adopt a pre-figured scenario set by a teacher of a problem and its respective solutions, but to view the relevance of an encounter for a learner as “inhering in the situated specificity” of his or her becoming, which is really a becoming-with the encounter and a correspondence between human and non-human components. This becoming-with constitutes a modulation (a morphogenesis) between forces, not a hylomorphism.

In considering ‘how is it here that something matters’, an important pedagogical question therefore is how is the *ecology* of this ‘here’ constituted for a learner and how do things matter ‘there’? Following this the question arises another, ‘how does this mattering for a learner become inherited by a teacher?’, which in turn raises ethical, political and aesthetic challenges towards providing effective responses to each learner’s mode of learning and their specific modes of mattering in relation to a learning encounter. In trying to draw alongside to ~~correspond or~~ negotiate how a learning encounter matters for a learner (and here we need to speak of an ecology of mattering) pedagogic work seems to require an *invention* itself, that is to say, such work constitutes an inquiry that demands an invention of forms of negotiation towards how things matter for a learner. The relation between a pedagogic object (a learner’s mode of practice, way of thinking, acting,) and the invention of propositions and questions towards such objects has to be considered carefully; “have a care....”

Trying to ascertain how this ‘here’ is constituted for a learner places obligations upon a teacher, but is it an obligation to *represent* or *interpret* and if so against what criteria? Or is it an obligation to *experiment* through an ecology of questions?(I am currently working on this issue with the idea of speculative pedagogies)

We usually think of a learning encounter as a series of inter-actions between a learner and the particular focus of learning. In art practice, for example, we tend to think in terms of a separation between a learner, the subject matter of practice and the means or materials for accomplishing this practice. (~~usually grounded on a deeper separation of mind and body, knower and known~~). This practice then tends to be viewed or made sense of through established conventions and criteria, what we might call transcendent hylomorphic framings that determine practice and the apparatus of assessment.

However if we adopt what we might call a pedagogy of immanence that considers the complex relationalities of learning, a learning encounter consists of on-going material relations of being affected and affecting in a situated specificity that involves human and non-human modes of being. Where matter and meaning coalesce. This is a process of modulation (morphogenesis) between forces, human and non-human, which is prior to any differentiation between learner, materials, practice, as found in assessment practices where the hylomorphic construction of ability takes place.

Taking on board the notions of immanence and modulation humans are not conceived as independent entities with inherent properties but relational processes that enable particular material (re)configurations of the world whose boundaries, properties and meaning are constantly shifting (stabilising and destabilising) thus, according to Karen Barad, enabling ‘specific material changes in what it means to be human (2003: 820),’ from species-being to species becoming.

A material practice of learning through making a drawing enables particular material (re)configurations of the world whose boundaries, properties and meaning are constantly shifting (stabilising and destabilising) thus enabling specific material changes in what it means to make a drawing. The process of mattering through making a drawing is a continual iterative performance. Here agency is not something which is attributable to subjects or objects but to a series of on-going relational processes that (re)configure boundaries and meaning, which I have called events of disobedience, that in turn can, “contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2003:827) in particular contexts of practice.

Ritornello

We can think of this reworking of how things matter and thus of the processes of ontogenesis and morphogenesis of learning through the idea of the *ritornello*. A ritornello as discussed by Guattari and Deleuze refers to a basic but pervasive process through which different aspects of being and becoming are structured. They give the famous example of the ritornello of a child humming in the dark to provide a sense of security. So a ritornello can be conceived as a spatio-temporal process, the creation of a territory or a zone of security and consistency through repetition, but, crucially, repetition as differentiation. Our lives are constituted through a multiplicity of ritornellos that create such zones in the different, heterogeneous milieus we inhabit. A ritornello is a little territorialisation composed of specific rhythms and repetitions according to which we configure ourselves; it affords a local composition of becoming with a world. Such compositions are constituted by a series of ritornellos and their different rhythms and repetitions that in turn constitute how things matter. Each ritornello or mode of expression defines its own territorial motifs or, put in other terms, it defines its own ways of mattering in the varied contexts of living. As Kleinherenbrink (p. 216,) states, “Ritornellos are signatures in the world and the expression of such signatures entails the formation of a domain.” Territories are marked by modes of expressivity, ritornellos, that are not planned in advance but emerge in the flux of practice. This aspect of the ritornello is important, it is not produced by a prior subject (a learner for example) but is a consequence of a series of relations from which a ‘subject’ (a learner) emerges.

We can witness the ritornello as a territorialising and deterritorialising force occurring in very young children’s drawings forming ecologies and ethologies of practice. These early experiments can be viewed as inventing gestural, cognitive, affective, noticing and consolidating rhythms constituting a drawing assemblage, a practice of inhabiting a world. The practice does not presuppose a world, which it then proceeds to represent, rather it creates or territorialises a world from surrounding milieus. A drawing ritornello therefore constitutes an event of territorialising in a milieu through a mixture of physical, cognitive and affective rhythms. As Deligny stated a “child’s drawing is not a work of art but a call for new circumstances,” indicating the immanent spatio-temporal force of such processes.

IMAGE

The drawing you see is clearly not a representation of a prior experience to inform a viewer but an experimentation, an invention emerging from an encounter with a material world. It is not an imposition of form on matter to reproduce reality, but the creation of an existential territory through a configuration of drawing ritornellos that repeat and differentiate. In the experimenting process of drawing we might view the ritornello as constituted by rhythms of marks, gestures, movements, relations, sounds, touch, that emerge in the uncertainty, the unknowingness, of experimenting and facilitating a sense of transient stability, a territorialising, but also an opening to future potentialities: an emergent morphogenesis. As the ritornello differentiates it changes relations and forms new existential territories that in turn remain open to the uncertainties of change. (We might think of the ritornellos of Pollock's lines and gestures; or the relational dramas of *Rogue Game*;))

Each relational spatio-temporality, each practice or process of learning, can be viewed as a series of ritornellos and their respective local rhythms. Local compositions of practice; local assemblages that constitute an ecology of practice; where the productions of practice (marks, gestures, etc.) form a cohabiting, a collaboration, a consistency, in the middle of experimenting; a process of individuation in a milieu where both change. It is not a process that is instigated by an individual self but one that functions on a number of relational levels in order to weave an ecology, to compose a dwelling.

The ritornello is a valuable device for thinking about the forming of ecologies of practice concerning the immanent formation of local rhythms and territorialisings in practice.

Ritornellos therefore are not only concerned with the actual, they are also concerned with virtual potential; actual and virtual ecologies of practice. This has direct implications for educational practices if we are to consider the immanent functioning of local spatio-temporalities of learning and their facilitating ritornellos.

These local forces and rhythms may sometimes appear random or incoherent when viewed from the lens of established practices and modes of functioning that hegemonise teaching and learning. But it is the disobedience of such ritornellos, their local

territorialising forces that constitute a potential for new or modified modes of practice, ways of seeing, feeling, making or thinking.

Can pedagogical work therefore be sensitive to the creative or inventive potential and germinal force ~~of the a grammaticality or disobedience~~ of local ritornellos? Those germs of practice which often slip under the pedagogical radar or are imperceptible to established forms and refrains of practice. Can the teacher become a ‘foreigner within his or her own language’ (Deleuze 1995, p.41 Negotiations)?

Such questions have ethical, political and aesthetic implications for *the creative instance* and how we approach this in each learner’s situated specificity of learning.

It is the creative instance, the movement of processual creation, its ritornellos of practice that may engender unforeseen or as yet unthinkable modes of becoming.

The force of art, the force of disobedience generates an ethico-aesthetic and political potential that may explode the grip of transcendent capture by established codes or practices that impose an onto-epistemic invalidation on aberrant or a-grammatical forms of practice and ways of knowing. This was illustrated in the *Rogue Game* project but it can also, with care, be witnessed in the art practices of children and older students that may produce what Guattari terms *mutant coordinates* or local ritornellos that may lead to new existential territories. The ontological difficulty of the disobedience of these forms speaks to modes of life yet to emerge.

Badiou (2005) opens up two relations of desire to established codes and practice; a desire that is controlled by tradition so that the latter delimits desire to what we might call normal desires. Then there is a desire to strike out beyond established parameters of knowledge, of collectivities, of practice; a desire for that which does not yet exist, a desire for invention beyond the capture of conservative forces. He argues that a crucial task is to give this force of invention a symbolic form (symbol is a term originally concerned with the practice of bringing together) or in his words, to seek for a new fiction beyond the capture of tradition, predatory capitalism or reactionary appeals to old hierarchies and identities. Perhaps a crucial challenge for art educators, indeed for all educators today, is to try to develop such a new fiction for pedagogic work?

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