

Pedagogy Without Bodies

by

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Abstract

Educational theory today seems to be premised on a distributive thought; *either* on students' bodies perceived as unified entities, as self-maintaining and ongoing forms that can be recognized and represented, *or* as with some post-humanist and new materialist accounts, as just this one entity, emerging and interconnected among a myriad of others in a world, understood as one organic and reproductive whole. This raises certain problems and certain questions, the solution of which presents us with specific tasks of thinking about curriculum planning, as well as ethics and politics in education. What is pursued is either a universal subject and his human right to be educated and skilled well enough to live well and to be a good and productive citizen (thus there ought to be generalizable and standardized elements of curriculum); or, there is a notion that we can only know subjects in their individuated and socially determined expressions, and thus curriculum is integrated as much as possible (bestowing individual differences in ability and access according to diverse social contexts), as is evident by the upsurge in individuated and differentiated learning plans tailored to each individual student. I argue that a different ethics is needed for the future of education and pedagogy if we are to think multiplicities beyond the world of man. By understanding life as virtual, it is possible to conceive of a *pedagogy without bodies*. Pedagogy without bodies as a *concept* (in Deleuze and Guattari's sense) would be an *orientation for educational thought* where we would no longer begin with the image of a living, active, corporeal body, but would, following Claire Colebrook (2011), consider intensive forces that unfold life differently from that of the productive human. *Pedagogy without bodies* as a concept alludes to the incorporeal *and* material composition of sense which, I believe, is an important orientation for thinking philosophy of education, and curriculum in terms of dispersed, intensive and inhuman forces and processes intricate to any singular pedagogical event and its readability.

Keywords: vitalism; reading; irony; philosophy of education; pedagogy without bodies

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

At its best, this thesis is a thought experiment. At its worst, a work to-be-made gone bad. Either way, it attests to a journey of thought passing along the lines not of a map, but of a *witch's flight*, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it, zigzagging. The writing itself indicates that this journey was not an attempt at a linear progression, nor a desire to reveal some hidden truth about reading and pedagogy. What follows is also not an effort at constructing a coherent whole which would give readers a sense of comfort at knowing that perhaps there is something to understand completely or master and that they can follow in a sequential, logical way the words they encounter on these pages.

Abrupt passages and disjointed narrative, these pages demonstrate, for a lack of a better word, that the ideas as well as the writing at some point started to take over independently of my intentions in a manner that felt more like weeds growing in all directions, smothering my own voice. Perhaps this is because English is my second language and I feel somewhat detached from it. At times the sense of detachment allowed me to sit and observe how the ideas came together in their own rhythm, bobbin-lacing the different concepts of the philosophers, hoping that the patterning of these concepts would yield to the readers a sense of how I encountered texts without having to offer an explanation. Inviting readers to lace their own sense of the work; to pin down patterns and hold them in place just until the next concept sets in motion a different pattern; to wait for the sense to peak here and there; or to experience some of the longer theoretical passages as pure nonsense.

As a student of linguistics in my native tongue, and later of feminist theory, I have always been drawn to the philosophical themes of detachment, translation and indifference. The three are sort of an undercurrent that carries the central theme of this thesis, namely a

pedagogy of reading. They are not articulated in these pages, neither as concepts nor as philosophical propositions. Rather, they function as a silent limit – not alluding to a beyond, but to points of inflection where sense and nonsense fold on the line.

When I first came upon the concept of ironic consciousness as developed by Kieran Egan for the purposes of conceiving a new educational paradigm, I knew irony was something I wanted to explore deeper. Irony carries a lot of baggage in the realm of academia. As a pursuit or consciousness reserved only for the keenest minds of the Western academic tradition (most of them white men) it has come to symbolize elitism and exclusion. It has also been employed as a way to challenge and subvert the Western grand-narrative tradition that seeks timeless, consistent, and systemic transcendental truth. Gilles Deleuze, for example, traces superior irony in humour, intensity and force. This irony forges forth a point of view of descent, rather than elevation, where the subject continually becomes.

After reading a number of volumes on irony in literary studies, I stumbled upon the work of Claire Colebrook. Her two books *Irony* and *Irony in Work of Philosophy* have not only profoundly changed the way I approach concepts and ask questions, but raised so many new questions that I felt propelled to read much more of what she has written. Having said that, I believe that understanding her work on irony gave me a specific direction as to how to read her work on questions such as sexual indifference and the Anthropocene. So when I first read her speculative question regarding reading – “How would we read if we imagine the text not as that which is given to us, opening our world, but as bearing its own world, as though it were left behind, after humans, in our wake and no longer signed by us?” (Colebrook, 2014b, p. 153) – I was utterly intrigued. I felt as though such a speculative thought would greatly benefit literacy studies in education and decided to embark on a thought experiment where I would not seek the answer to the question but follow my own path in trying to understand how such a question came about and what some of its implications might be in terms of thinking of a pedagogy of reading.

In order to create a new sense of pedagogy of reading as intensive, material, noncorporeal and constructivist, this thesis seeks to engage with a number of philosophers little known

in the field of educational theory of reading: Alfred N. Whitehead, Isabelle Stengers, Étienne Souriau, Gilles Deleuze and Claire Colebrook. In addition, as I make clear in chapter four, although intensive modes of reading address reading differently as it pertains to different modes of thought (scientific, artistic, philosophic, literary), this dissertation deals predominantly with reading literary and philosophic texts. That being said, it does open a sense of reading as eventful beyond text as a strictly printed medium.

While the thesis is paper-based, with each chapter written to stand alone, the theme of *reading* forms a strong conceptual thread woven through my various engagements with the previously mentioned authors. Although the chapters can be read alone, I would argue that they are much more fruitfully read side by side, as it is only (even in my own experience) upon reading the thesis as a whole that each of the single chapters can be understood in a new way, or can be reread in a completely new manner. As such, the thesis is an example of what I propose is a constructivist pedagogy of reading, where each element, concept or idea in a given theoretical text can be examined in its own right, with its own diverging force that can be understood differently with each new encounter, concept or composition producing different wholes. The word constructivist is here chosen to designate a pedagogy of reading that evokes monumental, geological and architectural images of reading which goes in the opposite direction from social constructivism where meaning making is assumed to be relativistic and belonging to individual point of view¹. The building blocks in constructivist pedagogy of reading are problems and riddles, which are open in nature, and not the already predetermined terms or relations of a solution (such as author, subject-object, text-meaning), where the solution is intensive only if it can potentially modulate the force of the problems. These building blocks erect the construction, but the construction (as a building) itself is the virtual field of possibility from which the actual reading to-be-made is created.

¹ The word constructivist as used in this dissertation does not relate to constructivist ‘theories’ of teaching or learning that are often associated with progressive or reform based education, in which students are said to learn by building their own ideas rather than receiving them directly from teachers.

Whitehead, Souriau, Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari are here encountered as events in a linear trajectory of a certain style of thought, but only if this line is thought of as multiple and synchronic, where divergent series, impossible worlds, contrasts and disjunctions are all being read side by side. I engage with these thinkers in search of how the above-mentioned problem or question of reading is formulated by Colebrook. I do so through the concepts of irony and passive vitalism as framed by Colebrook in conjunction with the ideas of “constructivism” and “the work of the Sphinx” as framed by Isabelle Stengers (2008) and Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour (2015). To disengage with the more domesticated conceptualizations of reading in educational theory, which have for the most part been informed by the psychological, linguistic and scientific research methodology, I turn to philosophy and the “pedagogy of concepts” as formulated by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*

Following developments in social theory, a relatively small number of literacy researchers are now challenging these psychological and linguistic research methodologies and have recently encompassed a ‘turn’ towards posthumanism (most notably to affect, art, ecology and materiality), for example, Masny, D., & Cole, D. R. (2012), Muecke, S. (2004), Kuby & Rucker, (2016), Toohey et al., (2015), to name a few. This theoretical and political movement seeks to de-centre ‘the human’ as a locus of agency and knowledge by addressing the ways human life is imbricated and interconnected with non-human actors (e.g. Braidotti, 2013). If it can be said, that the discursive and epistemological tendencies of posthumanist orientation of thought are acts of resistance and overcoming the normative figures of human agency and representation, such acts inadvertently produce new but no less normative representations of living otherwise. Following Colebrook’s reading of Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is philosophy?*, such tendencies presume a body to be an assemblage of historical and cultural inscriptions, habits and practices, subsumed in an image of an agent with a desire and will for self-furthering. Active vitalism, according to Colebrook, imagines life as continually auto-affective, reproductive and sustaining of human modes of existence, recognition and representation.

For example, in the forward to *Ecological Literacy: Educating our children for a Sustainable World* (2005), David W. Orr states that, “All education is environmental education” in as much as “by what is included or excluded we teach the young that they are part or apart from the natural world.” He goes on to say that every philosopher from Plato to Dewey “had to do with the timeless question of how we are to live. And in our time the great question is how we will live in light of the ecological fact that we are bound together in the community of life, one and indivisible” (in Capra, 2005, p. xi). There are a number of pertinent assumptions made in this passage, but most notably the unquestioned right to the sustainability of human life and the environment imagined as one and indivisible web of life. The unquestioned image of life in such accounts is bound to a certain topological notion of part to part relationality, where bodies do not relate and touch as parts to parts, instead what is imagined is space as a web – an interconnected whole imaged as a multiplicity of intra-related parts and time as chronology.

By contrast, Whitehead (with his notion of mereotopological or atomic time), Souriau (with his notion of singular modes of existences each issuing their own time and space) and Deleuze (with his notion of virtual time) all stress the importance of time as synchronicity and of the necessary distance or pure alterity as the condition for any notion of literal proximity. For any self-touching or auto-affectivity to occur, there must first be distance (Derrida, Levinas, and Irigaray each in their own way address this condition of sheer alterity in their phenomenological accounts of touch and relationality as the necessary condition for proximity and difference). It is not the purpose of this dissertation to further the discussion regarding phenomenology and its commitment or non-commitment to theories of presence. What I wish to stress here (following Whitehead, Souriau, Deleuze and Colebrook) is that the necessary vitality and the unrepeatability or *thisness* of events also “confronts contamination, non-relation, chaos, death, indifference, malevolence and stupidity that thought can never incorporate or master as its own – cannot be generated through thought itself” (Colebrook, 2011, p.7). This would be passive vitalism for its commitment to intuiting both the “emergence of a milieu in which thought takes place as opposed to tracing systems and truth claims back to the conditions of emergence” *while at*

the same time “confronting the thousand other plateaus that parse life through a different logic” (Ibid.).

For example, the posthumanist claims of overcoming Cartesian cogito do not offer a different logic. The self presence or auto-affectivity of cogito is not so much overcome, for the idea of the proximity through which man appears to himself is today fashioned as a power that is attributed to all life Colebrook (2011). Following Colebrook, it is possible to say that rather than rejecting cogito as a self-touching and autonomous power or extending this power to all life, what might be explored is a different logic, one that does not unthinkingly privilege proximity and auto-affectivity as the *prima facie* value of relationality, but looks for other styles of relating (viral or parasitic for example). Here the question is not that of immanence of life in all events, but of how this vital immanence is fashioned in thought turned toward bodies and affects as the condition of relationality and appearing. The move toward the autopoietic web of life of which man is one part, is not a move into a different direction, for the principal value of privileging auto-affectivity and proximity over sheer alterity and distance remains unquestioned (Ibid.). As I will try to explore in the conclusion, the Anthropocene thesis (a new geological epoch characterised by the impact of human activity as visible in earth’s geological strata) anticipating human extinction might force educational-as-environmental theory to take seriously the fact that the question will no longer be of *living on* but of *living otherwise*. What might be needed in educational theory is not so much the questioning of human exceptionalism and malevolence of cogito but, following Colebrook, the intensification of thought – of its potential to differentiate more – as opposed to (following Bergson) maintaining its appetite to condense the infinite variation of life to the manageable human mode of existence. For example, we can read printed texts for the meaning they communicate in order that the sense we make of them is brought back to and for the self. But we could also, following Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of ‘higher deterritorialization’, read the intensities of ink, the spatial codes of printed letters, the sound vibration of paper or intensity of digital light. It is when these would be “distanced to the maximum degree from the human sensory

motor apparatuses that something like life itself (beyond the organism) can be released” (Colebrook, 2011, p. 14).

That is, when the eye receives the sensory input, it reduces the pure potentialities of “to see” by censoring and editing in order to manage the sensory input. In the process, however, it “decides in advance how the non-perceived will be fabricated” and narrated. That is, “the reading eye as an organ actualizes pure potentialities of what it is ‘to see’ and ‘to read’ but can only proceed efficiently with a high degree of *not* seeing” (Ibid.). As Colebrook points out, this makes sense as the organism is oriented towards efficiency and self-furthering. In literacy education, we focus on the functional aspect of the ‘reading eye,’ that is on its ordering, actualizing and harmonizing tendencies. But that does not mean that this is the only logic or sense of how pedagogical practice needs to proceed. Taking the Anthropocene thesis seriously we might have to question the desire to live on harmoniously in one grand web of life, and instead create concepts and new problems that can foster “pure potentialities released from function” (Ibid.). To become hyper-human.

Following Colebrook’s reading of Deleuze, it might be possible to suggest that if the “logic of self-efficient and system-practice-oriented human were to be radically recalibrated in the future” of *living otherwise*, what might be needed is an education that fosters “machinic autonomy released from function – oriented towards disequilibrium, splitting, unbinding and dissolution” (Ibid.). That is, in pedagogical theory and practice oriented toward the uncertain or not-yet-imagined modes of future human existence, emphasis might need to be moved away from determining in advance how the course of the curriculum should run. The infinite variation of potentialities does not necessary have to be reduced to the already established and predetermined qualities and quantities actualized in the myriad of every day pedagogical encounters and events. However, as Colebrook warns, this might require “something like a violent threshold to be crossed” (Ibid., p.14). In educational theory we see this through images of what a good education ought to be – the temporal self-actualization of a child’s proper way of being in the world. Affect and touch (as self-maintenance and autopoiesis) are privileged over concepts and systems with no reference to a properly organic life (Colebrook 2011, p.108). However, the nature of this ‘turn’

toward life as auto-poetic remains contested (van Heur et al., 2012). Its central views can be found in a range of theoretical and methodological foci: ontology (Latour, 2007; Harman, 2011; Kirby V. 2011), materiality (Coole & Frost, 2010; Bennet, 2010), and affect (Massumi, 1996; Sedwick, 2003), to name a few.

In educational theory broadly speaking, a turn to posthumanism (affect, art, matter and materiality) has most notably (but not exclusively) been influenced by the work of Deleuze and Guattari, for example Snaza, N., & Weaver, J. (Eds.) (2014), Stables, A., & Semetsky, I. (2014), Semetsky & Masny, (2013), Semetsky & Stables, (2014), Jagodzinski & Wallin (2013), Wallin (2010), Taguchi (2009 and 2016), Taylor & Hughes (2016), and de Freitas and Sinclair (2014).

It might be said that the ‘turn’ has not been so much to a singular posthumanism, but rather, to multiple posthumanisms – each with its own configurations of and assumptions about phenomena, representation, matter, space, time, the agency of materials, and the location of life. Notably, in adopting one framework over another, literacy researchers draw on the different orientations of posthumanist theories and methods. It is one purpose of this thesis to explore the alternative modes of existence, such as virtual, possible and inhuman, for example, that are being conscripted within the active vitalist strand of the posthumanist turn to matter, bodies, affect and the nonhuman.

In terms of the contemporary search for ‘new’ ways of doing pedagogy, such as posthumanist and materialist turns in education to affect (to *feeling* rather than pure event) and embodiment, what seems often to be taken as the unproblematic *condition* is a mandate to posit some “life beyond humans”. If we are to find new directions for thought in education, literacy education included, then what might need to be contested is a bifurcation of thought which is maintained in those strands of posthumanist theory where what is affirmed is the vitalist image of the active, continuous and harmonious mode of becoming (as opposed to for example passive, inert, and evil modes of becoming) of intra-connectivity of human and inhuman networks of relationality.

Following Colebrook, I suggest that it is possible to frame the *problem* in the history of educational philosophy of what is it in the nature of a child that ought to be taken as the grounding for pedagogical intervention as that of *active vitalism*. The consequence of discerning this philosophical question as a *problem* of vitalism is that it obliges us to think what images of life, thought and perception are presupposed as the ground from which the questions of what it means to educate well (a speaking, reading, contemplating, communal and creatively self-maintaining subject) in order to live well begin.

To fully appreciate the importance of taking the speculative thought of vitalism in education seriously, it is pertinent to briefly sketch the overall privileging of scientific over philosophical methodologies of research in education. In addition, in what follows I attempt to frame historically the dominant notions of reading in education as communicative and cognitive activity.

1.1. Pedagogy in bounds

It is possible to argue that ever since the scientific methodology of natural sciences became utilized in social sciences as the single way of researching and legitimizing findings with regard to knowledge, reality and rationality, theoretical and practical questions were overtaken by strategic and technical issues. Objectivist notions of nature and culture patterned the normative behaviour of humans and left little room for chaos and speculation. In education, scientifically proven paradigmatic ideas provided comfort in the belief in unified, standardized and universal logico-mathematical reason. Since this belief became a part of a bigger progressivist paradigm, alternative modes of thought (aesthetic, imaginative, philosophical) seem not to have become a significant part of the field of educational research.

The notion that children learn in stages and move from concrete to abstract thinking seems to persist within the field of education with an almost sinister banality. The idea that children lack the ability to use abstract and logical reasoning is one that may hinder our

attempts to engage with the ways in which students actually learn. This discussion about what children can learn, how they need to learn, and at what age this can be done, must be seen within the context of larger philosophical debates, which have attempted to define the exact nature of the subject/object relationship. At the core of this debate are a number of assumptions about: the nature of human progress (evolution, recapitulation); human psychological and cognitive development; the nature of knowledge (empirical, transcendental, constructivist); and the way we come to acquire it (via scientific method or logical speculation). These assumptions are an appropriate platform from which to begin this brief analysis of the empirical foundations of educational thought.

The belief that thinking necessarily moves from concrete to abstract modes of reasoning is the result of, among other things, the generally assumed cultural notion that things, humans, and events move in linear progressions that can be mapped, and therefore described, understood and eventually controlled and managed.² I will draw on Bernstein's *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* to show how the battlefield over the conception of thinking as either objective or relative informs or reinforces widely accepted assumptions in education about concepts such as concrete vs. abstract thinking. This directly pertains to how we approach literacy and reading practices.

In his *Getting it wrong from the Beginning* (Egan, 2004), and in *The Educated Mind* (Egan, 1998) Egan traces the logic of educational ideas through history and exposes incongruences and incompatibilities in the assumptions that contemporary educators make. At the heart of this ironic commentary is a critique of how educators deal with the nature of a child's cognitive and psychological development. During the reading of these books, one is not only made aware that there can be more than a single account and explanation of progress,

² In his *Lines: A brief history* (2007), Tim Ingold explores how the Euclidean straight line ("as a connection between points that has length but no breath") becomes the trajectory of the modern conceptions of time, surface, space, language, art, progress and process, among others. He postulates that in modern times, this *straightness* has come to "epitomize not only rational thought and disputation but also the values of civility and moral rectitude" (Ingold, 2007, p. 4). For Ingold, on the other hand, lines (threads and traces) rule surfaces, but do not connect anything. The source of lines cannot be found in Euclidean geometry, but "in the taut warp-threads of the weaver's loom" (Ibid.).

of cognitive development, of mind and so on, but is also given an interrogative technique, based in philosophy. The goals are shifted from the development of atemporal metanarratives to engaging discussions about what needs to and should change in the field of education. Egan achieves this by employing an ironic understanding of the history of educational ideas that accentuates: (a) the limitations of empirical research in terms of providing *satisfying* answers; for it (b) assumes the objectivity of our research intent and conceptualizations; (c) the need to see the shifting character of historical contexts from which educational ideas originate (Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Spencer, Dewey); and perhaps most important for this paper, (d) the importance of examining what is shaping our theoretical perspectives. In his ironic stance, Egan does not propose that either one of them is right or wrong but tries to expose how they contribute to our *sense* of ‘getting it right this time’.

It is this ironic stance that I wish to present as an example of a philosophical approach that tries to go beyond objectivism and relativism and that helps “exorcise” what Bernstein calls the “Cartesian Anxiety” (Bernstein, 1983, pp. 16–20). In the next section, I look at Bernstein’s conception of this anxiety in order to begin mapping ways in which it exposes some of the more unexplored areas of educational dogmas. Bernstein’s conceptualization of the dialectic between objectivism and relativism becomes helpful in discussing the state in which we find today’s educational field. In his *Getting it wrong from beginning* Egan contrasts speculative philosophical inquiry with scientific research methodology, the latter being taken up by educational psychology as the single viable way in terms of how we “should get it right” in education. Egan writes that in the old educational paradigm, the educational schemes of Plato and Whitehead, for example, were denigrated to the status of the merely speculative and replaced by modern scientific methodology (Egan, 2004, p. 163). Bringing Bernstein into the discussion will help to tease out some of the more foundational assumptions and ‘anxieties’ that speculative thought seemed to have provoked, which in turn might shed some light on why scientific research methodology still remains the prevailing ideological framework in the field of educational research and theory.

Even in the context of post theory in the era of Anthropocene, with the threat of human extinction re-shaping some fundamental narratives in philosophy and science, the social sciences in general still debate which of the oppositional attitudes is correct and necessary. Bernstein names these attitudes the belief in “objectivism” or “relativism” and describes the debate as follows:

There is still an underlying belief that in the final analysis the only viable alternatives open to us are *either* some form of objectivism, foundationalism, ultimate grounding of knowledge, science, philosophy, language, *or* we are ineluctably led to relativism, skepticism, historicism and nihilism. Whether we focus on the origins of analytic philosophy or phenomenology, there was an earlier period of intellectual confidence and optimism, a conviction that we had finally discovered the secure path for philosophy, the right “method” for making genuine intellectual progress, for turning philosophy into discipline that would yield knowledge (*epistēmē*), instead of being the endless battleground for competing and shifting opinions (*doxai*). (Bernstein, 1983, pp. 2–3. Emphasis in original.)

Postmodernism, which to some degree influenced most of the human and social sciences, started to move from confidence to skepticism about the methods, foundations, rationality, and standards of evaluation. It is interesting to note how little effect these inquiries through the lens of post-modernism (and post-structuralism) have had on the field of education. Surely the movement opened up space for feminist (Lather, 1991; Luke, 1996; Luke & Gore, 2014), post-colonial (Dei, 2011; Dei & McDermott, 2013; hooks, 2003; Trifonas, 2002), queer (Pinar, 1998) and critical (Giroux, 2014; hooks, 1994; Kanu, 2006; Semetsky & Masny, 2013; Stables & Semetsky, 2014) theories to question and challenge the effects and influences of progressivism and the scientific method in education on minority groups, but this movement has not significantly changed the fundamental assumptions and day to day practice and beliefs of most teachers (and researchers). It seems as though teachers and education policy makers still remain deeply embedded in what Bernstein calls objectivism: “The basic conviction that there is or must be some permanent ahistorical matrix or framework to which we can ultimately appeal in determining the nature of rationality, knowledge, truth, reality, goodness, or rightness” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 8). There are three

such matrices in education: the traditionalist, progressivist and the one advocating socialization of future well-adjusted citizens.

In terms of education, it seems as though scientific method has offered the foundational and objective point, against which progressivist and developmental theories of cognition provide the framework for measuring progress made by research-based knowledge and language acquisition, concrete versus abstract modes of thought, and other key concepts.

On the other hand, there is

the basic conviction that when we turn to the examination of those concepts that philosophers have taken to be most fundamental – whether it is the concept of rationality, truth, reality, right, the good, or norms – we are forced to recognize that in the final analysis all such concepts must be understood as relative to a specific conceptual scheme, theoretical framework, paradigm, form of life, society or culture. [...] For the relativist, there is no substantive overarching framework or single metalanguage by which we can rationally adjudicate or univocally evaluate competing claims of alternative paradigm. [...] It is an illusion to think that there is something that might properly be labeled “the standards of rationality,” standards that are genuinely universal and that are not subject to historical or temporal change. (Bernstein, 1983, p. 8)

The conventional view of science, from which educational psychology has modeled its attitudes and methods, is the belief in some objective ground or foundation. An example of such an attitude is the belief in the natural cognitive and psychological development of a child that progresses from lower to higher levels of reasoning. Believing in such “discovered” objective truths about human cognition provides the discipline with a stable framework upon which it can secure its epistemological problems. It is in Descartes’ *Meditations* that Bernstein looks for the origin of this proposition that there is “some necessity to a grand and seductive Either/Or,” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 18) either objective truth or relativistic chaos. However, he is careful to say that it would be a mistake to think that “the Cartesian Anxiety is primarily a religious, metaphysical, epistemological, or moral anxiety” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 19). In fact, these are only some of the varied forms it may assume. Bernstein, following Heidegger, says that the Cartesian Anxiety belongs to the realm of ontology rather than being ontic, for “it seems to lie at the very center of our being

in the world” (Bernstein, 1983, p. 19). The sense of a crisis that the “*agōn* between objectivists and relativists” in humanistic disciplines perpetuates today (the Cartesian Anxiety) might be due to the fact that crisis, “however facile the conception, is inescapably a central element in our endeavors towards making sense of our world” (Kermode, 1967, p. 94).

Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* is another example of a more relativistic attitude towards making sense of the world that questioned scientific objectivity and, consequently, research methodology in the sciences and social sciences. Despite the many critiques this work has received from various academic fields, it provides us with a way through which to understand the influence of paradigmatic thinking on the questions we ask and what answers to those questions are possible or acceptable. His critique of structure is particularly important in any kind of re-reading of Herbert Spencer’s persisting hold over North American educational theory and practice. I would suggest that it is still presented as providing security and firm ground for currently dominant educational beliefs, and most importantly, the illusion that educational theory moves “forward”, while remaining structurally intact.

Kuhn argued that scientists believed in one paradigm over another because one paradigm was more “attractive” than another. This idea was contrary to the common sense belief that one paradigm is *superior* to another/others because of its ability to uncover the objective truth of nature through the rigorous application of empirically based theory and method. What is more, Kuhn argued that this attractiveness was often based upon “personal and inarticulate aesthetic consideration” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 158) and that “men have been converted by them at times when most of the articulable technical arguments pointed the other way” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 158). This is due to the fact that only the anticipated and expected in scientific research is experienced because paradigms are the “prerequisite of perception” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 113) and are constitutive of science as well as nature itself (Kuhn, 1962, p. 110). Knowledge, nature and truth are thus, in his perspective, not objectively uncovered but situated in historical, cultural, and social contexts. With Deleuze,

this truth is not some idea that is set against life and the visible, rather it is a potential to question, intuit and think beyond what is given.

Within the field of education, nature's truths are assumed to be revealed by empirical research performed by developmental psychologists such as Piaget, among others. It has been generally believed that what he proved is the fact that a child moves through cognitive developmental stages from a simple pre-operational to a concrete level and then to a more complex and abstract operational cognitive level in the process of maturation. Piaget's theories have been heavily critiqued, both in terms of his assumptions of developmental stages as well as in terms of the smooth progression from stage to stage, however, the necessity of the shift from the concrete to the abstract level of cognition still appears to be firmly embedded in most educational theories today.

Dewey is another thinker who believed in a natural process of learning that is close to a child's true nature. In *Getting it wrong from the beginning* Egan claims that these assumptions have been profoundly influenced by Spencer's paradigmatic ideas about evolution and natural development. Even though the majority of Spencer's ideas became heavily critiqued and finally ignored by most scientific fields, they still remain entrenched in educational theory as well as practice, even while not explicitly recognized.

What influenced Spencer's theories was the insight that all living organisms develop from a state of homogeneity to a state of heterogeneity. He connected ideas about evolution, development and progress, where each stage in the development includes and builds on the previous ones, which inherently makes each stage superior to the previous one (Egan, 2004, pp. 84–85). The development and growth of organisms, including humans, became perceived as fixed and given. What follows from such an objectivist notion is that all that is needed in education is to discover a spontaneous process of learning that follows these natural laws. These assumptions became a paradigmatic bedrock against which educational and developmental psychologists test their empirical findings. Anomalies in such findings, such as young children being able to think abstractly, appear, as Kuhn suggests, only as a largely unacknowledged background that does not disturb the paradigm (Kuhn, 1962, p.

65), in our case the progressivist paradigm, informed by the evolutionary theories of Spencer. This means that novelty emerges only for the researchers who, “knowing *with precision* what they should expect, is able to recognize that something has gone wrong” (Kuhn, 1962, p. 65). Thus, findings that show abstract thought present and utilized by small children (such as for example their ability to understand ironic utterance or the ability to intuit problems beyond their concrete experience) often remain outside the mainstream theoretical framework, because only the anticipated and expected results (children are concrete thinkers) are accepted and so recognized or experienced within the paradigm. This obviously has profound impact on educational practice, such as literacy acquisition or reading practices. But more importantly, what the above example shows is that because of the common assumptions that the same methods and standards used in natural science can also be used in education, this particular field of social science remains faithful to the methodological ideal of science, more or less firmly embedded in objectivist perceptions of knowledge and truth, reason and rationality. Ever since the origins of modern science, educational theorists in their more or less scientifically supported perspectives seem to offer educational models which can be easily assimilated or reduced to the already existing educational paradigms. This normative patterning of educational ideas might be explained by Gadamer, who, influenced by Aristotle and his idea of practical reason, writes that the:

[...] problem of our society is that the longing of the citizenry for orientation and normative patterns invests the expert with an exaggerated authority. Modern society expects him to provide a substitute for past moral and political orientations. Consequently, the concept of ‘praxis’ which was developed in the last two centuries is an awful deformation of what practice really is. In all the debates of the last century practice was understood as the application of science to technical tasks.... It degrades practical reason to technical control. (Gadamer cited in Bernstein, 1983, p. 39)

Two questions that seem pertinent to education arise from this passage. One is the question of the lure of the expert. I have no doubts that some of the researchers in education who have the most influence on educational policy and practice today (for example Gardner and Hirsh) realize the extent and limitations of their research and investigations, aware of the particularities of their applied methodology within the existing educational paradigms.

However, because their theories are believed to represent long-standing and scientifically supported truths about the nature of cognitive development or the nature of learning, teachers and policy makers accept their authoritative readymade ‘practical’ guides to what they propose are ‘novel’ ways of learning and teaching. That is, their theories fit the existing educational paradigms in enough of the key coordinates, that they are easily accepted by teachers as something that supports what they have presumably already known or ‘sensed’ to be the ‘truth’ about knowledge or cognitive development. This leads us to the next issue, which is the question of the relation between theory and practice. Worth quoting at length is the following statement by Habermas:

The real difficulty in the relation of theory and praxis does not arise from this new function of science as a technological force, but rather from the fact that we are no longer able to distinguish between practical and technical power. Yet even a civilization that has been rendered scientific is not granted dispensation from practical questions; therefore, a peculiar danger arises when the process of scientification transgress the limit of technical questions, without, however, departing from the level of reflection of a rationality confined to the technological horizon. For then no attempt is made to attain a rational consensus on the part of citizens concerning the practical control of their destiny. Its place is taken by the attempt to attain technical control over history by perfecting the administration of society, an attempt that is just as impractical as it is unhistorical. (Habermas, 1973, p. 255)

It seems to me that this passage depicts the state in which we can today find most educational practitioners as well as theorists. Offered readymade teacher guides, teachers no longer *read*, question or are encouraged to re-examine given conceptual frameworks or their historical and philosophical roots. The way the curriculum has come to be conceptualized, devised and accepted as the result of an industrial model of education based on logical positivistic science, forces teachers into the roles of technicians who hold power as administrators rather than ‘practitioners’.

In the following chapters I hope to create a different *sense* of a pedagogy of reading, not as a communicative process and a cognitive act, but rather as one flow of intensive desire alongside others. This is intended as a stratigraphic or passive-vitalist approach, evoking a

concept of *pedagogy without bodies*, where pedagogy is understood as a concept and an orientation for thought, evoking a material and noncorporeal sense of encounters.

That is, if life consists of different modes of existences, then one of those modes is, according to Colebrook, becoming through concepts, ideas and theories. This goes against the western model of representation following Plato, which has always supposed that there is a simple opposition between the actual world and its virtual copy or between life and the knowledge we have of it. But for Deleuze, the virtual and actual are both fully real and immanent to life as a domain of intensity. What he challenges, following Bergson, is the history of ideas that reduced difference to an identity, positing language or mind as the origin or condition of meaning and differences. What he proposes is a concept of univocity of being; there is only one being and thus the different modes of existence (for example human existence) are just different events within life conceived of as a plane of immanent difference. For Deleuze, the One is the immanent contained within a transcendental field and not the other way around, that is, the transcendent that contains immanence. One is always a multiplicity, such as an event, a singularity, a life where all transcendence belongs to the flow of immanent consciousness on the plane of immanence. For example, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari make clear that desire is not lack, but is immanent: it is a plane of consistency and is “defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency, whether it be a lack that hollows it out or a pleasure that fills it” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 154). “Desire is productive of relations, bodies and societies” and not the other way around, where “identities and images are seen as abstractions added on to life”, instead, they are “events within the flow of desire” (Colebrook, 2003, p. xvi).

1.2. Outline of the dissertation

By following Colebrook, chapter one explores irony as a concept and employs it as an approach and inquiry into modes of sense production. My aim is to study how reading might be conceived not as a process of discovering some hidden origin, condition, ground

or intention bound to the restoration of the knowing subject, individual or person. Rather, a reading, framed as an event, or immanent force in its own right issuing in its own relations, might yield a perception devoid of sense for humans. In this chapter I turn to irony in order to tease out some of the ways in which reading can be framed as a *problem*. I look at how a pedagogy or the leading out of the traditional style of irony might provide new ways of mobilizing reading in education, one fostering the distancing, splitting and unbinding vital yet passive force of irony. In other words, what notion of reading in literacy education might we mobilize if reading were to become understood as a problem that no longer assumes some proper (human) sense waiting to be uncovered? In the first part of this chapter I draw out Colebrook's theory of irony to contextualise the superior mode of sense production (which contrasts with the modernist notions of irony) by looking at Whitehead's ontology. In the last section I take Whitehead/Stengers' constructivist ontology of reading as an example of a new pedagogy of reading.

Whitehead, Souriau and Deleuze and Guattari all in their own way maintain a certain stratigraphic or disjunctive force in their writing. Their thoughts often seem contradictory and impossible (materialist and universalistic; empirical and transcendental; embracing lived experience and virtual potentialities). As such, they maintain the passive force of superior irony signalling the eventfulness of reading and writing beyond human intentionality and striving for meaning. Their texts are oriented to the immanence of life in all its virtual, machinic, abstract and indifferent events as well as in all its affective, prehending, material, aesthetic and instaurative experience.

Chapter two explores Étienne Souriau's concept of *instauration* or the process of the "work to-be-made" in order to look at how a pedagogy of reading might be conceived as *an* event and an inhuman force of "invention, obligation and risk". Life is a process of instauration, that is, an invention and a journey. For Souriau, just as for Alfred N. Whitehead before him and Gilles Deleuze after, the completed work is not something intended or willed, but unfolds as a singularity, a novelty, an encounter, a surprise. Souriau proposed that the mode of existence of the "work to-be-made" is different from the completed work and both of these modes are independent from the intentions of both the artist and the 'final' work of

art. Before moving into the discussion of what the concept of instauration might yield in terms of posthumanist literacy, I first situate the chapter within a wider context of the posthumanist turn in humanities and education more particularly. In the last part I present readers with an example of how literacy educators at higher levels of education might think the concept of instauration as a pedagogy of reading.

In chapter three I engage with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *pedagogy of concepts* in order to first look at what a *mode of reading intensively* would be and second to propose that what might be needed in literacy education is to distinguish a *pedagogy* of reading (resulting in the creation of concepts) and an *art* of reading (resulting in affective and figural prolongation of meaning making, criticism and opinion). This would result in intensifying the differences in reading (and in thinking) in philosophy, science and art. In addition to looking at how students use multiple literacies to make sense of or read the world, we would teach different modes of reading pertaining to distinct proclivities of thought – thinking in concepts, thinking in affects, thinking in functions, thinking in sounds or colours. For this approach, not to become a reaction-formation (ultrahumanism), this chapter suggests that what would need to be emphasised are modes of reading not as communicative acts returning meaning to a subject by restoring its embeddedness within the world conceived of as one whole and harmonious interrelational organism (the concept of *Gaia* for example). Rather, one would need a futural approach to reading, imagining different modes of existences; of *to-read* and of *to-be-read*, modes that do not presuppose man at the beginning nor at the end of sense as we know it.

In the conclusion, I re-approach some of the concepts from previous chapters by elaborating on Colebrook's counter-proposal, which is perhaps best described as an impassive vitalist approach, and discuss its relevance for the 'future' of education and pedagogy. I conclude by considering seriously the possibility of not maintaining the necessity of education or cultivation for the sake of sustaining human life as we know it. By confronting educational thought with the speculative implications of the Anthropocene (a geological impact of man that is readable in the earth's strata), namely the organization

of life after the life as ‘we’ know it, the conclusion aims to open the problem of the limits of education as a predicament of a singular mode of existence of men and his readability.

I suggest that a *pedagogy without bodies* as a *concept* (in Deleuze and Guattari’s sense) would be an *orientation for educational thought* where we would no longer begin with the image of a living, active, corporeal body, but would, following Colebrook (2011), consider intensive forces that unfold life differently from that of the human. These forces are material and virtual, if “material complexities” are understood to be “dispersed beyond any single intention” (Colebrook, 2011, p. 18). *Pedagogy without bodies* as a concept alludes to the material composition of sense that is not bound to a body. For example, let’s take a teaching-learning event of introducing the letter A to pupils. First there needs to be a potentiality for “to teach” and a potentiality for “to learn,” which further involves the potentiality of an “eye to see,” an “ear to hear” and a “hand to write”. For this particular event to make any sense, there had to have been all those material forces, such as the technologies of inscription and industrial production; the privatization of bourgeois time and space; the implementation of various school protocols; the ability to speak vernacular languages; the privatization of a once communal body; the reduction of variation in oral storytelling to the commodification of memory and printed text etc. That is, in order to make *sense* of this singular literacy event, we do not begin with the body and intention of a teacher to transmit knowledge, or the body and consciousness of an active-receptive pupil. Sense is material for there are first innumerable and materially dispersed, intensive and non-human forces and processes not bound to any single body and intricate to any event.

Chapter 2.

Irony and reading event

Traditional and progressive ways of instruction that have dominated education for so long can be clearly noticed in educational literacy theory, with the focus on representation, interpretation, phonics, whole language and embedded instruction, directed listening and thinking activities, technology assisted reading acquisition and so on. What is placed at the centre of these modernist approaches to literacy education, by way of utilising the findings of applied linguistics, cognitive and educational psychology are developmental stages (even if different in the emphasis of key factors contributing to learning – behaviourist, cognitive, social - for example Piaget, Erickson, Vygotsky) , the enclosed subject in all his individual differences, prior experiences and knowledge, representation, recognition and closed systems of communication (Afflerbach, 2015). Reading skills are measured in terms of cognitive abilities, vocabulary and orthography skills as well as phonological awareness, processing ability and metacognitive strategic competence (Pang, 2008). These views directly influence school-based ways of *good* reading and define what it means to become literate. The literacy curriculum, which is focused on phonological, morphological and orthographic awareness, is directly influenced by ‘evidence-based practice’ supported by various psychological studies (Berninger, Abbott, Nagy, & Carlisle, 2010).

In addition, the scientific models of curriculum based on cognitive psychology studies and research operate as a closed system of communication, focused on the probability of outcomes directly informed by psychological predictors and measures of reading success (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2015, Prior *et al.*, 2011).

What is placed at the centre of science-based research in literacy studies is a humanist image of an autonomous thinking subject who knows by recognizing, classifying and categorizing different qualities of things and subjects. In addition, the new findings in neuroscience call for a certain plasticity of the brain, its intimate intertwining with the new social context of increased communication and digital information and other environmental

factors. Next to the “science-based” or evidence-based literacy advocating phonics and enclosed literacy structures, new literacies and critical literacy theory now draw on neuroscience in order to emphasise the social and cultural forces that inform and emerge in the process of reading and writing. As a ‘reaction’ to such scientific based and closed systems founded on empirical data there is also a growing interest in what has come to be known as multiple literacies theory or *MLT*, introducing multimodal approaches to literacy acquisition in which alphabetic modes or representations of meaning merge with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactical, spatial and financial patterns of meaning making.

The aim of this chapter is to study how reading might be conceived not as a process of discovering some hidden origin, condition, ground or intention bound to the restoration of the knowing subject, individual or person. Rather, a reading, framed as an event, or immanent force in its own right issuing in its own relations, might yield a perception devoid of sense for humans. I believe this to be a viable thought experiment in a context of accelerated human ecosystem destruction as well as within those turns in theory towards matter, vitality and interconnected networks of human and inhuman agencies which emphasise harmonious and progressive living togetherness.

To that end, I turn to irony in order to tease out some of the ways in which reading can be framed as a problem rather than as meaning making, decoding or representing. I explore irony as a concept and utilize it as a method of inquiry into modes of sense production. I look at how a pedagogy or the leading out of the traditional style of irony might provide new ways of mobilizing reading in education. In other words, what notion of reading in literacy education might we mobilise if reading were to become understood as a problem that no longer assumes some proper sense waiting to be uncovered?

In the first part of this chapter I draw out Colebrook’s theory of irony, which will enable me to contextualise the superior or inhuman mode of sense production, which contrasts with the modernist notions of irony. In the second part of the chapter I explore Whitehead’s ontology in order to integrate the ‘traditional or humanist modes’ of sense production with the notion of *bifurcation of nature*. I utilise the Deleuzean reading of Whitehead’s concept

of an event and Colebrook's theory of irony in order to frame reading as an event or *an intensity in its own right*, detached from human intentionality. In the last section I take Whitehead/Stengers' *constructivist* ontology of reading as an example of a new pedagogy of reading.

Reading is a form of discerning the how, what, when and why of the world as it makes sense *to and for* us. In a common pedagogy of reading, teachers invite students to learn about different perspectives and meanings that people from varying cultural, historical and professional backgrounds make when reading the same text (film, poem, musical composition, etc.). They invite students to contemplate the various ways a single person can read a given text under different emotional and social circumstances. But rarely do they invite students to question the intention of reading, or make that intention problematic. Students are being taught to read in a certain style, with the intention to communicate, think critically, as well as connect and create a sense of self and belonging to the community in which they live. This style of reading begins from self as the subject who *then* reads the qualities of a given text or event, whereby the judging and interpreting subject is represented in advance. I believe this style of reading to be all pervasive in literacy education and if there is to be a change in a wider context of pressing educational issues, such as ecological challenges on a global scale to name just one, the point of view or intention of reading might have to be shifted away from the reading act of a sovereign subject towards readings as events in their own right.

In spite of the various theoretical, practical and pedagogical attempts at making this world more sustainable for humans, as well as non-humans and the inhuman, what has become more apparent is not so much the disappearing future, but the lack of alarm that people commonly expresses towards the possible annihilation of humans and non-humans. In part, I believe, this continuity of destruction is the expression of the limits of a particular sense of linear temporality, environing spatiality and humanistic point of view, where what is appearing always appears *for* the subjective self. Following Colebrook we can say that, there can be no salvation for humans if human is posited as "the origin or localizable point

of sense in space and time”, nor if the subject is “read against the world” through humanistic perspective or point of view (Colebrook, 2011).

This is to say, in a pedagogy of reading, what needs to be troubled is the very style of reading where the unquestioned intention of reading is either for a subject to grasp the world (traditional irony) or to critically claim that there is no world apart from relativistic points of view (postmodern irony). What if one of the aims of literacy curriculum was to problematize the humanistic intention to decode words and sentences, that is, the intention of grasping, understanding, and humanizing? This aim seems counter to everything we know and understand under the rubric of literacy education. But perhaps this is indeed what is needed as a thought experiment in approaching the future of literacy education.

In order to decentre a humanistic point of view I will be relying heavily on Colebrook to draw attention to the ways in which the concept of irony can help to situate a particularly humanistic point of view in the history of ideas and aesthetics. Colebrook is, I believe, among the first to systematically develop irony as a mode of production of sense. Her work will be essential in setting up the screen for a viewing of the concept of irony which can complicate the ways in which the West has come to understand self, subject, ground, and truth in philosophy and consequently in education. Irony, she will suggest, is traditionally bound up with spatial metaphors of ascent and descent. Her work is particularly useful here in that irony is mobilised not as an attempt to name or resolve (as in traditional irony), but in an effort to pose problems which, when left in motion, defy rather than facilitate closure. Key to this chapter is a process of moving *reading* away from the human symbolic (the priority on language and reason). I will thus pursue a prolonged interrogation of what has come to be termed by Alfred North Whitehead the *bifurcation of nature*. The bifurcation of nature in thought creates the world as an object that is out there, static and given for us to grasp. Human consciousness is set apart, at a distance from its environment. Here I will be concerned with the ways in which the bifurcation of nature places a hold on human perception, and on the way humans think about perception. For example, this bifurcating logic is very clear in the way speech and other language acts are perceived on a communication model where the temporal gap between the speaker and the speech act is

assumed linearly as an illocutionary act beginning with the speaker's intention and ending in a successful deliverance of utterance. In an attempt to rethink language and matter together, Elizabeth de Freitas and Nathalie Sinclair expose this logic by proposing that upon careful examination of the communication model

we find a deep-seated conviction about the ontological distinction between meaning and matter. This conviction longs for speech to be linear casual link between content and expression, and thus reflects in part our own anxiety around non-sense and a world inflected by chance. (Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 117)

We can read, speak, perceive and understand the world and its *objects* as finite points within human experience, but what if, following de Freitas and Sinclair, the potential of reading, speech and perceiving were “linked to non-sense, accident or singularity?” (Ibid.). A potential that could display the singularities or intensities of infinitesimal quantity of worlds, where “*singularity* is not meant as an instance of a universal, but as an irregular occurrence or disruption” (Ibid., italics in original). In other words, we have become accustomed to perceiving subjects as organized and unified bodies who then speak or read, rather than perceiving them as events or milieus of indifferent and accidental forces. In such a bifurcated logic, matter and material are perceived either as passive recipients as in the transcendental model of subject/object relationality, or as has become popular in contemporary theory, as vibrant and emergent entities in an inter and intra-related web of discursive materiality (such as in the theories of Karan Barad (2012), Vicki Kirby (2011), and Jane Bennett (2010), for example). In the later approach, the subjective/objective positions are believed to be overcome by placing the emphasis on the material relationality of phenomena, things, objects and relata, however, the ‘gap’ is somewhat maintained by sustaining the extensive and expressive attributes (either epistemologically and/or ontologically) of phenomena or things-in-themselves which forgoes specific intensive modes of virtual processes.

What is pursued in this thesis by contrast is Whitehead's and Deleuze's premise that *things* are derivatives of intensive processes where what becomes in an event is a result of passive and impersonal modes of virtual processes. To see objects as events is to grasp the virtual

reality of things not as phenomena but as impersonal flows in a milieu of indifferent forces. For example, we can imagine language and speech according to a line on a temporal scale, originating with the intention of the speaker causally resulting in the intended meaning or expression. But with Whitehead and the Leibnizean Deleuze, we can imagine this line of signification and communication *spatially, as a series of folds* (as *variable curvature*, see Deleuze's *The Fold*, 1993) and *inflections*. Deleuze, following Paul Klee who defined "inflection" as "the genetic element of an active, spontaneous line", maintains that such a 'line of flight' opposes Kandinsky, "a Cartesian, for whom angles are firm, for whom the point is firm, set in motion by an exterior force"(Deleuze, 1993, p. 14). Klee based his "abstraction not on geometric angles and enclosed shapes" like Descartes, but on a point where the "tangent touches and crosses the curve (or the point-fold), showing that no exact or unmixed figure can exist if life is based on inflection which is an authentic atom, the elastic point" (Ibid.). The *point of inflection* is an "intrinsic singularity"

Contrary to "extrema" (extrinsic singularities, maximum and minimum), it does not refer to coordinates: it is neither high nor low, neither right nor left, neither regression nor progression. It corresponds to what Leibniz calls an "ambiguous sign". (Ibid., p. 15)

The point of inflection is the pure event of the line or of the point and is therefore the "virtual ideality par excellence" (Ibid.). It takes place at an "indiscernible point, a site of cosmogenesis," "a nondimensional point" (the jump between inside/outside), that is "between dimensions". For example, in terms of speech, it is possible to say that rather than assuming the becoming of speech acts as the common sense linear progression or the in-between of sign and signification, we rather see it spatially and aleatory, as a fold, where the virtual and material converge as if in a reverberating effect.

The force of speech is in this play of difference, where pre-articulate intermediate entities flit about without resting easily on either side of a fledgling boundary between meaning and matter. As much as we polish and hone our language use and are subject to code and systematic meaning, speech seems to sustain this intermediacy in its stuttering fumbling ways. Attending to this indeterminacy and underside of speech demands that we think of word-sounds as both symbolic of meaning and 'assignifying particles' of expression. (Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 117)

Counter to phenomenological philosophers like Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Barad, Whitehead, Deleuze and Guattari account for all the imperceptible partialities passing from one mode of existence to another (virtual, potential and actual), merging and folding into each other in a milieu growing by its edges, where no element can form a whole. These are not ‘things-in-itself’ or ‘phenomena-in-things’ (Barad) as discrete units (as maintained by phenomenology). Rather than relationality being ontogenetic, with Whitehead and Deleuze it is the *process* or the growing together of pre-individualities before these acquire the qualitative properties of phenomena, forms, substances and expressions that is purely differential. Such abstract or machinic vitalism does not reject what is given in materiality, that is it accounts for all the virtual and potential bodies and relations or intensive multiplicities that partake neither of subject nor object. These intensive multiplicities can become eventuated via ingression into extensive relations (objects, expressions, signs). In terms of pedagogy of reading this means that we are caught in a swaying exercise of looking at reading as a force of intensive and differentiating multiplicity of virtual and actual signs that grow by connections (as diagrams of abstraction) and also as an extensive relation of signification and representation where no reading can exhaust the intensive multiplicity of its own potentiality.

In what follows, I utilise Colebrook’s theory of irony for the ways in which it depicts the temporal (linear) and spatial (elevated) organisation of language, thought and perception in order to stress the importance for educational research of looking at how language is “operating outside of a regime of signification – outside or alongside its capacity to refer, and even to communicate” (ibid.).

2.1. Colebrook, irony and the event of sense

Irony is commonly defined as the use of words to convey the incongruity or opposition between the intended and the ostensibly stated in text. It also conveys an outcome of life events contrary to what might have been expected. In theory, there are questions oscillating between the more transcendental or the more immanent figurations of the

interconnectedness of philosophical categories such as voice, persona, context, perception, identity, language, subjectivity, representation, metaphor, origin, and God to name a few. By approaching irony, from traditional to romantic, from modern to postmodern, Colebrook traces these philosophic categories as they figure in different modes or styles of sense production. For example, when irony assumes a transcendental or God-like point of view, as is the case of traditional irony, it often stems from a particular temporal relation between subject-predicate relations. That is, “[p]erspective or point of view traditionally suggests some undifferentiated continuity within which each point of experience is located [...]” (Colebrook 2007, p. 225). For instance, a speech act is finite because it “presupposes the one who acts and assumes a difference between the sayable and the said of the action” (Ibid.). Whitehead’s notion of the bifurcation of nature that takes shape through human perception resonates with this force of traditional irony, which, as Colebrook points out, “bifurcates the speaker’s point of view through time. The idea that is spoken here and now is doubled by some higher sense that either must have been (Socratic irony) or that is forever more to be (the concept’s future sense)” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 283). The deferral of meaning or sense oscillates between these two temporal points and assumes contingency to be embedded in the linear progression of time.

In contrast to this temporal bifurcation of perception Colebrook juxtaposes the immanence of a Spinoza-Nietzsche-Deleuze lineage, captured by the phrase “infinite impassivity” as exemplified in Flaubert’s free-indirect style, to which I will return later. Here impassivity can only be infinite because it is “nothing other than itself”, that is, it assumes a “complete coincidence between actor and act, between the one who speaks and that which is spoken”. This is contrary to the ‘traditional logic’ of sense production where the stress lies with a speaker who *then* expresses meaning. Instead the emphasis is on “*saying* that is nothing other than itself” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 57). The agent and action are thus not to be seen as separate where the creation of sense becomes an activity of some subject. This is an important shift in perspective and one that will greatly assist me in understanding current images of reading and literacy acquisition, for life can no longer be seen as an object or being that can be represented in language. It suggests as well that life is not some substance

or essence that *appears* as that which lies beyond language, “something more real or something that hides the truth”. Consequently, language “is not a proposition about the world; it is itself an event of a world that is nothing more than its becoming” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 58). The notion of “appearing” assumes some real beyond our reach, and this is why Nietzsche later rethinks the concept of appearance itself; “appearance *is* truth. There is appearing, and from this we (reactively) posit some ‘x’ that/who appears ... Speech is not some act of representation added to the world, speech itself is an event of the world’s own force and becoming” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 58. Italics in original.). This is an immanent view of the world and it differs significantly from that of Rorty. For example, in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* it becomes clear in the very beginning of the introduction-“By an antirepresentationalist account I mean one which does not view knowledge as a matter of getting reality right, but rather as a matter of acquiring habits of action for coping with reality” (Rorty, 1991, p. 1) - that such a statement assumes a reality that cannot be adequately represented in language. It presupposes, however, an elevated humanist point of view. This mode of sense production assumes the relativity of vocabulary and context, and is shared by some postmodern thinkers of irony such as Lyotard (2014), Hutcheon (1994), Searle (1969) and Muecke (1969). In conceiving his postmodern ironist, Rorty will thus say that:

(1) She has radical and continuing doubts about the final vocabulary she currently uses, because she has been impressed by other vocabularies, vocabularies taken as final by people or books she has encountered; (2) she realizes that arguments phrased in her present vocabulary can neither underwrite nor dissolve these doubts; (3) insofar as she philosophizes about her situation, she does not think that her vocabulary is closer to reality than others, that it is in touch with a power not herself. (Rorty, 1989, p. 73)

However, the problem with Rorty recognizing the contingency of the position of the subject in language ironically exposes a kind of risk of irony, for “irony discloses the impossibility of recognizing without falling back into irony”. That is, by maintaining that there is only distance (vocabulary) what remains unquestioned is a specific point of view, which is the one “set over and against empirical reality”. In this mode of the production of sense, the *autonomous and self-creating ironic subject* becomes fashioned as the one who refuses

transcendental ideals, but also, according to Colebrook, such a position rejects Nietzsche's positing of speech acts as events, that is, as "forces that are nothing other than what they are" (Ibid.).

Kierkegaard on the other hand attempted to think existence, not as an actual entity but rather as an infinite negativity. In contrast to Rorty, Kierkegaard (1992) assumes a position that is beyond the limits of everyday speech:

The same is true of the concept of irony, for philosophy must not become infatuated with one particular aspect of the concept's phenomenological existence, and above all not with its mere appearance, but see the truth of the concept in and with the phenomenological. (pp. 48–49)

Sense production is here intuited as that which is "other than rhetoric as well as other than a mere point of view of the worldly existence". Kierkegaard achieves this imperative through constructing a phenomenological existence of the life of Socrates as persona, existence which does not precede negativity but is itself negativity for the position outside rhetoric is "not yet another positive position", it is a personality that exists "alongside the negation of that personality" (Colebrook, 2007, p. 175). This reading suggests that there is a non-being, a nothingness at a distance from the positive actualities and everyday speech, and this is, following Colebrook, because of Kierkegaard's contradicting persona which "is, but is only through rhetoric". For Kierkegaard, it is impossible to speak from nowhere. As will become apparent, this assumption of some ground beyond language remains present in romantic irony as well, but the "nothingness of a subject" becomes somewhat complicated by thinkers such as Paul de Man.

As a post-Hegelian philosopher, de Man reworks categories such as morality, autonomy, subjectivity and irony. His romantic irony emphasizes authenticity as well as subjectivity, but the subject in de Man, according to Colebrook,

is most properly itself when it is not a thing, when it is nothing, and this subjective nothingness finds its recognition (and misrecognition) in literature. In the literary text, the description of the subject as a thing is seen as description. The literary trace presents itself in such a way, that language

is no longer a transparent representation but is seen in its effective dimension. The foregrounding of textuality is also a foregrounding of the subject's status as (the) nothing other than textuality. (p. 191)

This “nothingness that exceeds point of view” is close to Derrida’s notion of *différance* that “disperses the subject into the effect of writing”. However, as Colebrook proposes, the oscillation between anthropologism (the creation of a subject as other than thing) and subjectivism “can never turn into a recognition of authenticity”. As suggested by Colebrook, when “the subjective condition of man becomes posited as condition, it becomes one more recognition, and one more repetition of the human,” and thus “philosophy as the categorical intellectual imperative to ask the question of the condition meets its limit and fulfillment in irony” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 195).

Following Colebrook, we can say that what is at issue is just the sort of problem this idea addresses in terms of current turns to matter and agential realism. The anti-Cartesian quest for the salvation of man, which recognizes man as just this one entity among others, materially entangled in one grand interconnected whole, ironically posits the human condition as condition and therefore does not escape the transcendental subject-predicate mode of production of sense—thus continuing to play into the temporal organisation of thought and perception. That is, in the history of sense production, philosophical propositional grammar effects a point of view of a transcendental man that precedes thinking. It bifurcates nature and thought into exteriority and interiority where what is outside is thought of as being able to be viewed, represented and recognized as some ground, a passive presence in time and space. By implication, we can say that the history of pedagogical thought exhibits this *temporality* of becoming in language as seen in some of the prevailing metaphors for education and knowledge, such as technological, engineering, manufacturing and computational metaphors. (Serres’s *Troubadour of Knowledge* (1997) might come close to an exception – for example his spatial metaphor of knowledge as a *patchwork*.) In other words, the metaphors of industrial and capitalist power, knowledge and control can be seen as producing an outside or a higher point of view as in traditional irony.

In contrast to such a point of view as expressed through language, Flaubert's free indirect style does not posit some condition or ground for proper sense. For him, there just is this mode, or style of sense, not grounded in some posited beyond. Colebrook argues that:

In the repetition of banality Flaubert's free-indirect style occurs as a thoroughly immanent transcription of the human limit. The inhabitation of rhetoric is a recognition that any positing of an outside to rhetoric will always be another rhetorical effect. Flaubert's 'irony' or free-indirect style does not lead us to truth (of the soul, the absolute, or Ideas), but it does produce a sense of banality. The artist is nothing other than this sense, achieved through the play and inhabitation of style. Literature, as the avowed use of tone, style, voice and point of view, has a certain advantage over any position of knowledge that cannot but posit as real a certain view of the world. Style is a self-conscious repetition of the limit of any positive point of view. Style, in this sense, is nothing and everything, everywhere and nowhere. Flaubert is at once the culmination and end of irony. (p. 181)

The language of free-indirect style does not assume some ground that *then* becomes expressed and represented by an elevated look of an authentic subject. Neither is language itself figured as "a negativity, as a ground or "pure medium for expression" of a subject: "If we think language spatially rather than temporally, than we do much to disrupt the rigid logic of point of view" (Colebrook, 2007, p. 200). To that effect, Colebrook points out how Foucault as well uses free-indirect style against the idea of "some ironic philosophical elevation" which can be seen through his use of metaphors to describe his own method and which work against a "vertical axis". She points towards the spatial metaphors in his work as "an 'archeology' that focuses on 'dispersions,' 'distributions,' 'strata,' 'the planes' or 'tables' of knowledge and all its 'diagrams'" (Ibid.). In terms of reading, the focus on interpretation, decoding and coding organised around a focal point of view of the reading subject with the intention of grasping some sort of a totality of meaning in a particular text (be it visual or written) is the organising principle of much of the literacy curriculum. In K-12 education, very little attention is given to words, grammar and texts as a patterning force, frequency, or intensity in its own right - for example to collocation relations and their distribution patterns, or to frequency information and dispersion metric used to determine what word would be included in a dictionary, their distribution uniformity and

lack of randomization.³ This I believe is due to the focus and trust imposed on the adequacy of language to represent the outside of thought.

To a certain degree, this trust can be traced to what Whitehead believes is the founding idea of philosophy, namely the idea of the non-being. Same as later Deleuze (see *Difference and Repetition*), he points to the fact that European philosophy takes up the Plato in his dialogues, which elicits philosophical categories based on the dialectic argumentation of meanings of language provided by the sense-data (of the forces of nature and man's activities) disclosed *for* the philosopher in direct introspection. However, Whitehead points out that in *Sophist*, Plato “insists that not-being is a form of being”⁴ (Whitehead, 1967, p. 228). From this Whitehead concludes that there are two main errors in philosophic method, one is the “uncritical trust in the adequacy of language, and the other is the uncritical trust in the strained attitude of introspection as the basis of epistemology” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 228). Thus he himself appeals to literature and everyday practice which can show (as opposed to pure reflection and contemplation), that “The world within experience is identical with the world beyond experience, the occasion of experience is within the world and the world is within the occasion. The categories have to elucidate this paradox of the connectedness of things: the many things, the one world without and within” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 228). In other words and pertaining to pedagogy of reading, what I try to show next is that when reading is freed from a sort of temporality that binds it in a *rigid logic of point of view*, we can begin to see it more as an event, issuing in its own rhythm and intensity. What I suggest then is that understanding all reading as *ironic* – as a differential force or intensity issuing in an event – might yield new pedagogical practices and curricular aims with regard to reading.

To say that reading is ironic, or *superiorly ironic* (following Colebrook's reading of Deleuze) to be more precise, is to say that reading is not so much a subjective act of

³ For more on these examples see *Current Issues in Reading, Writing and Visual Literacy* by Gitsaki (2015).

⁴ Plato, as Whitehead observed, applied this metaphysical generalization to eternal forms. (Whitehead, 1967, p. 237)

discerning meaning nor postulating some hidden ground beyond the inscription. Rather it is an event, a dispersed force of creativity on the continuum of the becoming of each singular actual occasion. To better understand this, it is crucial to recognize how a particular style of point of view functions in establishing particular notions of self, language and production of sense. In what follows I trace Deleuze's and Whitehead's concepts of point of view, prehension and event in order to establish a pedagogy of reading as *superiorly ironic*.

It could be said that for Deleuze, point of view is a sign⁵, it continually becomes in a multiplicity of events through life. Similarly, for Whitehead, point of view does not belong to a human only, as even molecules carry the potential toprehend and feel. Point of view is the becoming of a continuity of prehension⁶, from one actual occasion to another, perishing and becoming in a rhythm of concrescence (concrete togetherness). As Colebrook shows, irony is intrinsically bound with problems of personal point of view; from Socrates who transcended his personality through philosophy to Rortyan postmodernism, where "philosophy can be nothing more than the recognition of viewpoint and persona" (Colebrook, 2007, p. 202).

In contrast with Rorty as well as with poststructuralist postulations that assume the discursive formation of self through regimes of power (Foucault, Butler), sexual difference (Irigaray, Grosz), *différence* (Derrida), lack (Lacan) and master/slave dialectic (Hegel, Fanon), Deleuze insists on "power of life itself to become different", where life is "nothing other than its eternally different events of expression" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 203). This is not a negation of a voice of being as set in opposition to life. It is not an affirmation of

⁵ Meaning that "[i]t is not the given but that by which the given is given" (Colebrook 2007, p. 140).

⁶ Whitehead conceived of a new lexical word prehension to describe his theory of perception. He distinguishes from positive and negative prehension, physical (based on causal efficacy-the real or actual entities) and conceptual (based on presentational immediacy-the ideal or eternal objects-pure possibilities) prehension. In his book on Symbolism, Whitehead warns against mistaking symbols for reality. If we assume that our comprehension is complete or final, we commit what Whitehead named the Fallacy of Mislplaced Concreteness. Any form of perceptual or conceptual reductionism commits this fallacy. Conceptual prehension should always be embedded in the context of apprehension (casual efficacy) because the tools of presentational immediacy allow us to consciously perceive only a limited world in symbolic reference.

difference between this or that event; difference is a potential of life to differ in difference - always becoming in other differences.

In traditional irony, by contrast, it is the subject who precedes all predications. This subjectivism assumes the self to be either the ground of experience and language to be the origin of meaning, which is given for us to contemplate through some higher point of view; or, as in poststructuralist irony, it assumes a self that is formed as an effect of discourse. But for Deleuze, as for Whitehead, there is no perception or contemplation that is other than itself, no point of view or prehension that would assume a transcendental outside: “Perhaps it is irony to say that everything is contemplation”, says Deleuze, “even the rocks and woods, animals and men, even Actaeon and the stag, Narcissus and the flower, even our actions and our needs. But irony in turn is still a contemplation, nothing but a contemplation” (p. 75). Irony here is not reduced to human *contemplation* (contemplation is here understood as a pure event of sense). Rather, it is intensity, “a positive instance of difference that insists with its own force and has its own way of becoming” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 210). Thus, Colebrook defines Deleuze’s “transcendental empiricism” as *superior irony*, which “assesses the force of each event of difference and responds to each difference through style” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 210). To understand irony as contemplation, is to understand it affirmatively, “neither an elevation above life and common sense nor a negation of life” (p. 219). In this context, to say that all reading is ironic is to suggest that it is an event, a differential movement exposing a certain machinic and detached force of style. For Deleuze it is not that there is some prior life to be read and represented in human language and perception, nor is it that life is an effect of language.

Social constructivist and deconstructivist are different styles⁷ of reading and different styles of responding to that rupture in philosophic thought that separated and distanced the knower and the known and thus established objectivity and abstract thought, privileging the eye, height and elevation over ear, descent, noise and sound. If new forms of thinking

⁷ I am using here Colebrook’s definition of style as “a self-conscious repetition of the limit of any positive point of view. Style, in this sense, is nothing and everything, everywhere and nowhere” (Colebrook 2007, p. 181).

are to take place, this will have to take place, as Colebrook shows, in a new style of writing. And, I would argue, in a new style of reading. In the last section I take Stengers' reading of Whitehead's *Process and Reality* as an example of a new style of reading which points to the ironic nature of humanistic dependency on *lures for feeling* or sense. That is, rather than proposing that the thought of the beyond, or the outside of thought be represented or abandoned, Whitehead enlists the reader of *Process and Reality* on a journey. What matters to Whitehead is not some faithful interpretation of his text seeking some deeper sense in the problems and concepts he proposed. According to Stengers, what *matters* is that the reader "cares for the abstractions as such" (2008). In order to prevent the reader from falling back into habitual understanding and communication of ideas, he invented new words to pattern his concepts such as *concrecence*, *sacrament of meaning*, *eternal objects* and *prehensions*, to name just a few. I believe the irony at work in this text compels the reader to examine human abstractions not as disclosing some hidden sense or truth, dissembled or deferred by the demands of subject-predicate logic of sense and translation of meaning, but as forces that "demand their due attention, detached as they are from sheer disclosure" (Ibid.). I believe it is key to understand Whitehead's notion of an event, if his *Process and Reality* might indeed be read ironically, exhibiting a certain machinic and differential force at work as the reader is invited to create her own journey by encountering the different philosophical propositions displayed in the text in her own way. A journey where "very little is given as a foothold" in what seems to be a disconnected narrative of the why and "how abstractions matter". In this sense, some texts, such as *Process and Reality* for example, are more giving than others in terms of conveying what I mean when I maintain that all reading is ironic. That is, a text (digital, print, bacterial, DNA, etc.) itself might be more or less ironic, but all reading as defined in these pages is ironic.

2.2. Whitehead's ontology of events and prehensions

What is very much current in Whitehead's ontology of sense, is his exploration of modes of thought on a plane of immanence that does not posit the either/or disjunction of subject predicate sense production. Closer to De Man, Whitehead does not posit either textuality

or interpretation as that which would expose some truth or origin of sense. Whitehead refers to Leibniz, who “singularizes connectedness wholly within the individual experiences of the monads” but he rejects the terms ‘perception’ and ‘apperception’ with which “Leibniz designates the lower and higher ways in which one monad can take account of another, namely for ways of awareness” (Whitehead, 1967, pp. 233–234). In his view, Leibnizian perceptions and apperceptions are “intrinsically linked to consciousness”, which in Whitehead’s doctrine is not a “necessary supplement” all the more as he rejects the notion of representative perception. Whitehead proposes the term *prehension* (modeled on Leibnizian “apprehension”) for “the general way in which the occasion of experience can include, as part of its own essence, any other entity, whether another occasion of experience or an entity of another type. This term is devoid of suggestion either of consciousness or representative perception. Feelings are the positive type of prehensions” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 234). When occasions perish, they “pass from the immediacy of being into the not-being of immediacy” which does not mean that they are nothing for they remain a “stubborn fact”⁸ (Whitehead, 1967, p. 237).

The ontology of prehension is important here for two reasons; it alludes to the immanence of being as positivity (as opposed to absolute negativity, or lack) since there is no exteriority as opposed to interiority of experience of perception. Perceptions as prehensions become events and it is “events that are the ultimate realities” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 236). In *The Fold* Deleuze marks Whitehead’s prehensions as “conditions without closure”, perhaps we could say a folding movement, because unlike the “monad’s being-for the world,” Whitehead’s “condition of opening causes all prehension to be already the prehension of another prehension” (Deleuze, 2006, p. 81). A “pure physical prehension is a perception of derivation and an emotional continuity of past with present” (Ibid.). It is “a basic element from which springs the self-creation of each temporal occasion. Thus

⁸ An example given by Whitehead is the Roman Republic. In one sense, it declined and fell; “in another, it stands as a stubborn fact in the Universe. To perish is to assume a new function in a process of generation.” One such new function can be seen as in the “Devotion to the Republic [which] magnified the type of personal satisfactions for those who conformed their purposes to its maintenance” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 291).

perishing is the initiation of becoming. How the past perishes is how the future becomes” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 238). But this becoming is not continuous because each occasion, each event of becoming, is a production of creative novelty that is also a new form of concrescence – Whitehead’s new lexical word for concrete growing togetherness (Whitehead, 1967, p. 236). Perishing is the opening of becoming and the thousand little events of becoming via perishing are issued in novelty.

The ontology of prehensions for Whitehead is then not a question of the opening of pure truth but the confrontation of creative novelty where the issuing of destruction is a form of positive becoming. If there is a condition in Whitehead, it certainly involves the empirical mode of existence, but this experience is not viewed in terms of some anteriority or exteriority. Rather, it is confronted as a problem of novelty created in each event of becoming where this or that becoming is not a becoming-*for*, as conditioned in the transcendental philosophy of non-being. Further, Whitehead insists that the development of Western philosophy has been hindered by the implicit presupposition of the necessity of static, spatio-temporal, and physical forms of order.

However, for Whitehead thought can never analyze all that it experiences, and it is this acknowledgment that places limitations upon what can be achieved through investigation, examination, and understanding. If there is an event of sense production, with Whitehead it might be possible to say that rather than seeing it as pertaining to thought, it is conceived as a principle of novelty or the ‘production of concrete togetherness’. Prehensions are not sense perceptions of something because they are neither a part of cognition and perceiving nor a sensory-motor response. A singular prehension is first and foremost a prehension of prehension (feeling before sensing) and it is a nexus of prehensions which forms an event. Each new prehension is a singular unity (like Leibniz’s monads) that becomes objectified in the following prehension. However, in view of the more recent turn in humanities to *new materialism*, with Karen Barad’s (2007) theory of agential realism and her focus on *relata* as the key conceptual source, it is important to note, as Deleuze’s reading of Whitehead would suggest, that this “concrecence” of elements is not a simple interconnectedness or a conjunction; rather it is a prehension. Prehensions are individual unities and so

everything prehends its antecedents and its concomitants and by degrees prehends a world. The eye is a prehension of light. Living beings prehend water, soil, carbon and salts. At a given moment the pyramid prehends Napoleon's soldiers (forty centuries are contemplating us), and inversely. We can say that echoes, reflections, traces, prismatic deformations, perspectives, thresholds, folds are prehensions that somehow anticipate psychic life. (Deleuze, 1993, p. 78)

Thus an event is at once potential and real, virtual and actual, abstract and concrete, sharing in the becoming of another event and is subject of its own becoming. What then is an event?

According to Deleuze, the first condition of both Whitehead's and Leibniz's definition of an event is extension. But in order to understand Whitehead's notion of extension it is important to note that Whitehead did not accept the idea of the seamless continuity of time as a sort of constant flow of becoming. By appropriating quantum mechanics, he instead proposed an atomic theory of time where the event is the opening and perishing of singular actual occasions. The event is completed by passing from one present or state into another which is the past. An occurrence of actual experience in the atomic theory of time entails a cycle of birth and death in a continuity between one occurrence and another. It is not actual experience which becomes here, rather it is continuity itself which becomes. Whitehead's famous formulation in *Process and Reality* that "the many become one and are increased by one" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 21) thus implies that a plurality of past events and eternal objects is not a pre-given oneness, rather it becomes one as the past events and virtual universes enter into an actual occasion as an inventive or creative process of occurrence, actualising as something new. Thus this becoming is not continuous because each occasion, each act of becoming, is a production of creative novelty that is also a new form of concrescence (Whitehead, 1967, p. 236). In the atomic structure of time, every actual event is implicated in the past event "which perishes once it is completed and once a new path on the vector of time is engaged" (Ibid.). This is far from an autopoietic system of intra agential movement defining the link between parts or individual agencies, as might be found in Barad's work. This is because "an actual occasion is a novel entity different from any other entity in the many which it defines" (Whitehead, 1978, p. 21). In other

words, the connection between parts is itself a novelty, an event of prehensions rather than the action of phenomena as postulated by Barad.

Understanding Whitehead's notion of time is key in understanding his idea of an event. As noted before, extension is the first component or definition of an event. With Whitehead, extension entails a connection of whole and parts where "one element is stretched over the following ones, such that it is a whole and the following elements are its parts" (Deleuze, 1993, p. 77). The infinite series of such a connection of wholes and parts "contains neither a limit nor a final term" and so the event can be conceived as "a vibration with an infinity of harmonics or submultiples, such as an audible wave, a luminous wave, or even an increasingly smaller part of space over the course of an increasingly shorter duration" (Ibid.). When space and time are understood as abstract diagrams of all series, always in extension then it becomes important to understand that for Whitehead, "extensive series" have "intensive properties", which is a second definition of an event, such as a certain colour, a sound, a texture. These "intensive properties converge towards limits in every new infinite series, entering into relations on their own accord," where the "relation among limits establishes a unification" (Ibid.). Looking at this in terms of signification and communication, following Deleuze we can say that the intensive qualities would be accounted for if we privileged "demonstrative pronouns rather than indefinite articles" (Ibid.) For example, "Are you seeing this?" is given primacy over "Look at a cat playing hide and seek". Intensive properties are thus not an image, a quality or representation, nor are they bound to the self-originating elevated point of view of the subject.

Whitehead's God is not the Creator of a transcendental "final togetherness out of nothing" but is a metaphysical principle of Immanent Creativity, where "each event is a process issuing in novelty" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 236). The world is made of events, happenings (verbs) where actual occasions (rather than nouns, things or solid substances) become and perish in an event of concrescence. This brings us to the third component of an event, namely the *individual*, which for Whitehead is pure creativity, the formation of a novelty. This, according to Deleuze,

is a personal mood, no longer indefinite or demonstrative. An individual is a concrescence of elements (each element having parts and being a part with intrinsic features) and as we have seen, this is not a connection but a prehension. An individual is a prehension. It is thus easier to understand that perception is the datum of the prehending subject, not effecting the prehending subject passively, but fulfilling a potential by virtue of its spontaneity in a sense that perception becomes an active expression of the monad, as a function of its own point of view. (ibid.)

As with Leibniz, everything in this universe according to Whitehead prehends everything else but it unfolds this infinite variation according to its own point of view. This ear at this moment prehends itself in its own world as it perceives a thousand little timbers of sound pulsating in the events and divergent relations of every other organ, memory, emotion and voice metabolising in this body where this sum of these divergent relations originate as a novelty, issuing not as unity but a flux of a discontinuous repetition of continuity of worlds. A thousand little perceptions. So the conditions of the objective world to become subjective are the conjunction of divergent series as producers of novelty which is compossible in its multiplicity but with the addition of one. However, as becomes evident by the fourth component of an event – eternal objects or ingressions - such conditions become actualised by the ingression of pure potentialities in the event.

According to Deleuze's interpretation, "extensions are movements, gaining and losing parts" as things are infinitely being altered and thus events are seen as fluvia⁹. Eternal objects are pure Possibilities realized in fluvia and are at the same time pure Virtualities that are actualized in prehension. No prehension can grasp other prehensions without apprehending the ingression of the eternal objects in an event. Eternal objects or conceptual feelings ("correlative to thinking prehensions"), can be *qualities* such as a colour or a sound ("combination of prehensions"), sometimes *figures*, like the pyramid ("determining extension") and they are also *things*, like silver or sandstone ("cutting through matter"). As in Leibniz, "figures, qualities, and things are schema of permanence that are reflected

⁹ fluvial (adj.) "pertaining to a river," late 14c., from Latin fluvialis "of a river," from fluvius "a river, stream, running water," related to fluere "to flow" (see flow (v.)). From Online Etymology Dictionary.

or actualized in monads, but that are realized in flux [...]” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 80). Deleuze offers a poetic account of this idea:

The origins of the sounds are monads or prehensions that are filled with joy in themselves, with an intense satisfaction, as they fill up their perceptions and move from one perception to another. And the notes of the scale are eternal objects, pure Virtualities that are actualized in the origins, but also pure Possibilities that are attained in vibrations or flux. (Ibid.)

With Whitehead, according to Deleuze, the play of the world is the play that diverges, it is a “world of captures, instead of closures” as is the case with Leibniz where “the monads’ being-for the world is submitted to a condition of closure, all compossible monads including a single and same world” (Ibid., p. 81). In contrast, for Whitehead prehensions are “open onto the world”, and “bifurcations, divergences, impossibilities, and discord belong to the same motley world that can no longer be included in expressive units, but only made or undone according to prehensive units and variable configurations or changing captures. In a same chaotic world divergent series are endlessly tracing bifurcating paths” (Ibid. p. 81). With Whitehead, and in contrast to Leibniz, God is not a Being who chooses the best compossible world but instead “becomes Process”. In this “chaosmos” beings “are pushed apart, kept open through divergent series and impossible totalities that pull them outside, instead of being closed upon the compossible and convergent world that they express from within” (Ibid. p. 81).

In terms of sense, irony and reading, perhaps it is possible to say that for Whitehead, signs are not expressive units disclosing some hidden or deferred nature of things as in traditional irony. Rather, to say that all reading is superiorly ironic is to say that the condition of the opening of the world is not a closure of some compossible and convergent sense that is then readable. Instead this world is a process where destruction, indifference, impossibilities and divergence are forces opening to their own point of view. This is why, I think, Stengers chooses to name her reading of Whitehead’s *Process and Reality* as constructivist.

For Whitehead, a mathematician versed in differential calculus, it was possible to think or hold divergent series of problems together, affirming impossible abstractions as building blocks. Calculus involves careful and sometimes counter-intuitive ways of thinking about the continuous and the discrete, the finite and the infinite. As such, these divergences demand attention from the reader in a wholly different manner. What is required is for the reader to see them as abstractions, coherent in their own point of view but not necessarily assuming a convergent context of meaning, which would issue in a generalizable point of view of a coherent narrative as a whole. In terms of a contemporary turn to matter as a reaction formation against Cartesian abstractionism it is important to stress how abstraction is understood here. According to Whitehead, *concrete facts exhibit entities that are abstract compared to it and nevertheless belong to it*

The explanatory purpose of philosophy is often misunderstood. Its business is to explain the emergence of the more abstract things from the more concrete things. It is a complete mistake to ask how concrete particular fact can be built up out of universals. The answer is, "In no way." The true philosophic question is, How can concrete fact exhibit entities abstract from itself and yet participated in by its own nature? In other words, philosophy is explanatory of abstraction, and not of concreteness. (*Process and Reality*, p. 20)

He introduces *eternal objects* (which are the virtual or possible entities) to convey what he means by the reality and materiality of abstraction. Similarly, Deleuze and Guattari's premise that the virtual (imperceptible continuities and discontinuities) and the actual (thresholds, milieus, events) grow together (*concretescence*) or *fold* at points of inflection rather than being enclosed dots on a geometrical line. As an example of the pitfalls of *concretising* or *corporealizing* philosophy see Colebrook's HYPO-HYPER-HAPTO-NEURO-MYSTICISM (2013) where she claims that

theory is not theory (and philosophy is not philosophy) if it is grounded in the tactility of the body. The idea of theory opens a necessarily critical distance of philosophy, even if that distance is contaminated, impossible and never as inhuman as it might strive to be. If (following a certain Heideggerian tradition) thinking is taken to be a comportment to the world that is without home, solace, identity or body—or at least where embodiment and dwelling offer almost nothing—then hypo-hyper-hapto-

neuro-mysticism—by contrast—indulges in the easy comfort that all so-called thinking is always connected, in touch, and oriented towards a world that is necessarily one's own. (Ibid., p.1)

In *Process and Reality*, point of view is dispersed where each problem *demand*s to be seen as a building block in a construction rather than issuing in some inter- or intra-connection of relations. To reiterate, pertinent to this thesis and what seems most compelling to me is that both Deleuze and Whitehead situate the actual and the virtual within the empirical. Their empirical does not assume an outside as substance or essence at a distance from a human point of view. And it does not assume that thought originates in the eternal or transcendental. Rather, as is the case in superior irony, “each point of view is the affirmation of its own infinite world: not a point within the real but the real itself” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 225).

2.3. Whitehead/Stengers “constructivist” ontology of reading

From Socrates to the 21st century, the question of self has been approached from philosophy, literature, art and science just as the formation of a notion of subjectivity has been a gradual process that took centuries to evolve. I have tried to show in the first part, that this formation has been embedded in a particular viewpoint, one that gradually separated the subject from its communal existence. The categories of inside and outside, of the limited and unlimited, of cause and effect, of essence and transcendence are not a natural progression of a matter fact. They are embedded in a particular image of thought, one privileging the either/or scheme that continually perpetuates the bifurcation of nature. This representational thought, according to Deleuze, assumes negation, opposition, difference, identity and recognition. It is figured in a certain temporality, certain grammar (subject-predicate) and, as Colebrook shows, a certain viewpoint (elevation, height).

Whitehead was after a different philosophical plane and point of view. If we assume that the form of his writing would need to correspond with the idea of the bifurcation of nature, he would have had to invent a new style of writing. In *A Constructivist Reading of Process*

and Reality (2008), Stengers argues that this seminal work should be read as an event, inviting a reader to experiment, play and invent her own way of thinking and reading with this work. That is, Stengers invents her own understanding of the word “constructivist” to describe what I believe to be Whitehead’s atomic composition or architectonic fluvia of various impossible abstractions as building blocks assembled side by side – each one *corresponding to the demand for its own differential reading* rather than *functioning as a part, correlated to and expressing other parts in the narrative as a whole*:

The problem I want to address here is how to approach *Process and Reality*, a text which has repelled so many readers but also a text which, I will claim, must be defended against a rather usual reading, which would bring the reader back to the common sense notion of a “conception of the world”, to be compared to so many such conceptions we have already, be they inspired by physics, by complexity theory or by theory of emergence. If Whitehead’s text had to be understood in such terms, its astonishing difficulty would be a matter of perplexity. Usually, the first efficacy of conceptions of the world is to produce adhesion, a feeling that we have understood, that the world explains itself for us. But if we are tempted to understand Whitehead’s proposition as unfolding the vision of a creative universe, we are thrown into some confusion. Not only does creativity never appear as an actor, or a power, or a tendency, or a force, but strange concepts, such as eternal objects or God, seem to stand in the way of any intuitive understanding of the world as some sort of creative, spontaneous becoming. (Stengers, 2008, p. 1)

There is no spontaneous and creative continuity of becoming of the world, no beyond for ‘us’ to adequately perceive, represent or restore in language. But neither is this world an expression of an intending mind. To avoid this bifurcation of nature Whitehead sought not to explain concrete experience against its fabrication by intellectual abstractions, which would be more akin to a sort of Bergsonian intuition because for Whitehead “abstract propositions, be they propositions relating a perception or philosophical propositions are not something, which would be abstracted from what would be more concrete. They are first and foremost interesting, eliciting interest, and more precisely a variation of interest,” so that “[a]bstract propositions are asking for, and prompting to, a “leap of imagination”, they act as a lure for feeling, for feeling “something that matters”” (Ibid., p. 2). To state that “here is a gray grain of sand” is nothing more than the confirmation of the adequacy

of perception, “abstracted from the selection of what matters” and of what can be specified. There is no truth beyond our abstractions. So the point is not that we either are “prisoners of our abstractions” nor, as is claimed by the anti-Cartesian charge, that we are the extension of some pre-existing interconnected network of relations. In contrast,

we may well become prisoners of the false problems they create, when we extend outside their specialized domain the trust they indeed deserve inside this domain. The point is thus not to criticize abstractions but to take care of them, and to engineer new modes of abstractions designed to lure an appreciation of our many modes of abstraction without nostalgia for whatever would lead us beyond them. (Ibid., p. 3)

That is, to claim that something is in nature, for example in the nature of a child that strives for expression is, paraphrasing Stengers, a philosophical construction, however what matters for Whitehead is that whatever the conclusion about a proposition is, “what is prohibited from the start is that we are left with the nostalgic memory of what we believed we experienced about nature, and must accept now to be only ours: our own transcendental, cultural linguistic, or social construction” (Ibid., pp. 4-5). For Whitehead, what is perceived may be altered, if the way “we” pay attention changes, which does not mean that it can be “annihilated, interpreted away in terms of general conditions, which would explain away what did first matter” (Ibid., pp. 4-5). Concepts are intensity, but they cannot be perceived away from the “imaginative leap” of a “philosopher experimenting with disclosure, not disclosure of a pre-existent experience, but of experience as conceptually ‘lured’” (Ibid., p. 4). An example of how to think abstraction in a constructivist sense (and not the typical Aristotelian “take away” thoughts and perceptions) is given by Stengers by using a concept of a mathematical circle:

we need to forget about nouns like “a table” or “a human being”, and think rather about a mathematical circle. Such a circle is not abstracted from concrete circular forms, its mode of abstraction is related to its functioning as a lure for mathematical thought, luring mathematicians into adventures which produce into a mathematical mode of existence new aspects of what it means, to be a circle [...]. (Ibid.)

However, nothing can be created or interpreted in general, for the “The process of tuning indeed works both ways, on human as well as on nonhuman agency, constitutively intertwining a double process of emergence, of a disciplined human agency and of a captured material agency” (Ibid., p. 3). What is a matter of concern, or a challenge faced by the philosopher, is not so much “the *what* of the concern”, but “*how* what matters obliges the philosopher” to think, design and create. It is the demand that we become able to read side by side the most divergent and impossible of concepts or problems. Or in Stengers’ words “[i]t is the demand that we become able to interpret together, without opposition, hierarchy or disconnection, what we usually describe in terms of mutually contradicting terms, freedom and determination, for instance, or cause and reason, or fiction and reality, or mind and matter” (Ibid., p. 6).

It is crucial here to remember that the point is not to go beyond those contradictions towards some kind of an inspired or transcendent vision, mysteriously able to discover a unified reality. Philosophy is about designing not transcending. As Stengers shows, the divide displayed by the bifurcation of nature must not be *repaired or tamed*. That is, any strategy of explaining away, of reducing some aspects of our experience to selected others, has to be resisted. In other words, following Stengers, “the demand for coherence will authorize no simplification, no purification or selection of what really matters. Everything we experiment must matter. Friction must be maximised. Again, it not a question of criticizing our specialized abstractions, or of dictating limitations. Rather of dramatizing them as achievements with a price” (Ibid.). The aim was, as Whitehead wrote, to produce both “a restraint upon specialists and an enlargement of their imagination” (PR, p. 17). In Stengers’ words “Limitation produces nostalgia, dreams of the forbidden possibility for your abstractions to rule undisputed, while enlargement of imagination means appreciating the importance and value of abstractions as such” (Stengers, Ibid., pp. 6-7).

What Whitehead achieved in writing *Process and Reality* is just this dramatization of abstractions, and he accomplished this by dramatizing writing. A certain style of writing promotes certain modes of abstraction and it is the process of inventing new styles of writing that can transform the experience of readers, where “we cannot but feel that the

settled ground which permits the communion of intuition we call meaning is missing. Each abstraction is mutely appealing for an imaginative leap, and it is this very leap which cannot be abstracted from its relevance to other abstractions also calling for an imaginative leap” (Ibid., p. 13). Abstractions are mute and partial, mutually impossible and not conditioned on some common ground or closure. This “absence of meaning or the non-meaning” (Ibid.) of *Process and Reality* embarks a reader on the adventure of reading without nostalgia for the loss of common ground or some intended meaning for ‘us’ to discern. Instead, the text is not a coming together of some organic whole. It is machinic rather than auto-poetic, with each part or compartment issuing in its own world. With Whitehead, “abstractions no longer bear a relation to the world but to themselves” (Ibid.). Such reading is possible only if the subject is conceived “not as something that exists and then happens to read, enjoy, share and contemplate this or that community of intuition as elicited by a sign” (Stengers, Ibid., p. 9).

To cultivate ironic reading in terms of pedagogical practice would mean to aim at “dramatizing the confidence we have in our abstractions” (Ibid.) and sense production. It would mean to create opportunities for students where reading would be evoked as an event or architectonic fluvia. Such reading would be ironic precisely because it would elucidate a certain detached and mute “disclosure” of sense. For example, teachers could look for texts (literary, scientific, digital, gestural) where what is seemingly incongruent and divergent can be read side by side. I believe evoking a certain mute force of a text (written, visual, corporeal, digital, geological etc.) ought to be one of the aims of literacy education in times to come (under the threat of human extinction and ever greater ecological destruction). Perhaps learning to read with no intention of understanding and decoding is one way. That is, to learn to read with nothing beyond to be revealed or appropriated by and for *us*. The ethical charge of such an intention is to see *texts* as an inhuman intensity and force eventuating in their own time and space, irrespective of the human point of view. This is not suggesting that we gracefully extend our notions of agency to texts as objects or actors in a network of mutually interrelated phenomena and things. Rather, it is to say, with respect to the force of irony, that abstractions just as texts are material, machinic,

indifferent and monstrous, and they eventuate in their own ontology of space and time. That is, if there is mutual entanglement, as claimed in certain strands of posthumanist and new materialist accounts of literacy education, it should not be premised on some common ground or condition, assuming a reproductive network as in one common and well functioning organism. As with the example of the ironic reading of *Process and Reality*, it is the destruction of sense as a bounded whole that is most constructive in elucidating a detached force of the text.

Chapter 3.

Étienne Souriau and an existential ontology of reading

Within the posthumanist and new materialist turn, the multiplicity of modes of existence is brought to the fore wherein matter is given agency in the quest to decentre the human subject as imagined by Enlightenment humanist thought. However, in proposing that the relationality between various actors (subjects, objects, inhuman etc.) takes the form of one grand and bounded harmonious network of interconnected material forces we run the risk once more of posing unity (counting to one) as the organising principle of relationality.

In exploring existential pluralism of relations, Étienne Souriau, proposes an infinity of modes of existence (beyond subject, object and the symbolic) which do not wind up in One. For him, beings (real and virtual) have no substance and in as much as they persist, it is due to the fact that they are always being instaured anew. In this chapter, I wish to explore his concept of *instauration* or the process of the “work to-be-made” in order to look at how a pedagogy of reading might be explored as *an* event and an inhuman force of invention, obligation and risk.

All being and becoming is a process of instauration, wherein instauration attests to life as an invention and a journey. For Souriau, just as for Alfred N. Whitehead before him and Gilles Deleuze after, the completed work is always a novelty, a discovery, a surprise. Souriau proposed that the mode of existence of the “work to-be-made” is different from the completed work and both of these modes are autonomous in as much as they are operating indifferently of the intentions of both the artist and the ‘final’ work of art. Souriau exemplifies his ideas through artistic examples, but it would be just as easy to apply his ideas to, for example, a research conducted in a scientific laboratory.

For Souriau, there is always an unstable equilibrium between the intentions of an artist and the obligation that the potential or virtual work of art presents the artist with. That is, reading as an *event of assemblage* is conceived in its multiplicity of details (actual) and potentialities (virtual). Thus, the provocation exists as a *contrast* (rather than opposition,

which assumes the *either/or* disjunction) between what has been read, what might have been read, and what will have been read. What becomes invented, welcomed, exchanged or prehended in an *event* of reading is a novelty and an actuality in its own right and existence, indifferent of the parts (subject, object, symbolic) that constitute the event of reading. Reading Souriau with Claire Colebrook, I suggest that the concept of instauration can be understood as assuming a certain machinic or detached force at work in singular events of reading.

Before moving into the discussion of what the concept of instauration might yield in terms of literacy, I wish to first contextualise the present chapter within a wider context of the posthumanist turn in humanities and education more particularly. In the last part I hope to present readers with an example of how literacy educators might think the concept of instauration as a pedagogy of reading.

3.1. Interruption; or against business as usual

I begin this section by briefly presenting Colebrook's arguments, exposing posthumanism as ultrahumanism in order to situate my own arguments within the current theory and to set the stage for the ways in which Souriau embarked on his philosophical journey by asking the question of how to overcome the bifurcation of nature in philosophical thought.

Yes, most avowed post-humanisms have celebrated the destruction of man as the ground of all reason, but what they have brought back is one grand whole of interconnected systems of observation (often readable in terms of some grander system of class, power or life). But it is the sacrifice of man as Cartesian subject in favor of a posthuman ecology of systems that allows the humanities to live on. If the human is assumed to be nothing more than an interface, already at one with a world that is one living system, then posthumanism is nothing more than the negation of a humanism that never was. It is an ultrahumanism precisely because once man is abandoned as a distinct system or inflection he returns to characterize nature or life in general, just as the death of God left an implicit and widespread theologism that no longer had a distinct or explicit logic. (Colebrook, 2014a, p. 163)

What unites posthumanist affirmations in search of networks, meshes, intra-connectivity, living organisms, etc. is positing nature as *one* grounding and unifying whole. The bifurcating logic of sense, “marking a single modality and active becoming of all existence is not overcome but reacted against,” and thus “When man is destroyed to yield a post-human world it is the same world *minus humans*, a world of meaning, sociality and readability yet without any sense of the disjunction, gap or limits of the human” (Colebrook, 2014a, p. 160). Colebrook argues that what is left is “the human all too human tendency to see the world as one giant anthropomorphic self-organizing living body” (ibid.). For example, in the introduction to one of the most recent compilations of the work on posthumanism in education - *Posthumanism and Educational Research*, the authors postulate that the most difficult task in “facing a future of posthumanist (educational) research,” is “acknowledging the “agency” of knowing in nonhuman subjects. What sorts of research could emerge that might include nonhumans as subjects?” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 5). They go on to say that in “this move away from consciousness and toward embodiment, materiality, and affect, posthumanism puts enormous pressure on humanist research methods ...” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 6).

The problem of a future of educational research is here exposed as twofold: how to keep the epistemological and the subjective, only now extended and granted to the nonhumans; and how to move away from the overtly Cartesian notion of human cogito as a separated and enclosed faculty to the moral vitalist and materialist notions of how this human man becomes. This ultrahumanism—the posing of the problem as an opposition between the epistemological and the material, the rational and affective, the conscious and the embodied—repeats the pernicious force of the age-old problem in the history of educational philosophy and practise. What is prolonged is the bifurcating conception of education based *either* on the belief in the necessity of Platonic pure abstract apprehension of ‘life’ *or* the pure experiential and concrete affectation of ‘life.’

What we find today, in the turn to posthumanist paradigm, is a reprise of the problem that Egan (2004) describes in his *Getting it wrong from the beginning* where he writes about speculative philosophical inquiry and scientific research methodology, the later being

taken up by educational psychology as the single viable way in terms of how we “should get it right”. In education, scientifically proven paradigmatic ideas provided comfort in the belief in unified, standardized and universal logico-mathematical reason. This belief later became a part of a bigger progressivist paradigm (Spencer, Dewey). Today, the alternative modes of reasoning such as aesthetic and animate, for example, are being conscripted within the vitalist strand of the posthumanist turn to matter, bodies, affect and the nonhuman as counter-normative. From this point of view, the knowing subject, the *epistēmē* and the known are no longer distinct entities but parts in a continuity of becoming of interconnected and self-maintaining whole striving towards realization.

The underlying question in the history of education then is perhaps not so much how a child becomes initiated into being a human through education but what is it in the *nature* of a child such that it can or ought to be educated? “Innate ideas” (Plato), “natural goodness” (Rousseau) or “infinite diversity of active tendencies” (Dewey)? And what is the *nature* of human society such that it needs some form of an educated or initiated adult? It seems as though the various turns in philosophy responded to these questions in their own style (romantic, modernist, progressive, linguistic, performative, etc.) and the most recent one, following the educational principles developed by Rousseau and Dewey, is the progressivist-constructivist idea that each student in a classroom is an active learner who is pursuing his or her own individual educational ‘curriculum’ on top of or next to that of a teacher. It is possible to say that the ethical imperative in education today is “a subject [who] is not a mechanism that unfolds in time to realize what he was always going to be, but becomes what he ought to be by realizing his self-creative freedom” (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 25). In the quest for creative becoming and self-realization of a subject, the turns to affect, embodiment, materiality and the nonhuman all strive to go beyond the normativity of consciousness, language and identity. However, what is highly normative in these accounts, according to Colebrook, is the question of what counts as life. I believe the question of education as a “guided discovery” pertaining to *nature* (intrinsic as in Rousseau or extrinsic as in Dewey) to be intrinsically bound up with the question of life, more specifically, with what Colebrook describes as ‘life *as it really is*’:

Indeed, the very notion and possibility of the normative, or the idea that one can proceed from what is (life) to what ought to be (ways of living) has always taken the form of vitalism. [...] I will define vitalism as the imperative of grounding, defending or deriving principles and systems from *life as it really is*. (This is why many post-human or anti-biopolitical models can be vitalist: it is life beyond humans, or life beyond the bourgeois subject of production, that is often appealed to in order to open a new horizon.) (Colebrook, 2014, p. 77)

Following Colebrook, it is possible to frame the *problem* in the history of educational philosophy of what is it in the nature of a child that ought to be taken as the grounding for pedagogical intervention as that of *active vitalism*. The consequence of discerning this philosophical question as a *problem* of vitalism is that it obliges us to think what images of life, thought and perception are presupposed as the ground from which the questions of what it means to educate well (a speaking, reading, computing, contemplating, communal and creatively self-maintaining subject) begin. In terms of the contemporary search for ‘new’ ways of doing pedagogy, such as posthumanist and materialist turns in education to affect and embodiment, what seems to be taken as the unproblematic *raison d'être* is just this appeal to ‘life beyond humans’. If we are not to continue with business as usual, literacy education included, then what might need to be contested is, following Colebrook, “life emerging from meaning as well as thought emerging from life and fashioned as readable”. Such bifurcation is maintained in those strands of posthumanist thought where what is affirmed are the vitalist declarations of the active, continuous and harmonious mode of becoming of intra-connectivity of human and inhuman networks of relationality (such as in sustaining material entanglements, emergent identities, agential realisms and vitalist ecology to name a few).

For the most part ‘life as it really is’ is defined through actual life: here, vitalism begins from living bodies (usually human, usually heterosexual, usually familial) and then asks what it means to live well. We could refer to this, following Deleuze and Guattari, as an active vitalism because it assumes that ‘life’ refers to acting and well-organized bodies. However, there is another way of understanding ‘life as it really is,’ and this is to align the real with the virtual. For Deleuze and Guattari this leads to a passive vitalism, where ‘life’ is a pre-individual plane of forces that does not act by

a process of decision and self-maintenance but through chance encounters.
(Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77)

What has been advantaged in the philosophy of education is this moral and temporal privileging of an active, creative, living body of a child and an “already constituted image of life as necessarily fruitful, generative, organized and human.” However, as Colebrook argues:

By understanding life as virtual we no longer begin with the image of a living body, and are therefore able to consider forces of composition that differ from those of man and the productive organism. [Passive vitalism] is not just different or distortive of those images, but comprises a power of imaging that is not oriented to the eye of recognition, the eye that views the world according to its own already organized desires. (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77)

Understanding life as virtual might have profound implications for education and for a pedagogy of reading if we understand reading in terms of it being an event.¹⁰ Following Colebrook, I hope to show that the ‘new’ educational theories maintain the active human agent and continue the long philosophical tradition of upholding life as meaningful and productive only.

Thus, in what follows, I attempt to sketch out Souriau’s philosophy of existence in order to then formulate the productivity in thinking of the possibility of a passive vitalism as it pertains to thinking about a different ethics or pedagogy of reading in literacy education. In the conclusion of this essay I will look at Souriau’s philosophy in relation to Stephen Muecke’s vitalist reading of Souriau in his attempt at conceiving new forms of literary criticism in order to suggest possible ways of considering different modes of coming-into-being of reading. But for now, I wish to suggest that Souriau, just as Whitehead before him,

¹⁰ To the best of my knowledge, there has only been one attempt at systematically formulating the problem of the virtual in education. In *Mathematics and the Body*, Elizabeth de Freitas and Nathalie Sinclair employ Gilles Châtelet’s philosophy of the virtual in order to problematize the new embodied approaches to studying mathematics education. They use mathematical concepts as a method and an aesthetic tool to challenge the current assumptions about the role of the senses and language in teaching and learning mathematics.

obliges us to think and work out problems architectonically: as an onto-topology of coexisting and yet distinctive planes of virtual and actual existences assuming that failure of phenomenal connectivity is constitutive to any ontology of experienced material relationality. By contrast, for example, Plato works out his metaphysical architectonic as a structure wherein the figure of the *chora* (the maternal void) functions as an intermediary between being and becoming (Mikulan, 2010). With Whitehead, Deleuze and Souriau, the architectonic of their metaphysics is less of a structure assuming a continuum of an infinitely divisible phenomenal world (such as in Aristotle, *see* Kavanaugh, 2007, p. 139) or a phenomenal continuum of real intra-actions themselves producing phenomena (such as phenomena-in-things as a spatialized extension in Barad, *see* Parisi in Nigianni & Storr, 2005) than it is fluvia, a flow of folding points of inflections, a growing togetherness of virtual and actual, whereby each mode of existence (phenomenological, subjective, objective, virtual etc.) issues its own intensive spatium, an abstract activity in an event of being and becoming

Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of immanence leaves no doubt that this may be the case. In particular, the concept of the event clearly points out that a virtual world is implicated in every subject as a field from which a point of view, for example a manner or modality, distinguishes itself. Against Aristotelian essentialism, these mannerisms are modalities of transformation of world extended to the cosmos, but not for such cosmos to encompass all modalities summed into One totality. (Deleuze in Parisi in Nigianni & Storr, 2005, p. 83)

Indeed, for Souriau, such cosmos is never a whole, unity or totality, but a multiplicity of modes of existences continuously composing and disintegrating in the process of the work to-be-made.

3.2. Instauration and Étienne Souriau's passive vitalism

Souriau's text *Les différents modes d'existence* has featured very little in philosophical and cultural critique since its publication in 1943¹¹. He has been re-introduced in France in 2009 by the republication of the aforementioned book and the lengthy 'introduction' to this corpus by Isabelle Stengers and Bruno Latour, namely *The Spinx of the Work*, which, together with the translation¹² of the original text, is only now available to the English-speaking world. With these publications, Souriau is only now starting to figure somewhat prominently in continental and Australian philosophy¹³ and we are yet to see what becomes of his work in the Anglo-American academic context.

For Souriau, questioning the nature of existence and the passage into being, there is only an *existential incompleteness of everything*. Moving beyond bifurcation, he suggests modes of existence to be multiple and plurimodal, where subject and object are instaured or become concrete together, side by side. Instauration is neither self-determined from the moment of instantiation nor caused by its milieu; instead, there are virtual potentialities towards which the event of instauration tends.

Vitry Maubrey outlines instauration as the "ensemble of processes which lead to the moment wherein the presence, assurance and autonomy of existence conferred upon a certain being are incontestable" (cited in Noske, 2015, p. 38). She suggests that the concept is mobilised in place of words such as invention and creation. However, "creation," she notes, "if one uses it in the strictest sense, indicates the act of drawing a being from nothing, an act which can only be understood in reference to a divine power" (In Noske, 2015, p. 38).

¹¹ With the exception of Luce de Vitry Maubrey and her *La Pensée cosmologique d'Etienne Souriau* published in 1974.

¹² Souriau (2015), *The Different Modes of Existence*. From now *DME*.

¹³ Isabelle Stengers (2008, 2009), Bruno Latour (2009, 2011, 2014), Stephen Muecke (2012), Catherine Noske (2015) and Frederic Fruteau de Laclos (2011).

Frédéric Fruteau de Laclos, according to Catherine Noske, defines instauration “as all encompassing: neither the subject nor the object, neither the form of the thought nor the worked material, pre-exist the act of instauration. The subject is no more assumed than the object is pre-determined. Subject and object, he suggests, are born coterminously, of the same instaurative act” (Noske, 2015, p. 38). In what follows I wish to argue that instauration is less of an act than it is an *event* and an *encounter* signifying the essential component of any instaurative process - the force of the virtual or of pure potentiality. I take instauration to be an assemblage of rhythmic intensity where the passage from one mode of existence to another (from virtual to actual for example, or from concrete to abstract) is a matter of instituting-into-relations, neither through *what it is for* or *what it does*, but through its irreducibility to either of these forms. It is the dramatization of the imperative of failure and annihilation “of the ever recurring questions of the sphinx: ‘work it out, or thou shalt be devoured’” (Souriau, 2015, p. 229). Instauration rather than creation for it promises no redemption or salvation *for* the agent.

A metamorphosis... You surely know the charming text by the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi: one night, Zhuangzi dreamt that he was a butterfly, fluttering about without a care. Then he awoke and realized that he was simply poor, old Zhuangzi. “Yet we cannot know,” he adds, “whether it is Zhuangzi who awoke after having dreamt he was a butterfly, or whether it is the butterfly who dreamt that he became the waking Zhuangzi. Nevertheless,” adds the philosopher, “there is a demarcation between Zhuangzi and the butterfly. That demarcation is the becoming, a passage, the act of a metamorphosis.” (Souriau, 2015, pp. 224–225)

Not reducible to either the virtual or actual, *this* passage is the only unquestionable foothold. With this in mind, Souriau, as I will show later, should not be mobilised today as an *active vitalist* (as for example in the works of Bruno Latour and Stephen Muecke), but as a philosopher whose concepts are akin to the *passive vitalism* of Henri Bergson, A. N. Whitehead, Raymond Ruyer and Gilles Deleuze. As Colebrook shows, “this passive vitalism is one in which ‘life’ is not some force that actualizes itself in single bodies, but a ‘field of survey’ that places any body’s becoming in relation to the forces of its milieu, and never as active self-creation,” wherein “there are virtual powers towards which development tends” (“queer aesthetics,” n.d., p. 29).

As Stengers and Latour show, the world according to Souriau does not present anything *to* or *for* us. For Souriau nothing is given in advance. The author and her work of art grow to existence together. Souriau's *forms* attest to continuity that is not pre-given, but which must be eventuated. These forms are not conditioned by perception or thought, but neither do they belong to the thing itself, inertly waiting to be revealed. Instead, his forms attest to the manner in "which realization is conceived of as a conquest. They reveal themselves in the very movement by which thinking and that which is thought about become concrete together" (Souriau, 2015, pp. 24–25). This is far from the Platonic ideal forms that pre-determine concrete forms!

It is certainly not useless to have noted . . . this constitutive characteristic of philosophical thought, namely, that philosophical thought tends towards the work [œuvre] – towards the monumental, towards a singularity, towards a being that constitutes the philosophical *ousia*. Philosophical thought belongs therefore to the genre of instaurative thought. This word 'instauration', which is here being used without it being stressed, avoids the word 'creation', which is full of traps. From one viewpoint, man creates nothing. Nature itself creates nothing. The opening of the bud does not create the rose. All of its material conditions were there. The form is the sole thing that is new. Novelty is immaterial and, naturally, the immaterial is alone new. (Souriau in Lawlor, 2011, p. 403)

For Souriau, philosophic thought must be instaured, which means that it must be actualized through relations and supported by *form*. His forms are not ideal, they are rather "the keys to reality", referring not to some grounding reality either, but to the "riddle to which realization provides its solution" (Souriau, 2015, p. 25). There is no substance or life in itself; only *anaphoric*¹⁴ *variation* which is another way Souriau describes his notion of instauration. In a sense, anaphoric variation is the dramatization of the force of the passage. That is, what Souriau is concerned with is not how being is given in itself, but how the instaurative passage through oneself (aseity) or through the other (abeleity) becomes eventuated (it can always succeed or fail, becomes conquered or annihilated) in its infinite

¹⁴ "repetition of a word or phrase in successive clauses," 1580s, from Latin, from Greek *anaphora* "reference," literally "a carrying back," from *anapherein* "to carry back, to bring up," from *ana* "back" (see *ana-*) + *pherein* "to bear". (Dictionary.com)

modes of existence. But that being said, for Souriau, different modes of existence also cannot be reduced to actual relations but are to-be-accomplished in each singular event of instauration (meaning that existence does not correspond to the already established, organized or synthesized life, but attests to the forces which thought cannot incorporate as its own).

By contrast, in her posthumanist inquiry into materiality, philosopher of physics Karen Barad (2007) draws on the latest findings in quantum mechanics in order to argue for “agential realism”, where relations precede relata (p. 136). She uses the term “intra-activity” to designate that distinct agencies such as humans, artifacts, and particles exist only through relation to other agencies, such that different agencies only come to being through their relations. For Barad, materiality is less about things or objects than the relations and entanglements that produce them. However, in presuming an agential power of matter as a neutral expression of reality, such a micro-cosmos of relationality taken at face-value (as in some strands of posthumanist theory) ignores a plurality of alternate modes of existence of materiality (such as materiality of *sense*, as suggested in the conclusion).

The ontology of instauration is then not a question of the opening of pure truth either in the epistemological or transcendental sense, but the confrontation of instauration where the issuing of the possibility of destruction and annihilation presents itself as a form of positive becoming. If there is a condition in Souriau, it certainly involves the empirical mode of experience (he was a faithful reader of William James), but this experience is not viewed in terms of some anteriority or exteriority. Rather, it is confronted as a problem of novelty created in each event of instauration where this or that process of instauration is not an instauration-*for*, as conditioned in the transcendental philosophy of non-being.

From the semantic viewpoint it is possible to observe a very interesting nuance in regard to this word [‘instauration’]. In the modern usage, its sense is that of ‘solemn establishment’, of an institution, a ceremony, a function, a way of making or doing, in short, a not strictly material reality. But in Latin ‘*instauratio*’ and ‘*instaurare*’ imply the idea of a restoration, of a recommencement, of a renovation, or better, of a resumption, definitive this

time, of what had not been able to be brought to fruition the first time. *Instaurativi ludi* (restorative games) are those games that are celebrated in place of those that had been interrupted. The modern use is easily understood in contrast to ‘restore’, a contrast that has pushed ‘instaurate’ to the side of: to establish for the first time. But it is legitimate to preserve in its meaning, from the Latin origin of the word, the idea that creation is not what is at issue, that the inventive or anecdotally first is not what is in question, that to instaurate means less to establish a thing, a moral or a physical being, temporally than to establish it spiritually, and to constitute it, to grant to it reality in its own kind. (Souriau in Lawlor, 2011, p. 403)

If for Souriau instauration is simultaneously the action of an ontic and its positing (he invents a word ontagogic for this synchronicity) (Souriau, 2015, p. 164) then the philosophy of instauration is about bringing together in a transitory and arbitrary fashion the modes of being (concrete establishment) and the modes of becoming (virtual establishment). Such a reading of different modes of existence (he names various modes of existence such as phenomena, réique or things, virtuals, surexistences, synaptics or passages, etc.), proposes reading of the multiplicity of scales (of meaning, content, forms, substances, phenomena etc.) side by side (or stratigraphically as suggested in the conclusion).

By privileging the word instauration over creation, Souriau emphasises the virtual being of philosophy (*see* also Lawlor, 2011). His insistence on the differentiation between the Latin origin of the word instauration and its modern use shows that the distinction between creation and instauration lies in the role that *reprise* plays in the temporal as opposed to virtual notion of establishment; of “what had not been able to be brought to fruition the first time,” that is, of what was there only potentially so. What *reprise* in its rhythmic and musical sense of resumption and repetition calls for is an attention to synchronicity and superposition of temporal establishment, rather than assuming independent points of succession of time on a straight line. This is a passive vitalism for each occurrence of an event is issued in an entirely new time and space detached from those that came before, while nevertheless overlapping with them, insofar as each event is a novelty, and insofar as the destruction of the past event constitutes the only possible occurrence of the new event.

This is because for Souriau, there is no genesis of events, for what is being instaured in an event is a novelty, issuing in the destruction of its terms; the question of being and becoming in an event is a matter of instauration, where these different modes must be taken as *arbitrary* and as such must not be conceived of as coming together *to form some richer type of existence*: “Let us therefore resist any temptation to structure and to hierarchize the modes by explaining them dialectically. If you strip it of the arbitrariness that is one of its absolute characteristic, you will always lack knowledge of existence on its own terms” (Souriau, 2015, p. 183). There is then neither a stable ontic situation nor a becoming of being, for being in itself is “exclusively transitive and situated or constituted in the action itself, and according to its mode” (Souriau, 2015, p. 178). Rather, these modes are *arbitrary*. What is important is the cut itself “To be, and not to be in some specific manner, is of no value. Cut yourself from whatever existential cloth you like, but cut you must – and, as a consequence, to have chosen whether to be of silk or of wool” (Souriau, 2015, p. 179). If there is transcendence of existence as attested by the cut, in Souriau, it is framed as “the investment of existence in the variation itself” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 84).

What is important here is that for Souriau, the singularity of each mode of existence is not tied to a relative, or secondary point of view. On the contrary, it *is* the point of view of existence itself, on its own territory (Souriau, 2015, p. 179). Souriau is thus able to posit modes of existence beyond those of a subject, object and the symbolic because if existence is a form of point of view or perception, there is not one being that then dialectically instaures another being. This attests to a form of a passive vitalism which will be addressed further in the following chapters. That is, there is an expressive and plurimodal multiplicity of existences or viewpoints, where one potential for instauration encounters another in an event or passage from virtual to actual, and it is these potentials or virtual powers that present an obligation to the different modes of existence.

Let us take for example a body. Souriau will say that to see a body as a superior existence is in fact to deny it, for “The existence of the body itself is not, in fact, purely corporeal and physical: it is above all the expression of the obligation of a physical existence,

perpetually constrained to follow a body on its terrestrial adventures” (Souriau, 2015, p. 150). What is stressed is not a living body as an expression of a prior animating force nor a physical existence, but the expressions of *the obligation* (or *sense* in the Deleuzian sense of the word) that signal virtual modes of existences that differ from those of an already constituted image of a human body or an organism. If Souriau wants unification, this is “not a unification of a whole, but the unification of all the possible modes of unification” (Souriau, 2015, p. 205). There is no whole that would be *other than this expressive multiplicity of variations*, where

each variation of potential modes of unification has no other principle or regulator than the demanding insistence that we declare [*qu'on prenne parti*] – for this thing, rather than for a thousand others. Just as the preposition “to” in “to-be-made” indicates, unification implies a synapse, a connection [*un branchement*], a bringing-together [*un abouchement*], what Deleuze would call a “double capture [*entre-capture*], as they variously come together, the modes of existence bend their branches so as to form places for occupants among many vaulted arches.” And it is vital that Souriau is precise on this point when we consider how tempting the notion has been in ethics: these “occupants” are not ideal existences. “There is no ideal existence.” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 81)

This is passive vitalism, for there is not one power that actualizes itself in single existences, but a milieu that forms places for a becoming of any existence in relation to the forces of its milieu. Coming back to the example of body, this would not be the active self-creation of a body tending towards some ideal existence but a novel coming together of everything that is “to-be-made,” which expresses and implies the virtual. But that does not mean that it is not actual for it responds or gives form to the obligation of the virtual. When referring to the *queer* nature of Deleuze’s vitalism, Colebrook makes a similar point: “Every body in this world is possible as an individual because it gives some form and specificity in time and space to a potential that always threatens to destabilize or de-actualize its being. This is what Deleuze refers to as real conditions of existence [...]” (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 80).

Souriau will offer a neat example of this when discussing art; what the event of instauration attests to is that whatever made Michelangelo or Beethoven great, for example, what made

them geniuses even, “was not their own genius, but their attention to the qualities of genius residing not in themselves, but in the work” (Souriau, 2015, p. 211). Contrary to some posthumanist tendencies in theory claiming agency for the object or the *vibrant matter*, as seen above, Souriou does not recognize the force of agency of either subjects or objects. Rather, what is evoked here is the role that the virtual reality plays in the question of one’s own subjective thought and its object, which is what ‘unites’ and directs what exists both in the mode of this thought and in the mode of this object (which is similar to Whitehead’s notion of prehension, where the object is assumed to be only hypothetically different). There is a milieu of correspondence and response (or concrescence in Whitehead’s terms), not as unilateral or bilateral movement or force of agency from one to the other, but more as an echo, a *reverberating effect*.

In existence there is only correspondence; not a resemblance between thought and its object, but a *response* from the one to the other, forming a couple. The fact of this response (it does not matter if it is right or wrong) is the only existential fact here. There is an echo. Some object is faced with some thought. The evergreen oak and the majestic tree call to, respond to, and confront one another. Such responses (in Goethe’s or Baudelaire’s sense) are inscribed in existence as a positive relation. But *how* do they respond to one another? Here we have the possible insertion of *surexistence*¹⁵. (Souriau, 2015, p. 210)

The existence of the virtual (pure existence) is conditioned by reality wherein this or that reality does not establish the virtual itself. When Virginia Woolf wrote *To the Lighthouse*, we might say, it wasn’t that she established an imaginary readership first thus giving this imagined possible a form of existence. She intuited something in the reality of the readership in their desire to “find out for themselves” what had, would have or will have happened and thus she discerned a virtual that was dependant on that reality but only as a “conditioned conditioning”. The virtual readership of *To the Lighthouse* is conditioned by the real readership without the latter being able to give this virtuality its final stroke. The actual readership provides the “evocatory formula” for a virtual readership: “The virtual is a conditioned conditioning, dependent upon a fragment of reality, which is foreign to its

¹⁵ *Surexistence* is transcendence with respect to the “to exists” (Souriau, 2015, p. 185).

own being, and which is like its evocatory formula” (Souriau, 2015, p. 158). These virtualities are not some distinct and Ideal ground as in Plato, from which actuality is enabled. Rather, they are co-present and become materialized as if by “a reverberating effect” (Souriau, 2015, p. 114).

That is, what Woolf intuited was a fragment of an immanent desire in her readership and she attended to that fragment by instaurating the event of *To the Lighthouse* existing in its own mode regardless of whether or not it is or will ever be read. It is not the reader who gives it existence, rather, it is the event of *To the lighthouse* that composes the potential reader and her imagination. Souriau does not begin with agency of objects or subjects (such as a book or a reader) nor does he posit relationality as the *prima facie* value of existence. The correspondence between a book, a reader and a writer is not a unilateral or bilateral movement of agency from one to the other. There is a milieu (assemblage) of forces, but these cannot be perceived from a point of view of a dotted line, one dot attesting to and granting existence and agency to the next in line, producing an image of relationality *ad infinitum*. Rather for Souriau, there is a response which is less of an agency and more of an echo, a vibration or a *reverberating effect*, attesting to the forces of the virtual.

Following Stengers and Latour in their interpretation of the virtual in Souriau, what is at stake in the example of Woolf is not her as the author. What is at stake is her *soul*. That is, in one of “those lucid moments” or “sharp peaks” as Souriau calls them, when *To the Lighthouse* became realizable, the virtual became according to its own resonating vibration. However,

[i]t would be a grave error to suppose that these sharp peaks, these lucid points, emerge out of being “like the point of a sword emerges out of the sword.” On the contrary, we must know the point of the sword as being more real in its acuity (however immaterial it is) than the sword itself, which it draws in some way by means of a reverberating effect” (Souriau, 2015, p. 114).

In other words, there is no condition for Souriau, such that existence would be conditioned on some ground. If we take readerships for an example, these are, as Stengers and Latour

suggest, “materialized as if by “a reverberating effect,” whereby the sharp moments in which they become materialized are not conditioned by the *soul* of the author. Instead, it is the readership that propels her *soul* (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 62). This *soul*, as they suggest, is not ontic but is the *soul* that “fixes us”, the *singular thoughts* that

[...] have in them something that makes them ours; a certain individual quality of the “I think,” by which my own “I think” can be distinguished from that of my nearest neighbour. But let us be careful not to suppose that in the first place I am: and that this thought is therefore mine because it has received my stamp. The fact that it has received a certain stamp, a certain *nota personalis*, is what outlines the me into which it can be incorporated. If this thought didn’t or couldn’t have it, it would never be able to belong to me. It is not the me that existentially and ontologically engenders these singular thoughts: it is all these singular thoughts that integrate this me. (Souriau, 2015, pp. 116–117)

With regard to the mode of existence of thought, the reality of *this* me in *this* moment and place is dependent on a multiplicity of singular thoughts. The mode of existence of *this me* would be different when considering the mode of existence of this soul, or this body or this dream. The idea however, is the same with these different modes of existence. For example, there are first all those singular forces from which this body I call mine is composed. Had there been a different biological and cultural evolution and production of human bodily form, a completely different mode of existence of this body would be materialized. This is why Souriau stresses the importance of the virtual, of the positive existence of that which is absent. In terms of the mode of existence of thought it is possible to say with Souriau, that had there not been such thoughts, this particular me would be absent and a whole different me present. In concrete terms, Souriau shifts the attention from an integrated *me*, to all those tiny little, in this example, thoughts from which *this me* is composed.

If there is an inner life for Souriau, the “richest aspects of it are these multitudes of presences that are an absence, the evocativeness of which are dependent on singular fragments of reality that are foreign to their own becoming” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 62). So that “[...] the trace “of the lover’s bloody, bare foot in the sand” is enough to outline the mysterious passerby in the interworld [l’intermonde] on the

margins of being” (Souriau, 2015, p. 157). So it is not these singular thoughts, taking shape without our having engendered them that is emphasised in Souriau: “What is dramatized is not the mode of existence specific to the virtual “for us,” but rather the flurry of evocations to which we remain deaf” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 63). It is not the case, as it is in Plato, that the virtual defines the realizable. The virtual *dramatizes* that which becomes realizable in the process of instauration. Just as with Whitehead’s *abstractions*, the two are positively co-present.

The bridge that no one thinks to built, of which we have not even conceived the possibility – but for which all the materials are available, and whose nature, span and form are perfectly determined so as to provide a sole solution to a problem, for which all the data is complete though unrecognized – this bridge exists with a virtual existence that is more positive than the one that was begun, but whose completion was rendered impossible by a flaw or faulty design. (Souriau, 2015, p. 113)

In a sense, it is possible to say that for Souriau, there are encounters of virtual and actual intensive modes of existences, and there are *passages* from one mode of existence to another. All of these are *positive* existences. They do not exist as an *effect* of perspective (like in Kant, Husserl or Heidegger, where they are considered in the order of *related existence*) but are immanent to the *existence considered in itself*. For Souriau, it is possible to exist strongly or weakly, with which a distinction between what one is or what one might become is made. However, for Souriau, what is at issue in considering the immanence of existence is not the postulating of being or non-being. For example, in education we would not focus on what exists in a child as pre-determined and ready to emerge so that as teachers we might pay attention to the qualities and quantities of pedagogical encounters in order to provide for a good life extended to its fullest potential. The question of being and non-being has in the history of philosophy up until Aristotle been posed as *all or nothing* (for example Parmenides, Pascal). With Aristotle, as Souriau will show, the possible, the potential and the infinite create a middle between being and non-being. However, as long as the problem is composed as that of *degrees* of existence rather than kinds, we remain in

the realm of *doxa*, not able to conceive of the possible as *positive*¹⁶ existences. Thus, Souriau problematizes this philosophical question

On the one hand, there is the idea of different kinds of existence—the possible, the potential, and the ready-to-emerge being *beside* the actual, the real, and seen through it, as if in rear projection, in another order of reality. On the other hand, there is the idea of a sort of weak existence, stammered out beneath the integral threshold of being. (Souriau, 2015, p. 113)

The answers to the question of *either* all *or* nothing of being for Souriau float endlessly back and forth among philosophers because the *problem* to which the answers seem to correspond was never composed *positively*. In Souriau the problem is not fashioned in a neoplatonic method, positing the multiplicity of beings such that there is the world of hierarchical degrees, but of positing the multiplicity of modes of existence such that there is a world of kinds of existence. Thus, he constructs the problem of being in terms of the kinds of existence and begins from a positive experience of annihilation and nothingness.

We must not reduce the question “am I?” to the question “what am I?” We must not allow the response “I am not,” or “I hardly am,” to mean “I am not myself,” or even “it is not I who am, but something is, and I am merely participating in it.” For example, it is God who is, or (transposing *Ich denke* to *Es denkt in mir*) it is thinking [*Denken*] that is. The response “no” or “hardly” must mean: there, where I am looking, there, where I am testing existence, there is only a little bit of existence or none at all. In other places and for other things, it is of no concern. (Souriau, 2015, p. 121)

According to Souriau, both Descartes and Heidegger failed in the task of examining being, for they did not contemplate that the answer to “am I?” might be “no!” What if there were no being-in-the-world? What if the world no longer offered support in such a questioning situation; what if experience had no *respondent*? Here is where I find the crux of Souriau’s philosophy. If we take Souriau’s composition of a problem of being seriously, that is, if we take it *as a problem* and a task of *testing existence*, then the only being a Man can claim for himself lies not in actuality, but in the force of a problem; of the *work to-be-made*. What

¹⁶ Both Bergson (in *Creative Mind*) and Spinoza (in *Ethics*) present the idea of the possible, but always as *relative-to*.

constitutes Souriau's ontological argument is the *response*, in the form of a real and concrete proposition, which has been given to the question (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015). In terms of vitality and life, following Souriau, what is important then is to consider *what is in question when we ask what life is?* Or in terms of education and pedagogy, rather than debating and deliberating about the existence of a child's true nature or being, we pose it as a problem. For example: *what is in question when we ask what the nature of a child's development is (with all of the implications the answers provide for the way we design literacy curriculum, for example)?* And the same questioning situation has to at least be articulated for the so called development; so that what we perceive as the *nature* of child's *development* is in some manner put in play, movement or *action* and, following Stengers, *can stand in its own defence*.

For Souriau the question is not that of *what it is to be* (being), but of *how it is to be* (existence).

It is not a question of man in the world (let us avoid sending the reader down a wrong path) or outside of the world. Nor is it a question of objective or the subjective, of idealism or realism. Those are only partial or technically specific aspect of the general and fundamental problem. It is a question (to speak like scholastics) of aseity or abaliety. (Souriau, 2015, p. 123)

With aseity, it is a matter of *existence in itself* and with abaliety of *existence in dependence on what is not itself* where "the existential responsibility can be borne either by the one or by the other, and can be transposed entirely to one side or the other, changing the being's equilibrium" (Souriau, 2015, p. 123). What something is is given through this motion of anaphoric movement (instauration). It is possible to say that I exist more or less, "but only in light of the problem thus composed – a life must be instaured: Let he who doesn't submit himself to the work to-be-made not ask whether his life does or doesn't have reality" (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 44).

It is not a question of opposing being or reality to pure existence but of the question of how each of these modes of pure existence works out its own reality for "[e]ach mode is an art of existing unto itself" (Souriau, 2015, p. 131). In concrete terms, this would mean that, for

example, it is not existence that is weak or strong (such as a *real* cognitive development of a child compared to an *essence* of cognitive development as such) but existing strengths or weaknesses of such development, considered in itself and as the intensity of an existence, which they actualize or perfect for what it is. “As vital or analyzable elements of this existence, these do not divide pure existence. Existence is an assemblage of what appears as singular elements or reality of existence” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, pp. 44). There are no “factors in a pure type of existence”, because.

From mode to mode, therefore, the comparison should not be made by passing through the intermediary of a substance common to them all and of which each would be a mere variation, but by granting each the capacity to produce, in its own way, the assemblage of ontological categories that are specific to it. It’s as though each mode possessed a specific *pattern* (in the sense of this word as it is used in needlework), an ontological pattern that cannot be superimposed onto other modes or that, if we insisted all the same in doing so, would result in distortions, folds, discomforts, in short, innumerable category mistakes. (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, pp. 44–45, *emphasis in original.*)

Souriau’s ontological argument does not take the passage from essence to existence or from existence to essence as what constitutes the ontological problem. The ontological question *par excellence* is the passage from one mode of existence to another, for example from virtual to actual or from actual to virtual. He does not begin with space and time to define primary qualities or things¹⁷ (of which phenomena would be appearances or secondary qualities). Instead, it is the pure mode of existence of things that produces particular forms of space and time.

How then can we understand the self-identity of a *thing* (thought, concept or particular individual, inscription or a body) if there is no substance and no spatio-temporal framework to support them in existence? The self-identity of a *thing* is possible because Souriau will reverse the order and enlist first a *capacity* to “*remain numerically one,*” a sort of “liaison and communication” and “*only then, as a consequence,*” a particular *capacity* for thought

¹⁷ For Souriau, things exist in *réique mode* wherein concepts and souls are also things.

or an individual body. It is not” thought that causes communication or coherence, rather, these are factors of thought” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 53). For example, in the case of a particular Socrates, there is a capacity or Socrates-ity first that then becomes the various and monumental appearances of Socrates which are translated into a form of “the law of a permanence, of an identity” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 55). And this *capacity* according to Souriau, has as much of a status of a thing as does thought, at least insofar as they obtain to a particular spatio-temporal continuity. All of the different modes of existence (phenomena, réique or things, virtuals, surexistences, synaptics or passages, etc.) have equal ontological status. The mode of *existence of things* does not define all of the modes of being; it actually provides just one mode of being that subsists side-by-side with a myriad of others (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 57). Bifurcation of nature is here overcome. One mode of existence cannot answer for the other. Each mode of existence has to be examined on its own plane. And there are modes-of-existence-still-to-come:

there are many experiences still to be had, many “to exists” still to be conquered, in order that the problem might finally be perfectly defined and begin to offer a virtual solution. And that is why existence is, as we have said, quite rich and quite poor at the same time. It is fortunate poverty, since it leaves room for invention, for the novelty of untried modes of existence, thus positing new possibilities, even *surexistence* [...]. (Souriau, 2015, p. 213)

This is a passive vitalism because it accounts for the distinct as well as for the continuum but without imposing any external point of view on the becoming of matter. “What is really at issue is the problem resolved, in the reality of its solution. It is not the ideal, but the reality of this ideal that is in question” (Souriau, 2015, p. 208). *Passive* vitalism in Souriau terms thus expresses in existence without defining what is given in potential (virtual materiality) and what can become actual (concrete materiality). What is defended is an *existential pluralism* (such as that of William James, A.N. Whitehead and Gilles Deleuze); existences are intensive and polyphonic, where the phenomenal, material, virtual and transitive manners of being inform multiplicity of existences, expressing all the imperceptible and impersonal realizations between the coming into being and being itself

but only if it engages in a work to be-made, which is always “*this* work, the only work bearing witness to this virtual in a modal, specular way, certainly, and as a riddle” (Souriau, 2015, p. 85).

To appreciate what difference Souriau and the problem of vitality (as a questioning situation) might present to the challenges of reading in “facing a future of posthumanist (educational) research,” we can begin with taking heed with regard to a body of a student. Perhaps it is possible to say that most of the history of educational thought assumes active vitalism in that it postulates some grounding and undifferentiated pre-social nature of a child, which is then individuated by being subjected to social norms and represented in language. That is, there is a true and real subject who then acts and speaks; effected as a relatively stable, recognized and well organized social kind. There are individual (affective, cognitive, bodily) as well as social differences among the individual students, as they are constituted and recognized as selves who act and speak in a world of signification that is meaningful for them.

What is being contested in the new posthuman turns to matter cited earlier is the Kantian idea that there is a mute, inert and meaningless life upon which a human subject imposes his self-originating thought (systematizing and categorising). For education researchers, such as Snaza and Weaver, agency is given to matter and a student is no longer a unique entity standing apart, but is now no more than just one among the many different and mutually entangled unique organisms and things. “There are experiences happening all the time, all over the school, independent of humans. There are always interactions between humans and nonhuman sentient beings and humans and non sentient objects, such as computers, doors, playgrounds, hallways, utensils, trays, balls, windows, desks, and so on” (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 9).

The mutual co-constitution of the organic and inorganic forms takes precedence while maintaining an active and vital self-constituting and self-maintaining individual organism.

While there are no doubt such curricula that are radically humanist, offering students a dominion- or stewardship-based way of understanding the

human's relations to plants, soil, animals, wood, water supplies, tools, and so on, these curricula could also produce the awareness of the fundamentally interconnected, non-dissociable nature of these relations (see Rotas, this volume). "Humans" are not without all these Others: These nonhuman Others are not here for us to "use"; they are the condition of possibility for our existence. (Snaza & Weaver, 2014, p. 8)

What such accounts of the mutually constitutive agential relationality between subjects and objects stress is that there is a world of ontic beings (inorganic, organic, inhuman, ahuman, nonhuman) that ought not be ontologically hierarchized. Further and by implication, they pertain to the question of how to reconfigure (in connection with its vital milieu) that which we assume is the "essential nature" of a child as a unified entity (an assumption often made in educational theory but not always explicitly articulated). What these turns towards 'new' materialism do not account for is the passive vitality of virtualities. These are vital in their potentiality to be instaured; as an obligation of the work to-be-made, of the problem to be solved. Such vitality promises no salvation since the work to-be-made can fail. Rather, such vitality is destructive, indifferent and monstrous: "work it out, or thou shalt be devoured" (Souriau, 2015, p. 229).

When Souriau insists that the plane of immanence needs to be instaured and that all existence tends towards further and further distinctions by way of further instauration in the various expressions of existences he assumes these to be differences in kind. What forms stabilities (such as *a* student) is a unique interplay of virtualities, plurality of existential planes, and intensity of reality. Each of the possible interplays or encounters is issued in its own distinct mode of unification. "Immanent justice: to exist in a manner of a body, is to be a body: in the manner of a soul, to be a soul." But you will be a soul only "if, in mathematical ratios of their architecture and the array of their sonorities, your interior harmonies outline virtual riches [...]" (Souriau, 2015, p. 212).

This does not mean that there is *either* body *or* soul, but that each of these modes of existence exists in its singular and absolute manner, echoing or reprising virtual potentialities (for example "to battle," "to cut," "to affect," "to learn," "to imagine" – as the infinitive form of the verb). Thinking in terms of students and their bodies, completely

different questions would need to be asked, if the problem of thinking their “being-in-the world” would be confronted with the thought of their “being-in-a-certain-world,” where the notion of what a world is, is not the universe as conceived of in phenomenological existentialism. Socrates is not this unified being in a world as a representation of a universal essence of a man. Socrates exists as this self-same entity, but only as this assemblage of various and distinct pure potentialities that are indifferent to their specific situations in the world as they are unfolded according to space and time. It is “the conquest and realization, the effective possession of this presence that is indifferent to its situation” (Souriau, 2015, p. 143).

In concrete terms we can say that there are virtualities which provide an “evocatory formula” for this Socrates, this thing or that concept, that converge in the diversity of actualizations, the future of which is not contained in the present. For Souriau, the future is not what is possible or contingent: it is rather the “virtual accomplishment” that finalizes the movement of *this* present leaning into the future and of that future folding back into the present. There is first *Socrates-ity* that then folds the diversity of singular Socrates’ to converge in a form of Socrates. Every assemblage can be arranged from the point of view of a single characteristic. Socrates as a younger man or an older teacher; the props of this history – Socrates’ friend Plato, the poison – all become realized as forms of distinct and individual continuous time lines where “[a]ll these “histories of things” are parallel and mediated by a common order” (Souriau, 2015, p. 145), where time is understood as *conquest rather than coincidence*.

However, for Souriau, following Stengers and Latour, what counts is not conjuring up a system of ontic modes, but “composing a problem of existence so as to give it more possibilities.” There is connectivity among beings, but the connections are “exclusively transitive and situated or constituted in the action itself, and according to its own mode” (Souriau, 2015, p. 178). Thus the “mode of existence of causality operates synthetically – in its capacity as a dash,” rather than the “measurable elements of phenomena, which depend on it for their reality” (Souriau, 2015, p. 176). Life is transitory, it is work to-be-made.

There is a contrast in distinguishing the *problem* of existence as that of acting (agency) in contrast to that of “action” (force or movement). The modulations of existences *for*, existences *in front of*, existences *with*, are what Souriau understands by his notion of action. In my reading of Souriau, these are a potentiality for variation. This potentiality is not some force or virtuality, for it exists in a mode of existence that Souriau terms “synaptic,” emphasising the role of *passages* (of “*what is done*” or *to be-made*) as the only “true existents”. If there is existence in the being of things, this existence according to Souriau implies neither the substantive existence (as in Kant) of the subject, nor that of the predicate (as in Leibniz) but that of the “synapse”. Following Stengers and Latour we can say that the synaptic mode of existence is the “existence of the relation of inherence” of the coming together of the existences of both the subject and the attribute¹⁸; an existence on which the existences of the subject and the attribute depend. Souriau does not take phenomena as a starting point of interrogation into the modes of existence; the construction of the problem is that of a *pattern of investments* of existence. Because the philosophical problem of being becomes modulated as the problem of synapse, Souriau is able to

recover from the excess of importance that certain philosophies grant to the celebrated man-in-the-world. For the man-before-the-world and even the man-against-the-world (*adversus*: against it as conflict, as clash and violent collision, as an entirely offensive attempt at gaining the upper hand) are also real. And conversely, there is also the world-in-the-man, the world-before-the-man, the world-against-the-man. What is essential is that we fully appreciate that in all these modulations existence invests itself not in man or in the world, nor even in their ensemble, but in that “for;” in that “against;” in which the “what is done” of a kind of being resides, and upon which, from this point of view, man and the world both equally depend. (Souriau, 2015, p. 176)

In terms of reading, the focus on prepositions evokes the privileging of the spatial image of language as it evokes the onto-topology of language in its material assemblage. Further, beings are neither an expression or extension of a pre-given unity; as suggested by neo-platonic philosophies. What is privileged in Souriau’s prepositional logic is a positive

¹⁸ In grammar, attribute is a word or a phrase that serves to limit, identify, particularize, describe, or supplement the meaning of the form with which it is in connection (www.dictionary.com).

conjunction or *relation to what is not itself* in which the *passage* (as an ontologically real being) from one mode of existence to another is the only true existent upon which everything that takes up existence depends (Stengers and Latour, 2015). However, the scale against which Souriau reads intensive variations of existence is always that of instauration. Given that there is only an existential incompleteness of everything, the various modes of existences are being constructed along the way, and always in relation to a certain *degree of risk*—of success or failure of anaphoric movement towards completion of the work to-be-made.

This is important in view of thinking about vitalism as it figures in educational thought as well as certain strands of posthumanism. We can maintain the image of thought where *life* is conceived “through either imagination or perception” (Stengers and Latour, 2015, p. xx). We can “sustain a mode of reality upon which Man will rest, in which he will be established, and which will posit a world of beings, of which he will be one” (Ibid.). However, for Souriau, things conceived materially, discursively, fictionally or essentially is not what should be in question when we ask about the different modes of existences because in each case, it is man who “will be the demiurge, the creator or support of a kind of reality” (Souriau, 2015, p. 177). What Souriau proposes instead, with the notion of *action*, is a completely different *kind* of reality and a completely different manner of being in-this-world.

All that is verbal will now be in vain, and all that is stable in the ontic will become spectral. Properly speaking, there will no longer be a universe of discourse. There will only be this action, which belongs to this kind of the event. And in order to establish himself in it, in order to situate himself in it, existing in the sense that action exists, he will have to sacrifice (an enormous, frightening sacrifice) all the ontic solidity and stability belonging to him and even the world, which, from the other point of view, appeared to be the very model of substantiality. (Souriau, 2015, pp. 177–178)

The problem of the existence of beings as formulated in “action—and not the act or activity” is not about privileging becoming over being, or activity over stability. Souriau, just as Whitehead and Deleuze, places *event* (as this *action*) at the forefront of the solution to the

problem of bifurcation. Right next to the other important task, which is to renounce the image of thought, to move the discussion away from metaphysical foundations; that is “[T]o close all the books, to put an end to all discourse, to forget all the theories that maintain the world of the ontic, and to enter into action through a renunciation of their philosophy - of what appears to them to be philosophy; as Pascal renounced mathematics or Rimbaud renounced poetry” (Souriau, 2015, p. 178).

Souriau rejects any notion of substance except that of an event. Other than postulating it as *action* (without it being a verb, for verbs evoke the linear passage of time), we learn nothing else about this concept. Event is not a process such as with Whitehead’s notion of event, where “each event is a process issuing in novelty” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 236). The world for Whitehead is made of events, actions (verbs) where actual occasions (rather than nouns, things or solid substances) become and perish in an event. For Souriau, it seems as though events are this instaurative *action*, the experience of which is given through the effect of the anaphora, that is, through the effect of intensity evoked by aesthetic repetition or reverberation. It is more of a *preposition*, attesting to the existential incompleteness of everything such that “[n]othing, not even our own selves, is given to us other than in a sort of half-light, a penumbra in which only incompleteness can be made out, where nothing possesses either full presence or evident patuity, where there is neither total accomplishment, nor plenary existence” (Souriau, 2015, p. 220). There is no actor, no condition. Only a “to act in which *we* are included and which encompasses life in its entirety, in each of its moments, in a tyrannical, totalitarian fashion,” that is, this *to-act* “bears witness to the formation of a cosmicity in the pleroma¹⁹ of actions, and to the insertion, into that cosmicity, of life” (Ibid.). This passivity of action attests to the empirical which does not assume an outside as substance or essence at a distance from a human point of view. And it does not assume that thought originates in the eternal or transcendental. Rather, each *to-act* is the affirmation of its own infinite series of encounters. Thus, these are not points on a dotted line within existence but only the existence itself. This is a

¹⁹ Totality or fullness. The term is being used in both Gnosticism and Christian theology. Souriau gives no additional explanation of how the term functions in his text.

passivity of “to act”. In having to respond to the given, Souriau’s *instauration of concepts* is itself an experience or an experimentation, but without alluding to the possibility of creation and creativity of an agent, for everything (the world, man, work of art) can fail at any given moment. Instauration always resumes or repeats a prior instauration, which has been posed by the demands of a questioning situation.

If for Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, the task of philosophy of immanence is the *creation of concepts* on the plane of immanence, with Souriau, the plane of immanence itself must be instaured. The difference between instauration and creation is that in instauration, the demand posed by the necessity of repetition arises because nothing can be achieved without prior instauration, that is, without incorporation of previous questions and problems thus composed. This is why I believe it is important to note Souriau’s notion of *action*. There is a certain synchronicity in the *passivity* of the *to-act* and therefore,

instauration leads to a very different experience than that of creation, or, better, it leads to the experience that is at the root of concept-creation,” for it “leads to the experience of the impossible: ‘We shall say that THE plane of immanence is, at the same time, that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought’. Because the plane of immanence is never able to be completely achieved, since the planes of immanence that have been laid out can never be the best (except, once more, for that of Spinoza, and perhaps Bergson) the plane of immanence always requires another (albeit necessarily insufficient) instauration. (Lawlor, 2011, p. 405)

Thus, the task of the “*creation of concepts* as a necessary gesture suggested by the philosophy of immanence is not simply the task of responding to the given,” but with Souriau, that of instauring; of “succeeding in the journey required by way of response” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 37). But the “successful resolution of one riddle does not necessitate in answering for the ones that follow” (Ibid.). The outcome is not pre-determined, for existence (life, beings, art, abstractions) can fail. In Souriau, these are not self-maintaining and self-furthering creative elements in a whole. As Stengers and Latour show, if “we are to be successful each and every time”, this will be experienced as “losing *our* place as little judges” (a distinctly human mode of existence) in order that “beings are able to define their own truth in their own mode of existence. It is us who have to position

ourselves in relation to these modes of existence, what they require, their own unique perfection, their ‘own success in the art of existing.’” It is only “in the relation to them” as in *alongside*²⁰ them, “that *we*, we who pose the question of existence, find ourselves situated and implicated” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 38, *emphasis in original*). This is counter vitalism, for there is no denial of a distinctly human event of thought; thought does not emerge from something (life, matter) or someone, as the claim goes in contemporary turns to matter, affect and embodied mind. Thought is instaured in its own right. Just as with Whitehead, thought is implicated in relation to things, but only alongside them, rather than co-extensively - it is implicated in things themselves.

We can think of students’ bodies as unified entities, as self-maintaining and ongoing forms that can be recognized and represented, or we can see them as just this one entity, emerging and interconnected among a myriad of others in a world, understood as one organic and reproductive whole. This raises certain problems and certain questions, the solution of which presents us with specific tasks of thinking about the ethics and politics in literacy education. For example, in terms of ability or access, the intent and agency of the individual are maintained regardless of the difference in the expression of the problem (Cartesian subject of mind/body opposed to the Neoplatonic subject as an expression of the One). There is either a universal subject and thus there ought to be generalizable elements of curriculum; or there is a notion that we can only know subjects in their individuated and socially determined forms, and thus curriculum is integrated as much as possible according

²⁰ It is important to note that Souriau repeatedly points out how he is neither a phenomenologist (for phenomenology, according to Souriau, “puts the phenomenon itself in parenthesis” rather than see it in its own right) nor an existentialist. Similar to Souriau, Maurice Merleau-Ponty posits Sartre’s existential opposition between the *For-Itself* and the *In-Itself* as problematic, because of the formulation of the *For-Others* arising from this opposition. That is, the *For-Itself* either “concedes everything to the *For-Others*” or “it concede[s] nothing to it”. Sartre’s ontology does not permit “that I *accompany* the other” (p. 120). While in Sartre’s ontology there is a “connection [to the other] that is a distance because it is created by me, [...] there needs to be distance that is a connection”. While Sartre’s ontology allows “a ‘respect’ for the freedom of the other [which] is non-intervention of others in me, [...] it would be necessary to take responsibility for the other, not as infirm or impotent, but without rejecting from the other everything that one thinks” (Merleau-Ponty, Lefort, Darmaillacq, Lawlor, & Massey, 2010, p. 120). An ontology that allows for such interconnectivity leads to a different ethics.

to individual differences and social contexts as is evident by the individual learning plans that almost every student now has.

But we can also think of bodies in light of Souriau's passive vitalism, where there are different kinds and intensities of existence of singular bodies (phenomenal, objective, virtual, "super-existent") which we encounter neither through intention nor through knowledge. This is passive vitalism, for bodies are composed of instauration and virtual passages, transitional realms, and realities still in the making, all of which constitute a multiplicity of "inter-worlds" the outcome of which is never determined in advance. With Souriau, each body unfolds its own time and space. And within this or that body, there are a thousand little *actions*, encounters between this heart and this beat, where the *work to-be-made* is not necessarily reproductive, for at any given moment, it can fail. In addition, these encounters involve passages from virtual to actual, where the passage is itself an ontological being existing in itself, demanding to be instaured. For Souriau, the world is composed of so many actions that unfold in monumental as well as barely perceptible events, where what is being encountered in the work to-be-made are not pre-given individual entities (bodies, subjects, objects, relata, particles etc.) but different milieus. We would then not begin designing literacy curriculum by looking at the already constituted things (individuals, bodies, texts, development, nature etc.) nor would we strive to embellish things, terms and forms into one grand reproductive transcendental whole. Following Souriau, what we are left with are actions (pure events, forces) that generate their own spatio-temporal correspondences beyond any need for individuation. There are a thousand little events echoing, reprising, happening at any single moment in a classroom, such as an inflection of the tone or pitch of the student's voice trying to convey a message or a thought. These events generate relations and responses beyond the sense we make of them and beyond any subjective identity we might adhere to in trying to make out their meaning.

And further, all that exists in singular encounters is prone to error, each stage of progression of the encounter itself existing in its own mode of existence. A curriculum would be conceived less as a stream or a *course* with the underlying assumption of an essential

connectivity and relationality of elements (stages, aims, outcomes), and more as a *construction*. With both Whitehead and Souriau versed in (differential) calculus, the underlining is a notion of assembling elements architectonically, of reading and modulating (in terms of curriculum) of things side by side. The direction is not that of a *course* but of random change at any of its points.

In what follows, Souriau's ideas and the theoretical framework laid out above will be further examined in light of some of the underlying and unquestioned notions of vitalism in recent turns to matter and materiality as well as the posthuman in literacy education, and more particularly, as it pertains to reading.

3.3. Ingression; reading to-be-made

The key through which Souriau applied his ideas with regard to the plurality of existences is the question of a work of art. For him works of art are “where the spiritual conditioning of their intrinsic, formal realities meet all that is virtual in the demands of the age, in the noetic needs of the moment, in human attention, all of which outlines their counter-proofs and counter-reliefs in the mode of the virtual” (Souriau, 2015, pp. 211). The art object, let's say a poem, would be an accomplishment or a conquest, *a coming together* of actions, passions, desires, histories, and perceptions that cannot be reduced to the intentions or formative powers of any of the parties involved in an event of reading (subject-text-object). And herein lies the currency of the passive vitalism of Souriau in thinking about posthumanist literary reading. Not only does he pronounce a plurality of modes of existence, counting way beyond one - including all the virtual, fictional and the *to-come* existences as actual - his existential pluralism of relations assumes a possibility of *failure* of connectivity, a certain detached force at work in an instaurative event, in a *to-act* of a *poem to-be-read*.

Unfortunately, today Souriau is being taken up as an active vitalist, a similar fate that happened to Deleuze's and Guattari's work on becoming, individuation and aesthetic now

being read and appropriated in theory as “mindful” aesthetic which is reinforcing an image of a fruitful and reproductive life. In what follows, I look at Stephen Muecke’s understanding of Souriau/Latour’s vitalism with regard to the *posthumanist* aesthetics of reading in order to contrast it with my own in the conclusion.

In *Can You Argue with the Honeysuckle?* Muecke aligns himself with a wider vitalist school of philosophy, the trajectory of which he traces from “Spinoza, followed by Bergson and Diderot, which continues with James, Souriau and Deleuze and Guattari” (Muecke in Rutherford & Holloway, 2010, p. 42). What seems to be at odds in Muecke’s notion of life in relation to that of Souriau, for whom life is that which has to be instaurated and is thus, in its anaphoric progression (progression that is akin to a rhythmic aesthetic repetition) of the plurality of modes of existence prone to failure, indifference and annihilation is Muecke’s insistence that life is creative, reproductive, poetic and “flowing incessantly,” where life progresses in a self sustaining manner, a world “[...] as having a feeling of the immanence of life in and through worlds that fold in and through each other again and across time, life being movement and growth [...]” (Muecke, 2004, p. 4). Central to Muecke’s argument about the vitality of life is its intimate relationship with *reproduction*, as one of the many modes of existence. In his ecological or what he calls *object-oriented writing* where the premise is to “let the object talk to the writing—without worrying too much about defining the object” (Muecke, 2011, p. 47) what is put to the fore is an animating life, where the interconnectivity of things strives toward enhancing life.

Multiple connections enhance the life of the machine; it is a complex object which, like anything that is not an atom, is composed, and keeps on being composed, built on, by those who participate in its life. So now, with the help of Bruno Latour, I want to think about objects like motorcycles (or humans or snails) as animated in their multiple connections, carefully forged and nurtured [...]. (Muecke, 2011, p. 48)

So when Muecke asks what “are the heterogeneous things that make a poem come into existence and then help it stay alive?” in order to challenge the object-subject bifurcation of nature, he is asking what are the conditions that allow the objective world to become subjective. What is rightly problematized is the notion that the “context” of a poem can be

considered as this One and unified reality which comprises so many different variations and (literary) worlds as well as the human centrality in poetic experience which is not derived from the interconnectivity or interaction between things as phenomena and as mediated by language.

Mine is not the moral eco-critical claim that all sorts of nonhumans deserve a place in the sun, or that Heaney's concern for spuds is ecological. It is actually a cosmic claim in the sense of Stengers' *Cosmopolitics*. It is that "Heaney's world," as we used to say so formulaically about any author, is not just his, but is an ontologically plural world which includes "Heaney," in one corner, as well as all sorts of other things that respond to other kinds of realities. (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 164)

That is, what is evoked here is the notion of a poem as that which *is* its extensive relations to all of those other things, contexts, worlds, history, texts and realities. In this "poem-thing" relation "A spade should be able to relate to a poem differently to the way it relates to you or me, as in the well-known Heaney poem":

a clean rasping sound

When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:

My father, digging . . .

(In Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 164)

What I find problematic in this account of a sort of a dispersion of point of view is that it assumes *things* as already accomplished elements of a bigger system where what is at issue is giving agency to things, of animating them rather than problematizing things themselves as events, always yet to-be-accomplished in intensive relations: each element of a poem instauring its own series of relations, where a poem (or a book) is a series of instauration in which every instauration tends towards a series. Its existence would be accomplished only at infinity as the totality of encounters with other modes of existence (fictional readers, printers, papers, illustrations, places) with the poem's infinite series of relations where the new lived-experience is measured in relation to them. Instauration always resumes or

repeats a prior instauration, which has been posed by the demand of a questioning situation with the deadly maxim or *the Sphinx of the work: work it out or thou shalt be devoured*. There is a *capacity* or poem-ity (not an Ideal form but an ontological existence) first which then becomes the various and monumental appearances of a particular Heaney's poem transposed into a form of an identity. This enlists a poem and its readership as a progression of a rhythmic aesthetic repetition (anaphor) of the multiplicity of modes of existence in an event rather than seeing a poem as a channel for a creative process of the composition of its parts.

This constructivist approach suggests that attention to spades, spuds, mirth and imperialism offers more to aesthetics, rather than less, when those things are seen as animating life as much as us humans. And from the point of view of the process of creation, it suggests that the poem is a kind of channel for all those things coming together in a composition. (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 164)

However, there is a reason as to why Souriau tried to avoid the words creation and creativity. It is the imperative of error or failure; of the possibility of non-actualization of the potential in an instauration event that obliges Souriau to work out how exitance is being actioned or instaured anew in each singular interval, in the passage between the autonomy of the virtual of a poem and the autonomy of the actual poem? The employment of virtual is to affirm, that for example, between parts of a poem and a poem as a whole (*diastemic relationality* as Souriau will call it, evoking a cut, splitting or gap), there is an unfolding passage, an intensive transitive space at a point of inflection - itself of ontologically equal status as that of things.

It is this virtual link that is *positively concrete*, fanning out in a novel togetherness the identity of which is indifferent to the spatio-temporal distribution of its terms or parts. In concrete terms the employment of virtual would mean that the "*richest aspects* of a poem are the multitudes of presences that are an absence, the evocativeness of which are dependent on singular fragments of reality that are foreign to their own becoming." (Stengers and Latour, 2015) For example, the trace "of a clean rasping sound" is enough to trace out the reader of the Heaney poem in an "interfold between worlds, on the margins

of being”. It is not “these singular traces”, that is emphasised in Souriau for that would imply that what is “dramatized is the mode of existence specific to the virtual *for us*”. Rather, what is key in applying Souriau to the aesthetic of reading a poem or a novel, is the “flurry of evocations to which we remain deaf” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 63). The virtual does not define the realizable, as is the case with Platonic Ideal forms. The virtual *dramatizes* that which becomes realizable in the process of instauration. The two are positively co-present. This excludes any *prior* animating force pertaining to either texts or their readers.

Now, in order to “instaure” a text in its own truth (“it is manifested in its entire accomplishment, in its own truth”), my method is to ask two questions of it: *how is it keeping itself alive in its place?* [...] And the second question I ask is: *what are its partners for reproductive purposes?* At this point “the Marxist reading” can be brought back as a partnership, not as a reduction. Or the offer to read “with Butler” is an invitation to go on a date: I can’t take this poem out clubbing just by myself; I need another highly desirable partner as well. Two things then: place-based devotion or cultivation, and no reproduction without getting partners to come to the party. (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, pp. 170–171)

In contrast to Muecke, what Souriau is concerned with is not how being is given in itself (*how is it keeping itself alive in its place*), but how the instauration passage (as anaphoric intensity) *in relation to itself* (aseity) or *in relation to what is not itself* (abeity) gives itself *to-be-eventuated* in its infinite modes of existence where life cannot be reduced to actual relations but is to-be-accomplished in each singular event of instauration. In order that beings (Heaney’s poem) are able to define their own truth in their own mode of existence it is not a question of *their place*, but of *ours*. It is “us” who have to position ourselves in relation to the mode of existence of Heaney’s poem, to what it requires, its own unique perfection, *its own success in the art of existing*. It is in our relation to this poem, “that we, we who pose the question of [its] existence, find ourselves situated and implicated” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 38, *emphasis in original*). Vitality is here generated as a *being of a problem* (the Sphinx of a problem), of a questioning situation demanding response. What it is not is generating vitality if vitality is understood as reproductive of “proximate linkage, of partnership” even if this partnership is conceived of

as “neither the historical/referential reduction — ‘No, no, not King St in 2012! It has to be about Royal Avenue, Belfast, in 1962!’—nor the humanist universalism (‘Timeless, it speaks to us all’)” (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 170). Muecke’s emphasis on the *reproductive* mode of existence, which is a “specific, working and perhaps unexpected partnerships (which have nothing to do with representations which imply a gap, between referent and sign, for example)” implies the necessity of a life of a poem to be self-furthering and self-maintaining in its own place by way of its relations to its various Others.

The poem is not constructed as a series of benign linguistic equivalences and figures, but as a series of transformative differences that probe always toward alterities. In order for transformations to take place as little events (within the text and in its iterations through various worlds), the text must tempt or try out the Other, to see if it will yield to the point of reproductive partnership. Now, strangely, it is only on this multirealist platform that the poem can speak with its true voice, as its own thing, not reduced to some reading or another, by virtue of the work it has to do trying out its various Others. (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 170)

What is desired of a relationship (partnership) is that it might “yield to the point of reproductive partnership” that is, of generating new relationships “as animated in their multiple connections, carefully forged and nurtured [...]” (Muecke, 2011, p. 48). This entails understanding time as a creative succession generating ever more active and reproductive life where:

A poem is now read (or listened to) as traces of life engendered by partners. These are constituted as chains of intimately connected transformations which, working with alterities, generate vitality. There are no metaphors of depth or transcendence, just a ceaseless trying of things out with others. To say that a poem lives in a place, and can go on to live in new places, is to refuse modernist universalisms, and to engage the facts and values of its particular existence as a local voyager. (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 171)

A poem is here read as an extension of life, not as an already existing force some posthumanist accounts of life take it to be, but that which itself is a result of genuine encounters. And this is where Muecke’s ‘vitalist’ account of reading comes closest to being passive in Souriau’s sense of the word. However, what might need to be accounted for is

that nothing in these encounters is secure along the path, there is no mimetic recourse for everything that happens (the “what has been done”), happens along the way. This is not constructivism in a traditional sense, for it pertains to *anaphoric progression*. As Stengers and Latour stress, if a work of art can fail, if the *last stroke* to the poem failed in establishing the poem in its sublimity, then entirely other questions are raised. The question of failure and success is thus eminently ethical (2015). What the chronological conception of time lacks is the *dramatization of abstraction* where the actualization of the infinite field of potentialities entail a possibility of destruction and annihilation

One must be a philosopher, a cerebral type, a seeker of beautiful, abstract constructions to arrive at a conception of time as an enrichment, which, in conserving the past integrally, continuously completes it through the integration of an ever-novel present. But for all those who are living, for those who butt up against life’s rough edges and are injured by its hard knocks, time is composed of annihilation. (Souriau, 2015, p. 26)

The contrast success/failure is an ethical question, because it has nothing to do with success in the productive or reproductive sense. The task for Muecke in instauring “a text in its own truth” in asking it *how is it keeping itself alive* is to “foster “Fosterage” by sending it out, to your Royal Avenue of the imagination. As soon as you can place it elsewhere, for example, in King Street near my place in Sydney, you have partnered it in that new way and found fertile associations for it in its new location, which are necessary to its continued reproduction. Its lyric existence has the property of proximate linkage, of partnership [...]” (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 171). For Muecke, in his own “posthumanist” aesthetic of reading of *Fosterage*, a poem by Seamus Heaney, a poem is “not determined by context, not reducible to any one or two of its multiply real registers, but coterminous with them, reproducing their forms in transformative imitation, wouldn’t you agree, Mr. Heaney, channeling Mr. McLaverty, remembering Mansfield and Hopkins, inventing Chekhov and finding revelation with the Ancients?” (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 170). The instaurative method of cultivating “posthumanist” reading here suggests intertextual “place-based devotion or cultivation, and no reproduction without getting partners to come to the party” (Ibid.). Muecke’s method assumes that there are four levels or modes of existence of this multirealist (aesthetic) description, which he claims are

“essential to the poem’s power to reproduce”: the historically real, the intertextual-compositional remix, the intersubjective, which he calls “partnership,” and a final register of the real, the spiritual²¹ (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, pp. 166–167).

In conclusion, let us (*we*, who ask the question of *the mode of existence of posthumanist literacy*) keep the (active vitalist) *instaurative method of reading* proposed by Muecke as that of two questions he asks of a text: *How is it keeping itself alive in its place?* and *What are its partners for reproductive purposes?* and add two more, yielding a passive vitalism of Souriau’s concept of instauration: *How does a poem give itself to-be-eventuated?* and *How are we, we who pose the question of [its] existence, situated and implicated by it?* In the first instance, we do not interrogate the relations of texts within their milieu according to some proper degree of their generative vitality. Instead, what is taken into account is the idea that at any given moment, a poem as a work of art can produce entirely different relations and compositions, indifferent to the point of view of an interpretive eye and contemplating mind. A poem gives itself as a potential accomplishment of virtuality composed of fragments of actuality, each of which is issuing in its own ontological duration and its own capacity to live in relation to what is not its own. This is not a virtuality *for us*, it is mute in its demanding to be instaured.

In the second instance, what is at issue is the ethics of error or failure of reading, demanding that the questioning situation or a being of a problem be taken seriously. That is, it is the riddles or the *personae* of the problem (Sphinxes of the problem) of the work of art which implicates us, demanding that we work it out or else be devoured. There is no *proper* reading of *Fosterage*, but there is a demand posed to us by a *being of a problem* of *Fosterage* (Belfast in 1962, note of exile) that demands to be worked out or intuited. Not

²¹ With the word spiritual he refers to Heaney’s poem when the “ghosts of the classical ancestors are called upon, as if the poet descended from the Greeks in a European tradition, which in a sense he does. The ancestors’ “life” is immortal, to the extent that the echoes of their voices are not forgotten, and with the silver words given him, this poet too, it is implied, will pass over into their immortal number. This transcendentalism, this translation from the material to the spiritual, is also a necessary and real part of the (multirealist, Western) aesthetic I am attempting to describe; there would be few poems that did not attempt to borrow a bit of this transcendent soul stuff” (Muecke in Danta & Groth, 2013, p. 167).

by giving sense back to *us*, for a poem is in itself mute (an indifferent actuality), but by implicating us in its instauration (how does this reading respond to the problem of exile? What is implicated in intuiting this problem and not other? How does the way we pose the problem of exile implicate this reading?). That is, there is no truth of the being of a problem in itself, which we then discern in relation to other problems. Rather, with Souriau what becomes important is that what the truth of a being of a problem (of *Fosterage*) does (*actions*) is instaurate these relations while at the same time, it itself is not reducible to these relations.

We do not *interpret Fosterage* for there is no *Fosterage* beyond all of the singular readings (including of readings yet-to-be-made), each reading instauring a body, “a” *Fosterage* as a material inscription, and a relation (not relative to sense *we* make of it but bearing its relations to everything not itself). Further, there is always an unstable equilibrium and the potential of failure between the intentions of the poet and the obligation that the potential or virtual poem presents the poet and her readers with. “Often there is no warning: the finished work is always up to a certain point a novelty, discovery or surprise. So that’s what I was looking for, that’s what I was meant to make!” There is a being of exile before Heaney created it as a part of a certain problem of *Fosterage*. It is *Fosterage* that utilizes man – Is it not *Fosterage* that needed Heaney’s exile? “When Wagner becomes enamored of Mathilde, is it not *Tristan* that needs Wagner to be in love? For it is in this way that we are implicated and employed by the work, and that we throw everything we find in ourselves that is capable of responding to its demand and its call into its crucible” (Souriau, 2015, p. 235). There is a question of exile posed to Heaney by the work itself, which he has to respond to in the anaphoric progression of the poem to-be-made. And *Fosterage* is never complete for at any given moment it can pose that terrible demand of the Sphinxes “Here I am, fully realized to all appearances, though someone greater than you would know that I have not yet achieved my supreme radiance, that there is still something more to be done that you do not know how to do” (Souriau, 2015, p. 234). This is not “futuraity, since this future may not arrive if there is an abortion,” (Souriau, 2015, p. 230) therefore, there are no (reading) “projects”, only journeys. Is that indifferent, monstrous and inhuman

demand not what *we*, as readers of *Fosterage* and *we* as *supporters* of Souriau *sense* (as that which implicates us) when attempting to intuit that *riddle* which made Heaney write *Fosterage* and which made Souriau write *The Different Modes of Existence*?

To instaure is to follow a path. We determine the being to come in exploring its path. In blooming, the being demands its own existence. In all of this, the agent must yield before the work's own will, must work out what it is it wills, and must renounce himself for the sake of this autonomous being, which he seeks to promote in accordance with its own right to existence. (Souriau, 2015, p. 231)

This bears the final question of implication “How would we read if we imagine the text not as that which is given to us, opening our world, but as bearing its own world, as though it were left behind, after humans, in our wake and no longer signed by us?” (Colebrook, 2014c, p. 153).

Chapter 4.

Constructivist pedagogy of reading

In this chapter, I wish to propose, that the new turns to material, embodied, affective and multiple literacies engulf variations and differences in distinct proclivities of thinking and reading (philosophic, scientific, aesthetic) rather than expand them. Following Gilles Deleuze, we can say that either reading is *extensive* (vital, embodied, material and self-assured by figures, such as *man* for example) or reading is *intensive* (intuiting the problems, desires, and provocations rather than lures for feeling, all of which are not of the forces of man, but are the variations and strivings of *life*).

The materialist turn to vital and embodied literacies in a wider context of educational theory is ‘now’ juxtaposing *learning in doing* (with all the material interconnectedness of things, texts and bodies in a classroom, continuing the tradition starting with Dewey’s pragmatism but with the addition of agency and vibrancy of the material itself) with that of *learning in contemplating* (the ‘traditional’ education based on the ideas of Plato). All the bodies (human and nonhuman), objects (animate and inanimate) and materials in the classroom (conceptualised now as actively engaged and emergent in space and/or place) are seen as agents or actants intrinsically interconnected and co-extensive, coproducing and cocreating in novel assemblages. What these accounts do not take into consideration is, according to Colebrook, their ultrahumanism; repeating and intensifying the anthropocentric, representational and masculinist image of thought privileging action over inertia; sexual reproduction over sexual indifference; vital over destructive; and meaning over nonsense²².

For example, in a recent turn to matter, affect, mindfulness and embodiment, *new materialism* as a “theory” claims that everything in the world, including humans, is a “vibrant” and “intra-agential” matter where the ontic, the phenomenological and the

²² For the vital importance of considering the role of nonsense seriously see *Mathematics and the Body* by Freitas & Sinclair, (2014).

epistemological arise through continuous and diverse material exchanges of both animate and non-animate *things*. What is common to most variants of new materialism is an *active vitalist* claim that all bodies (human, nonhuman, animate and non-animate) are inter and intra-connected, producing a *meshwork*²³ of mutually constitutive materiality, embodiment, and subjectivity. For example, Jane Bennett postulates that all materials are *actants* emphasising the constitutive role that materials play in the formation of what she calls *action-text* (Bennett, 2010). Her research is focused on the ways objects become “vibrant matter” or “actants,” holding the potential to provoke and lure us into doing in moments where “the human being and thinghood overlap, the extent to which the us and the it slip-slide into each other” (Bennett, 2009, p. 4).

As in the wider context of the ‘posthumanist’ turn to materiality, she claims to move from the “language of epistemology to that of ontology” and from an “elusive recalcitrance hovering between immanence and transcendence (the absolute) to an active, earthy, not-quite-human capaciousness (vibrant matter).” What is alluded to is “a vitality intrinsic to materiality in the hope of enhancing our receptivity to the impersonal life that surrounds and infuses us”. She claims that in turn, this will “generate a more subtle awareness of the complicated web of dissonant connections between bodies, and will enable wiser interventions into that ecology” (Bennett, 2009, p. 3). Following Colebrook we can say that there are two major points in such accounts of matter. One is where life is understood to be always already active, redemptive, reproductive and fruitful and the other is the prolongation of a long (philosophical, literary and ecological) tradition of imaging the environment as something that *envelops* us²⁴. Both of these presuppositions entail a certain form and notion of space and time as well as a certain notion of sexual difference bound to a reproductive economy of gendered kinds.

That is, as in the wider context of post-theory, for example in *Actor-Network Theory*, *Object Oriented Ontology* and *New Materialism* so in the recent turn to material, affective

²³ For more see Tim Ingold (2011 and 2007).

²⁴ In the numerous writings Luce Irigaray points to the sexual and corporeal origin of such an image of the environment .

and embodied literacy, the majority of the theoretical conceptualisations of new forms of literacy do not account for the pervasive ultrahumanist notions of life, space, time and sexual difference. The turns to matter and embodiment, this time infusing it with becoming, action, vitality and agency only defer the masculine attributes previously reserved for characterising time onto what is no longer a passive and mechanic matter, all the while sustaining the negative dialectic of making the other (this time matter rather than woman) bare the burden of supportive relationality.

In this chapter I engage with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the *pedagogy of concepts* in order to first look at what a *mode of reading intensively* would be and second to propose that what might be needed in literacy education is to distinguish a *pedagogy* of reading (resulting in the creation of concepts) and an *art* of reading (resulting in affective and figural prolongation of meaning making, criticism and opinion). This would result in intensifying the differences in reading (and in thinking) in philosophy, science and art. In addition to looking at how students use multiple literacies to make sense of or read the world, we would teach remarkable modes of reading pertaining to distinct proclivities of thought – thinking in concepts, thinking in affects, thinking in functions, thinking in sounds or colours. For this approach not to become a reaction-formation (ultrahumanism), what would need to be emphasised are modes of reading not as communicative acts returning meaning to a subject by restoring his embeddedness within the world conceived of as one whole and harmonious interrelational organism (concept of *Gaia* for example). Rather, one would need a futural approach to reading, imagining different modes of existences; of *to-read* and of *to-be-read*, modes that do not presuppose man at the beginning nor at the end of sense as we know it.

In the first part of this chapter I look at Deleuze and Guattari's concept of pedagogy of concepts (as it is related to their other concepts of deterritorialization, intuition, problem, and desire) and read it in connection to Souriau's concept of instauration (as it is related to his concepts of anaphora, aseity and abeity). In the second part I propose a distinction between a *pedagogy of reading* and an *art of reading* and conclude by suggesting what an constructivist mode of reading intensively would be like.

4.1. Life is a problem

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari pose the question of philosophy as a problem. They create a plane of immanence or an intensive plane and discuss how philosophy, science and art can be thought of as distinct forces on the plane of immanence that enable possible and diverging lines of thought. There is a duality of movement between the virtual powers (for example the capacity in philosophy for the movement of thought to be presented *in itself* or as we will see with Souriau, existing in a mode of *aseity*) from which philosophy, art and science emerge and there are at the same time the geographical, historical, economic and geological events from which a philosophical creation of concepts is made possible (existing in the mode of *abeleity*). That is, with Souriau, we can say that what Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with is not how philosophy is given in itself, but how the passage of philosophy *through itself* (*aseity*) on a plane of immanence and *through what is not itself* (*abeleity*) as a creation of concepts gives itself to-be-conquered in its infinite modes of existence (philosophy as transcendence, philosophy as immanence, philosophy as yet to be invented).

In Souriau we find the idea that the task of philosophy is to be found in its tendency towards the work to-be-made (work as a monumental and singular *oeuvre*). What constitutes the philosophical being or the philosophical ontic is the process of instauration and thus for Souriau, philosophical thought is instaurative thought. When discussing the plane of immanence, Deleuze and Guattari make a quick reference to Souriau, however only in a footnote towards the end of the book. The English translations of *What is Philosophy?* goes something like this “In 1939 Etienne Souriau published *L'instauration philosophique*. Aware of creative activity in philosophy, he invoked a kind of plane of instituting as the ground of this creation, or "philosopheme," animated by dynamisms (pp. 62-63)”. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 220). However, in the original French, Souriau’s concept of instauration and not institution is preserved “il invoquait une sorte de plan d’instauration comme sol de cette création” and thus “La philosophie est à la fois création de concept et instauration du plan. Le concept est le commencement de la philosophie, mais le plan en est l’instauration” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2013, p. 37). That is, philosophy is at once concept

creation and instauration of the plane. The concept is the beginning of philosophy, but the plane is its instauration (Ibid.).

For Souriau, the plane of immanence or the domain of intensity must be instaured, which means that it must be accomplished through relations and supported by form; not a Platonic form but the form of a “riddle to which realization provides its solution” (Souriau, 2015, p. 25). What links the creation of concepts and the plane of immanence, is that the problems emerge in the process of creation of concepts answering other problems. The plane of immanence gives itself to-be-conquered in the experience where each conceptual solution becomes a creation which in turn is only the production of novel problems or riddles and the unknown. Thus, the plane of immanence is both required and instaured by the creation of concepts. The privileging of the word *institution* in the English translation does not capture the problematic of time and the rhythmic aesthetic of the word instauration. Thus what is lost to the English readers or to the readers of Deleuze unfamiliar with Souriau, is how, in terms of plane of immanence, Deleuze used this concept to designate or nuance the virtuality of time (synchronicity of philosophical time) and intensity when emphasising that this plane is not a transcendental condition

From the semantic viewpoint it is possible to observe a very interesting nuance in regard to this word [‘instauration’]. In the modern usage, its sense is that of ‘solemn establishment’, of an institution, a ceremony, a function, a way of making or doing, in short, a not strictly material reality. But in Latin ‘*instauratio*’ and ‘*instaurare*’ imply the idea of a restoration, of a recommencement, of a renovation, or better, of a resumption, definitive this time, of what had not been able to be brought to fruition the first time. *Instaurativi ludi* (restorative games) are those games that are celebrated in place of those that had been interrupted. The modern use is easily understood in contrast to ‘restore’, a contrast that has pushed ‘instauration’ to the side of: to establish for the first time. But it is legitimate to preserve in its meaning, from the Latin origin of the word, the idea that creation is not what is at issue, that the inventive or anecdotally first is not what is in question, that to instauration means less to establish a thing, a moral or a physical being, temporally than to establish it spiritually, and to constitute it, to grant to it reality in its own kind. (Souriau in Lawlor, 2011, p. 403)

If for Souriau instauration is “at once the action of an ontic and its positing. It is ontagogic,” (Souriau, 2015, p. 164) then the philosophy of instauration of the plane of immanence is about bringing together in a transitory and co-sustaining fashion the modes of being (concrete establishment) and the modes of becoming (virtual establishment). By privileging the word instauration over creation, Souriau and Deleuze emphasise the virtual being of philosophy (see also Lawlor, 2011, p.403). Their insistence on the differentiation between the Latin origin of the word instauration and its modern use shows that the distinction between creation and instauration lies in the role that *reprise* plays in the temporal as opposed to virtual notion of establishment; of “what had not been able to be brought to fruition the first time,” that is, of what was there only potentially so. What *reprise* in its rhythmic and musical sense of resumption and repetition calls for is an attention to *stratigraphic time*²⁵ - synchronicity and superposition of temporal establishment, rather than assuming independent points of succession of time. This is not an active vitalism for “The patuity of the event deploys an entirely new cosmos separate from those that came before, while nevertheless overlapping with them, insofar as it is a stranger to the work and to the monumentality of the soul, and insofar as their destruction constitutes its occurrence, its only occurrence” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 73).

For Souriau, there is no genesis of events, for what is being instaured (by way of reprise) in an event is a novelty and issuing in the destruction of its terms; the question of being and becoming in an event is a matter of instauration, where these different modes must be taken as *arbitrary* and as such must not be conceived of as coming together *to form some richer type of existence*: “Let us therefore resist any temptation to structure and to hierarchize the modes by explaining them dialectically. If you strip it of the arbitrariness that is one of its absolute characteristic, you will always lack knowledge of existence on its own terms” (Souriau, 2015, p. 183).

²⁵ See Deleuze & Guattari, 1994a.

There is then not *either* a stable ontic situation *or* a becoming of being (which, according to Souriau is in itself entirely transitive and constituted in the action itself according to its own mode) for these modes are *arbitrary*. To exist in this or that manner (for example, as a man, woman, child, animal, particle or virus) is not important. What is important for Souriau, is the cut itself. The “cut is not a transcendence of choice, but it is a factor in transcendence in as much the transcendental is a matter of invention”. If there is transcendence in Souriau, it is framed as “the investment of existence in the modulation itself” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 84). And the “specificity of the modes of existence” does not match some “relative, or secondary point of view, but, on the contrary, to the point of view of existence itself, on its own terrain... That is what existence is. That is where it reigns, where it resides. And it is demanding” (Souriau, 2015, p. 179). Souriau is thus obliged to count beyond one or two points of view (belonging to either subject or object, or the symbolic), for each single mode of existence is issuing from its own point of view, creating its own ontological space and time. These cuts are a matter of invention and are thus not points of view on a dotted line within existence but the existence itself. This is a *passivity* of “to act” of the plane of immanence in Deleuze. In having to respond to the given, Souriau’s *instauration* is itself an experience or an experimentation, but without alluding to the possibility of creation and creativity of an agent, for everything (the world, man, work of art) can fail at any given moment. Instauration always resumes or repeats a prior instauration (and not a prior condition), posed by the questioning situation.

If for Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, the task of philosophy of immanence is the *creation of concepts* on the plane of immanence, with Souriau, the plane of immanence itself must be instaured. The difference between instauration and creation is that in instauration, the demand posed by the necessity of repetition arises because nothing can be achieved without the incorporation of previous problems. This is how for Deleuze, the plane of immanence is both required and instaured by the creation of concepts. The necessity also arises, because of Souriau’s postulation of the non-possibility of instauration as in “what was not possible the first time,” and this is what distinguishes, as suggested by Lawlor, instauration from creation in Deleuze and Guattari. In other words,

“instauration leads to a very different experience than that of creation, or, better, it leads to the experience that is at the root of concept-creation,” for it “leads to the experience of the impossible: ‘We shall say that THE plane of immanence is, at the same time, that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought’. Because the plane of immanence is never able to be completely achieved, since the planes of immanence that have been laid out can never be the best (except, once more, for that of Spinoza, and perhaps Bergson) the plane of immanence always requires another (albeit necessarily insufficient) instauration.” (Lawlor, 2011, p. 405)

Thus, the task of the *creation of concepts* is not simply the task of “responding to the given,” but with Souriau, that of instauring; of “succeeding in the journey required by way of response” (Stengers and Latour in Souriau, 2015, p. 37). The plane of immanence in Deleuze, following Souriau, is not a condition, upon which a solution to the (philosophical) problem via a creation of concepts would entail an interpretation or a justification (Ibid.) for, as Souriau will say, *everything happens along the way*. Or in Deleuze and Guattari’s words, “Problems and solutions are constructed about which we can say, “Failure...Success ...,” but only as we go along and on the basis of their coadaptation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994a, p. 82). The solution modulates the problem, its plane of intensity. This is more akin to an activity of translation (as we will see later) rather than reading, or perhaps more akin to reading as translation.

Constructivism disqualifies all discussion-which holds back the necessary constructions - just as it exposes all the universals of contemplation, reflection, and communication as sources of what are called “false problems” emanating from the illusions surrounding the plane. That is all that can be said in advance. It is possible that we think we have found a solution; but a new curve of the plane, which at first we did not see, starts it all off again, posing new problems, a new batch of problems, advancing by successive surges and seeking concepts to come, concepts yet to be created (we do not even know if this is not a new plane that has separated from the preceding plane). (Ibid.)

For Souriau and Deleuze and Guattari after, the successful resolution of one problem or riddle does not necessitate in answering for the ones that follow. “We cannot say in advance whether a problem is well posed, whether a solution fits. This is because the criteria for each philosophical activity are found only in the other two, which is why philosophy

develops in paradox” (Ibid.). The outcome is not pre-determined, for existence (concepts, life, beings, art, abstractions) can fail. For Deleuze and Guattari “it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, or Important that determine success or failure” (Ibid.) In Souriau, these are not self-maintaining and self-furthering creative elements in a whole. As Stengers and Latour show, “if we are to be successful each and every time, this will be experienced as losing *our place as little judges* in order that beings are able to define their own truth in their own mode of existence. It is “us” who have to position ourselves in relation to these modes of existence of concepts, “what they entail, their own singular perfection, their *own success in the art of existing.*” (Stengers and Latour 2015, p.44, my emphasis) It is only in relation to them, as in *alongside* them, that *we*, we who pose the question of concepts, find ourselves located and occupied, territorialized and deterritorialized. In this respect, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the most universal concepts are the most “skeletal and least interesting”:

Nothing positive is done, nothing at all, in the domains of either criticism or history, when we are content to brandish ready-made old concepts like skeletons intended to intimidate any creation, without seeing that the ancient philosophers from whom we borrow them were already doing what we would like to prevent modern philosophers from doing: they were creating their concepts, and they were not happy just to clean and scrape bones like the critic and historian of our time. Even the history of philosophy is completely without interest if it does not undertake to awaken a dormant concept and to play it again on a new stage, even if this comes at the price of turning it against itself. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994a, p. 83)

To understand this as a certain mode of becoming rather than being of concepts, Deleuze and Guattari show that becoming is not the kind of action or activity where what is hoped for is a certain replication or striving towards imitation of some image of a proper concept. As in Souriau, this is a process or anaphoric progression (anaphora being a rhythmic and aesthetic reprise from one manner of existence to another), transitive and transformative in each point of action with no end at some external point of origin. I will never learn to do philosophy or to teach it, if I just repeat what Socrates did in his what is now known as “Socratic method”. Or if I just repeat or ‘interpret’ the concepts created by Plato (of irony, Ideas, Forms etc.).

The event of Plato is an intensity and a desire. For Deleuze, desire is a tendency not directed towards lack or the beyond of consciousness, but is a tendency of perception to become through what is not itself (existing in the mode of absence). This goes against the traditional idea of philosophy, where what is at issue is a contemplation, retrieving or positing of some original truth or image. It attests to the importance of the concept of instauration, for it evokes positive reprise in difference, the “What was not possible the first time”. If Nietzsche constructed a new concept of man through the concept of “bad conscience” this is not because he was reacting to Plato or Kant, nor recognizing their error, but because he was responding to new problems and new domains of intensity. The concept of “bad conscience” was not possible the first time, because the problems, planes of intensity or images Plato was responding to in the ancient polis and thought were different.

Concepts transform life. Not the other way around. If we actively engage with a concept, the concept will help to rearrange our lives. But today, according to Deleuze and Guattari, the concept has become “the set of historical, scientific, artistic, sexual, pragmatic displays as products where the event becomes the exhibition setting up various displays of the conversations and discussions it is supposed to promote”. Philosophers have preferred to think of a concept as knowledge or representation that is *given* and can be elucidated by the “various faculties able to *form it* (abstraction or generalization) or *employ it* (judgment)”. But for Deleuze and Guattari, the concept

is not given, it is created; it is to be created. It is not formed but posits itself in itself-it is a self-positing. Creation and self-positing mutually imply each other because what is truly created, from the living being to the work of art, thereby enjoys a self-positing of itself, or an autopoietic characteristic by which it is recognized. The concept posits itself to the same extent that it is created. The post-Kantians concentrated on a universal encyclopedia of the concept that attributed concept creation to a pure subjectivity rather than taking on the more modest task of a pedagogy of the concept, which would have to analyze the conditions of creation as factors of always singular moments. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994a, p. 11)

It is easier to understand the difference between an “encyclopedia of concepts” and a pedagogy of concepts or their singularity if we take what Deleuze insists on a “power of

life itself to become different”, where life is “nothing other than its eternally different events of expression” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 203). It is not an affirmation of difference between this or that concept or event, for difference is a potential of life to differ in difference - always becoming in other differences. For Deleuze one of the main problems of western thought has been transcendence. There is a foundation such as subjectivity, matter or God as something that lies outside life that we then think, judge or represent as thinking subjects. Through the activity of philosophy, science and art, we continually imagine this outside as some secret, something that is beyond thought and perception. Immanence on the other hand, has no outside and exists as nothing other than itself (aseity). We have created figures such as God, despot, or subject, who create transcendent worlds. But for Deleuze, the force of creation does not lie outside (above or beyond) the world for it is life itself that is a process of creative power. Thought, language, and the subjective self are not other than life or world, but are part of the fluidity of the world. To think, read, create or signify are not activities of a unified substance in order to represent life. What is at issue in thinking immanence is the creation and transformation of life itself.

For Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, life is instaurated through itself and has a capacity to form connections or territories of forces from itself, that produce distinct assemblages (it exists in the mode of *through itself*). This is how all life (bodies, concepts, viruses, societies) is territorialised. But next to or *alongside* “every single territorialisation there is also the power of deterritorialisation.” For example “The light that connects with the plant gathers it to grow but it also allows for the plant to become other than itself: too much sun will kill the plant, or perhaps transform it into something else (such as sun-dried leaves becoming tobacco or sun-drenched grapes becoming sultanas)” (Colebrook, 2003, p. xxii). The singular connective²⁶ forces (including destructive forces) that “allow any form of life to become what it is (territorialise) can also allow it to become what it is not (deterritorialise)” (Ibid.); becoming through what is not itself. The “human genes that

²⁶ Whitehead also prefers the doctrine of connectedness to the doctrine of relations, referring to Bradley and his idea that the “experience is not a relation of experient to something external to it, but is itself the ‘inclusive whole’ which is the required connectedness of many in one” (Whitehead, 1967, p. 233).

assemble to form an eye” (territorialisation) produce a whole that then allows them to be “governed by the human mind - the reading eye” (deterritorialisation, where the reader can imagine existences beyond the ones that are given) (Ibid.). Reading is a crucial site for learning to construct wild concepts because it invites us to stretch beyond ourselves; and so holds the potential to disrupt what we have come to know as our life on this earth and transform the way we live together. In a time when people are reading more than ever, and where the quality of reading is contested (e.g. surveying or glancing at the short and instant information on social media, texting, news headlines), the need for new pedagogies of reading might never have been more urgent. But the task of a philosopher is to look at the imperceptible or virtual connective forces, that is, the intensive planes before these become recognized as this or that given form.

For example, with regard to the figure of *intersubjectivity of communication*, for Deleuze, there is only a “pure act”, an “impassivity that is expressed in the infinite as a meticulous style: not a speaker who then expresses meaning but a saying that is nothing other than itself” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 57). The agent and action are not to be seen as separate where the sentence becomes an activity *of* some subject. Life here is not an object or being that can be represented in language. Life is not a substance or essence that “appears as something beyond language, something more real or something that hides the truth.” Consequently, language “is not a proposition about the world; it is itself an event of a world that is nothing more than its becoming” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 58). Similarly, it is possible to say that traditional approaches to reading assume that language is a proposition about the world and thus consider reading to be an expression rather than production of life and relationality.

“Something in the world forces us to think”, says Deleuze, and “[t]his something is an object not of recognition but of fundamental *encounter*” (1994, p. 139). What is encountered may be Socrates, an obelisk or a demon. It may be grasped in a “variety of affective tone”, for example, wonder, passion, fear, hope, disgust, sorrow. But the “primary characteristic of what is encountered is not this or that quality but that it can only be sensed”. What is important for Deleuze is that what is *grasped*, is what “moves the soul,

‘perplexes’ it – in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though the object or encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem – as though it were a problem” (p. 140). Thus in contrast with Rorty as well as with poststructuralist postulations which assume the discursive formation of self *through* regimes of power (Foucault, Butler), sexual difference (Irigaray, Grosz), *différence* (Derrida), lack (Lacan) and master/slave dialectic (Hegel, Fanon), Deleuze insists on “power of life itself to become different”, where life is “nothing other than its eternally different events of expression” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 203).

Subjectivism assumes the self to be *either* the ground of experience and language to be the origin of meaning which is given for us to contemplate through some higher point of view; *or*, as in poststructuralism, it assumes a self that is formed as an effect of discourse. In education, this transcendental and representational thought can be seen in various ways, from privileging a progressive theory of evolution to understanding cognitive development as something natural, fixed, objective, given and ‘out there’-- that can be empirically proven. Understanding is assumed in stages, following from concrete to abstract whereas language is seen as a tool with which we can manipulate the subjective and objective processes of life. But for Deleuze, as for Whitehead and Souriau, there is no perception or contemplation that is other than itself, no point of view or prehension that would assume a transcendental outside: “Perhaps it is irony to say that everything is contemplation”, says Deleuze, “even the rocks and woods, animals and men, even Actaeon and the stag, Narcissus and the flower, even our actions and our needs. But irony in turn is still a contemplation, nothing but a contemplation” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 75). It is intensity, a “positive instance of difference that insists with its own force and has its own way of becoming” (Colebrook, 2007, p. 210). Thus Colebrook defines Deleuze’s “transcendental empiricism” as *superior irony* which “assesses the force of each event of difference and responds to each difference through style” (Ibid.).

For example, if, according to Deleuze, we accept life to be immanence, thinking cannot begin with the notion of the thinking subject. There is no distinct being that can judge and explain being in general. For Souriau and Deleuze, there is being or existence as such (in its mode of aseity), in all of its different modes of intensity, complexity and becoming. A

life (a potentiality or virtuality that is real) and immanence suppose one another. Immanence is pure when it is not immanent to something (subject, object, mind, matter) for it is always “yet in the making” or “to-be-made”.

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. It is not immanence to life, but the immanent that is in nothing is itself a life. A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss [...] It is a haecceity no longer of individuation but of singularization: a life of pure immanence, neutral, beyond good and evil, for it was only the subject that incarnated it in the midst of things that made it good or bad. The life of such individuality fades away in favor of the singular life immanent to a man who no longer has a name, though he can be mistaken for no other. A singular essence, a life... (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 27–29)

This is not the life of an individual but a life where nothing is given in advance – an “indefinite life”. The task of philosophy of education is not to recognize but to create concepts in order to confront all of those virtual and imperceptible forces that, for example, differentiate the modern concept of Man as a subject from a life and to see just how, where and when this particular Man becomes recognized to be the origin of all difference (of thought, language, representation). For Deleuze, there is not a subject who then thinks. Rather, there is an event of thought within life that produces subjects. There are singularities, impersonalities and syntheses that pre-exist identities of figure, habit and perception (a mouth, a heart) within a temporality that is always beginning again in the midst and within relations that are based on encounters and compositions, rather than recognition and identification

This indefinite life does not itself have moments, close as they may be one to another, but only between-times, between-moments; it doesn’t just come about or come after but offers the immensity of an empty time where one sees the event yet to come and already happened, in the absolute of an immediate consciousness. (Deleuze, 2005, p. 29-30)

If everything connects with everything else, individuals connect differently than events that “constitute a life” and so

[a] singular life might do without any individuality, without any other concomitant that individualizes it. For example, very small children all resemble one another and have hardly any individuality, but they have singularities: a smile, a gesture, a funny face — not subjective qualities. Small children, through all their sufferings and weaknesses, are infused with an immanent life that is pure power and even bliss. (Deleuze, 2005, p. 29-30)

So, while all life is anaphoric variation (immanent, indifferent and instaurative or to-be-made), philosophy can create concepts that can transform the thought of creation, variation, life and difference as such. While science begins from a “state of things”, philosophy can engage with what is not yet actualised. For example, following Deleuze, science examines a wound as already actualised in a state of things. But philosophy can look at a wound as itself a pure virtuality that “existed before *my* wound on a plane of immanence that leads *me* into *a* life; my wound existed before me as not a transcendence of the wound as higher actuality, but its immanence as a virtuality always within a milieu (plane or field)” (Deleuze, 2005, pp. 31–32). Philosophy can transform life because it can invent new images and “imagine new wounds” (Ibid.).

4.2. Reading intensively

Traditional and progressive ways of instruction that have dominated education for so long can be clearly noticed in literacy theory, with the focus on representation, interpretation, phonics, whole language and embedded instruction, directed listening and thinking activities, technology assisted reading acquisition and so on. What is placed at the centre of the modernist approaches to literacy education by way of utilising the findings of applied linguistics, cognitive and educational psychology are developmental stages, the enclosed subject in all his individual differences, prior experiences and knowledge, representation, recognition and closed systems of communication (Afflerbach, 2015). Reading skills are measured in terms of cognitive abilities, vocabulary and orthography skills as well as phonological awareness, processing ability and metacognitive strategic competence (Pang, 2008). These views directly influence school-based ways of *good* reading and define what

it means to become literate. Literacy curriculum focused on phonological, morphological and orthographic awareness is directly influenced by ‘evidence-based practice’ supported by various psychological studies (Berninger et al., 2010).

In addition, the scientific models of curriculum based on cognitive psychology studies and research operate as a closed system of communication, focused on the determinacy of outcomes directly informed by psychological predictors and measures of reading success (Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2015, Prior *et al.*, 2011). With the findings in neuroscience indicating that children require a social setting and social interaction with another human being to trigger their computations skills to learn from exposure to language, such a “social brain” now informs the future of literacy education, suggesting that

In the next decade neuroscientists, educators, biologists, computer scientists, speech and hearing scientists, psychologists, and linguists will increasingly work together to understand how children’s critical “windows of opportunity” for learning work, what triggers their inception, and how learning can be encouraged once the optimal period for learning has passed. The ultimate goal is to alter the trajectories of learning to maximize language and literacy skills in all children. (Kuhl, 2011)

What is placed at the centre of science-based research in literacy studies is a humanist image of an autonomous thinking subject who knows by recognizing, classifying and categorizing different qualities of things and subjects. In addition, the new finding in neuroscience advocate for a certain plasticity of the brain, its intimate intertwining with the new social context of increased communication and digital information and other environmental factors. Next to the science or evidence-based literacy advocating phonics and enclosed literacy structures, new literacies and critical literacy theory now draw on neuroscience in order to emphasise the social and cultural forces that inform and emerge in the process of reading and writing. As a ‘reaction’ to such scientific based and closed systems based on empirical data there is also a growing interest in what has come to be known as multiple literacies theory or *MLT*, introducing multimodal approaches to literacy acquisition in which alphabetic modes or representations of meaning interface with oral, visual, audio, gestural, tactical, spatial and financial patterns of meaning making.

Within a broader sense of MLT and recent turns to embodiment, (vibrant) matter and affect, we can note an introduction of Deleuze to what Diana Masny and David Cole in their *Mapping Multiple Literacies: An Introduction to Deleuze Literacy Studies*, conceptualise as *affective literacy*. In their “viral model” of literacy, what is proposed is framing literacy as a question of how modes of reading and writing “enable orientations, differences and the creation of minor deflections,” which can enable “the possibility of reading and writing not as modes of replication (tracing a pattern) but as modes of mapping – marking out new spaces, new dimensions, new lines of filiation” (Masny & Cole, 2012, p. xi). They conceive of a literacy classroom as “full of hybrid human and non-human subjectivities that can interrelate, overlap and contradict each other in texts-based activities” and propose that “Deleuzian literacy studies do not pre-determine or project subjectivity into context, as the field is enlivened through pre-personal affects, which are multiple and happen in time, often without the rational overtures of literacy development or instrumental ‘improvementism’,” which does not mean that “Deleuzian literacy studies only sides with irrationality or the utterly chaotic, yet the unconscious, with its concomitant drives, should be an equal party in any literacy programme with rational order; associative powers should be valued alongside logic” (Ibid., p. 5). That is, what they propose is that the unconscious or what they align with pre-personal affects, should be equally valued as the rational or conscious cognitive powers in any literacy curriculum and literacy research.

Cole claims that such an affective literacy is “transformative” for it “enlivens” lesson planning and increases the engagement of students. He proposes that the “enjoyable, interactive and gripping content of texts is focused upon, explored and used to push pedagogy,” and while this emphasises the role that the teacher plays in such a pedagogy, they note that the “decisions of the teacher are also embedded in social and cultural values, as students must make connections between teacher’s choices and their own lives [...]” (Ibid.,p.64). Cole suggests that “affective pedagogy for using text” is also applicable to other discipline areas, such as “humanities, drama, psychology, sociology and philosophy,” because the “multiple literacy encounters in these areas require a thorough understanding and grounding in affect, the workings of power and the multiplicity of literacies” (Ibid.,

64-65). It makes sense that within such an approach to Deleuze, what would become privileged concepts in terms of creating new notions of reading (see Masny in the same volume) are his concepts of rhizome and assemblage. Masny proposes that reading is “intensive and immanent” and she approaches such reading through Deleuze’s concept of assemblage²⁷. She uses vignettes “not as an empirical data representative of reading” but “as part of the assemblage (e.g. this chapter, book, writer, reader, etc.), for they effectuate the power to affect and be affected and transform the assemblage including reading, reading the world and self” (Ibid., p. 74). In sum, for Masny, following Deleuze, reading is

[a]bout mapping events of experiences on different planes: reading immanently, intensively and in interested ways (foregrounding certain thoughts and experiences that disrupt). To read intensively and immanently extends the power to read differently and to think differently, to go beyond what it is to what it could be, the virtual-actual interaction: difference and becoming. (Ibid., p. 78)

I believe there is a fundamental problem at issue here. The authors propose that rather than turning to science for the redemption of reading in an ever more depressing state of affairs in terms of the end of reading, we ought to turn to philosophy. However, by employing Deleuze’s concept of affect as the key motor of change, they commit a fundamental error, which according to Deleuze’s *What is Philosophy?* is the imbrication of concepts with affects. While concepts pertain to philosophy and are potentially transformative and productive of life, affects pertain to art and do not attest to transformative powers as claimed by Cole. For example, a novel can describe loneliness but when reading this novel, the reader might not feel lonely or transformed by the presentation and description of loneliness. Rather than seeing a literary text as what affects a reader, for Deleuze, a literary text presents affects (for example ‘affect of loneliness’) as such, regardless of who (if at all) reads or perceives it. Even though affects are a response to (loneliness, fear, desperation) and not the meaning of an experience, literature, and art more generally,

²⁷ In her dissertation entitled *Reading as Assemblage: Intensive Reading Practices of Academics* (2010), Sharon Murphy Augustine also uses Deleuze’s concept of assemblage to conceptualise intensive mode of reading.

according to Colebrook, attests to a certain detached and non-relational force of text, language and communication. So while it makes sense that in a wider context of vitalist post-theory Deleuze's and Deleuze and Guattari's concepts of *assemblage* (bodies and things being an outcome of connections, of force that enables complex relations of texts, places, ideas, and memories) and *affect* are taken to be most productive for conceptualising intensive reading, I believe there is another way. In proposing their different pedagogy of reading, Cole and Masny rightly claim that we need to turn to philosophy, but focusing on affective pedagogy of reading as a transformative practice, they fabricate concepts with affects and follow an aesthetic rather than philosophical approach to reading. This is not to say that concept and affect do not often pass one into another in experience, so that the plane of composition of art and the plane of immanence of philosophy "can slip into each other," but the task of art and philosophy is to think differently and respond to problems differently, that is, to disentangle affects and concepts. So we might first have to ask what is this force that connects or assembles things, what is this flow that provides the force of connection and thought, both in art as well as philosophy? In what follows I try to show that this connection is desire if desire is conceptualised as intensity rather than lack.

As with any other concept in Deleuze's corpus, the concept of desire is intimately linked with a host of other concepts; for example, *Bodies Without Organs*, *plane of consistency*, *schizoanalysis*, *deterritorialisation*, *capitalism*, *desiring-machines*. To fully appreciate the concept of desire, one would quite possibly need to read the whole of Deleuze's corpus. This is because for Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, any concept lacks meaning if it is not connected to a force of a problem and to other concepts. As the purpose of this section is to dive into the concept of intensive reading, I will focus on how desire is productive and linked to intensity and thought, or thought as intensity and desire.

Desire for Deleuze is "[...] unconscious that is material rather than ideological; schizophrenic rather than Oedipal; nonfigurative rather than imaginary; real rather than symbolic; machinic rather than structural – an unconscious, finally, that is molecular, microphysical, and micrological rather than molar or gregarious; productive rather than expressive." (pp. 107-108). Desire is not a problem of meaning but a problem of use.

The question posed by desire is not "What does it mean?" but rather "How does it work?" How do these machines, these desiring-machines, work—yours and mine? With what sort of breakdowns as a part of their functioning? How do they pass from one body to another? How are they attached to the body without organs? What occurs when their mode of operation confronts the social machines? A tractable gear is greased, or on the contrary an infernal machine is made ready. What are the connections, what are the disjunctions, the conjunctions, what use is made of the syntheses? It represents nothing, but it produces. It means nothing, but it works. Desire makes its entry with the general collapse of the question "What does it mean?" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 50)

In contrast to the productive notion of desire, the traditional logic of desire places it on the side of something subjects must acquire, resulting in a concept of desire as lack, as something idealistic (dialectical, negative). This can be traced back to Plato and is constitutive of psychoanalysis, which dramatizes lack in the figure of Oedipal triangle (mommy-daddy-me). For Kant, desire is both extrinsic and intrinsic. On the one hand, real objects are produced by external mechanisms and causality and on the other, desire has the power to create its own object and it posits this causality as originating from within desire itself. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this way of conceiving of productivity of desire does not question the validity of the classical Platonic conception of desire as a lack. What is more,

it uses this conception as a support and a buttress, and merely examines its implications more carefully. In point of fact, if desire is the lack of the real object, its very nature as a real entity depends upon an "essence of lack" that produces the fantasized object. On the very lowest level of interpretation, this means that the real object that desire lacks is related to an extrinsic natural or social production, whereas desire intrinsically produces an imaginary object that functions as a double of reality, as though there were a "dreamed-of object behind every real object," or a mental production. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 25)

For Deleuze and Guattari, "desire lacks nothing" or in other words, "it does not lack its object". Thus, desire "is productive and immanent in and of the real world of relations, partial objects, flows, and bodies". Thus, "desire and its object are one and the same thing; the objective being of desire is the Real in and of itself. Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 26–27). It is

not that there are bodies and things or some general structure of relations such as language which are organised, ordered or grounding and from which different beings or things would emerge. It is desire that is productive of concepts such as gender, sexuality, language, unconscious.

For desiring-machines are the fundamental category of the economy of desire; they produce a body without organs all by themselves, and make no distinction between agents and their own parts, or between the relations of production and their own relations, or between the social order and technology. Desiring-machines are both technical and social. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 32)

For example, reading as a desiring-machine would not be a result of reproductive tendencies or potentialities. Reading is a flow of desire producing multiple relations (including destructive, indifferent and monstrous) and new flows of desire. Following Colebrook we can say that *a* reading becomes reading only through relations of desire to other desires. So too with various objects, ideas and concepts. They are not external to desire but are a part of or immanent to desire. There are no fixed subjects, for the only “subject is desire itself on the body without organs, inasmuch as it machines partial objects and flows, selecting and cutting the one with the other, passing from one body to another, following connections and appropriations that each time destroy the factitious unity of a possessive or proprietary ego (anoedipal sexuality)” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 72). As they show, for example, “desire does not want sex”, it is sexual in its own right, “causing strange flows to circulate” that do not “let themselves be kept enclosed within an established order of the *Oedipus’ bedroom*” (Ibid.).

In contrast, “when we relate desire to Oedipus, we are condemned to ignore the productive nature of desire: we condemn desire to vague dreams or imaginations that are merely conscious expressions of it; we relate it to independent existences—the father, the mother, begetters.” (1983, p. 107) That is, from the moment desire is made to “function as dependant on the signifier, it is put back under the yoke of a despotism whose effect is castration,” but for Deleuze and Guattari, “the sign of desire is never signifying, it exists in the thousands of productive breaks-flows that never allow themselves to be signified

within the unary stroke of castration. It is always a point-sign of many dimensions, polyvocality as the basis for a punctual semiology” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 111–112). The task of the *process of schizophrenization* is to “plug in” desiring-machines” that would make us feel as of “out of place,” like “a priest from the Middle Ages on an assembly line”; where nothing would be decided in advance but all would remain unknown (Ibid., p. 113). Desire, for Deleuze and Guattari is machinic, sexual and revolutionary because it is a process, connection and creation of life not a goal. It is not the expression of some organism, life or ground, but its machinic production and expansion. And if life is its desire, according to Colebrook, it manifests differently in its various modes of existence; responding to problems of desire differently whether through philosophy (through concepts), art (through affects and percepts) or science (through functives).

By analogy we can say that if life is its flow of desire, then reading as one mode of desire among many (thinking, writing, speaking, viewing being some of the other modes) is machinic, sexual, material and revolutionary, not because it is an expression of, but because it is productive of relations

For reading a text is never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified, still less a highly textual exercise in search of a signifier. Rather it is a productive use of the literary machine, a montage of desiring-machines, a schizoid exercise that extracts from the text its revolutionary force. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 106)

The task of reading would not be to interpret, critique, communicate or make meaning of a text so as to restore the subjective self. Rather, the task of reading would be to intuit the (revolutionary) force of the problem of a text at hand in order to become transformed by that “strange and open space of being a foreigner in one’s own language” and by “constructing a line of flight”.

There are, you see, two ways of reading a book: you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies, and then if you're even more perverse or depraved you set off after signifiers. And you treat the next book like a box contained in the first or containing it. And you annotate and interpret and question, and write a book about the book, and so on and on. Or there's the other way: you see the book as a little non-

signifying machine, and the only question is "Does it work, and how does it work?" How does it work for you? If it doesn't work, if nothing comes through, you try another book. This second way of reading's intensive: something comes through or it doesn't. There's nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It's like plugging in to an electric circuit. (Deleuze, 1997, pp. 7–8)

A book can be seen as a signifier through which relations are communicated, organized and actualised. The aim of the first mode of reading is to trace all of the potentialities concretised in the book. Or we can read intensively, wherein the book would not figure as an extension or expression of some life as represented and codified through language, always re-lived in the present moment as an independent point in a succession of time, but would be a *section or a fraction of chaos*, of synchronicity and superposition of temporality. This is because concepts for Deleuze “are precisely like sounds, colours or images, they are intensities which suit you or not, which are acceptable or aren't acceptable”(Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 4). Reading, just as writing is one flow of desire among others in relation to other flows (of words, money, politics etc.), one machine among others. If philosophy contemplates with concepts, science with functives and art with affects and percepts, then these conceptual, functive and affective *flows* are *separate lines of flight*. "Thus philosophy, art, and science come into relations of mutual resonance and exchange, but always for internal reasons. The way they impinge on one another depends on their own evolution. So in this sense we really have to see philosophy, art, and science as sorts of separate melodic lines in constant interplay with one another" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 125). So even though there is always a certain “cross-cutting” and “zigzagging” from one to another, this should not result in mutual entanglement or imbrication of one with the other (of concepts with affects or functives). In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari make an additional distinction - while philosophy constructs, art composes. Thinking with concepts entails thinking the *truth of the problems*. Composing in art entails encountering singular intensities, affects and percepts. It is possible to say, that all reading is desiring because it is intensive, but what is confronted or read differently is different problems, differences and signs encountered by a virus, electron, fairy, wasp, philosopher, artist or scientist.

For Deleuze, truth is not something one should accept from some higher position of power or authority. There is not a truth reduced to some relation on an undifferentiated field of power. In his monistic ontology, singularities are not distributed within some general field of power. Just as for Souriau, as seen in the previous chapter, each singularity is a power that produces its own intensity (space, time) from itself. These powers to differ, to singularise, to instaure produce relations differently according to each new encounter (with other desires, other problems). For Kant on the other hand, we can only know what something is, for example desire, through its external relations on the field of experience. For Deleuze, by contrast, desire is positive and does not lack anything, for it is intensive and immanent (always becoming what it is) and differently with each new encounter. The task of thinking with concept is not to recognize these relations in order to know how they become established, but to intuit the problem or the field of sense or intensity from which certain concepts are created in a given text. The question is not what this or that philosopher meant to say, the truth of their work, but to think what problems provided the intensity propelling them to create their concepts. To intuit the truth of the problem.

Thus, the task of conceptual or constructivist pedagogy of reading is not the task of responding to the given. It entails an intensive ‘construction’ of truth, not in terms of some higher truth but, as with Souriau, in terms of its success or failure. It is the solution that modulates the truth of the problem, its plane of intensity. The truth of the problem is its desire, the field of intensity or sense from which it emerges. The task of constructivist pedagogy of reading is to foster a desire for *stammering*, for *plugin-in*, for disruption of common sense, consumption and opinion, where desire is not lacking but is always modulating the questions and problems we pose, depending on the *field of sense* we occupy. We do not look for the truth of the already established terms and relations in a given text (for example cogito, gender, subjectivity, lack) but turn to intensity or power of a text (the *action* of problems, concepts, personae) in order to invent or populate new fields of sense and create new concepts that can transform life.

However, even though for Deleuze, it is possible to intuit the truth of the problem of any text (literary, philosophical, scientific), truth is not affect. When affect or the lure of

seduction of opinion and common sense become imbricated with concept, figures intervene, preventing us to think or read intensively. These figures are seductive lures that disable thinking in thought. To propose something like *an affective pedagogy of reading* (Cole and Masny) as a *transformative* practice is counter-intuitive in terms of the conceptual framework of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. Thinking in thought, or reading as learning with the potential of transformation should not be a practice or *pedagogy* of being led by affects. According to Deleuze and Guattari of *What is Philosophy?*, if "affects pass directly to judgement without reflection," we remain seduced by already constituted terms and relations and move from "I don't like this," directly to "this is no good". In addition, reading intensively becomes differently according to the concepts it creates and the field of sense it populates. For example, concepts connect, produce, transform and enable us to think and live – we can think of the concept of desire as either *lack* or as an immanent force of life. With the creation of new concepts other senses of what desire is or might be will become possible. This is because an intensive concept (of desire for example) is never presented in itself, but always connected to the way we pose problems, according to new intensities or forces it encounters and populates.

As we have seen, the concept of desire enables us to think the virtual forces, singularities and differences that precede the already established forms, identities and bounded wholes. Affects, on the other hand, "are always singular" and "may not produce relations" nor transform life. In addition, according to Colebrook, following Deleuze, the language of literature allows matter to stand alone.

Whereas the language of life is productive, vital, and extensive—so that our lexicon allows us to stabilize the world and relations around us into an ongoing, predictable, and lived time—the language of literature is material and dead. The word is no longer part of an acting, living body and its communicative relations but stands alone, as a monument or fragment of time in its pure state. (Material fem, p.91.)

We can conclude by suggesting that pedagogy of reading would be intensive or constructivist rather than affective, if it did not disclose the world *for us*. And while we can read literary, scientific and philosophical texts equally constructively, by intuiting the

problems that provoked the disclosure of the sense of the text at hand; reading intensively in each of these disciplines would entail disengaging concepts from affects and concepts from functions, because the truth of the problem is its desire that actualises itself differently within each new event or encounter with other desires and other provocations of good sense. As seen, this is because each of these disciplines responds to problems differently. Philosophy responds to the truth of the problem of sense *constructively*, by creating concepts that can transform life by violating opinion or common sense. Literature and art on the other hand, respond to the truth of the problem of finding what monument to erect on an aesthetic plane of sensation, by *composing* affects and percepts which attest to the, following Colebrook, *dead matter of language*

What matters is not, as in bad novels, the opinions held by characters in accordance with their social type and characteristics but rather the relations of counterpoint into which they enter and the compounds of sensations that these characters either themselves experience or make felt in their becomings and their visions. Counterpoint serves not to report real or fictional conversations but to bring out the madness of all conversation and of all dialogue, even interior dialogue. Everything that novelists must extract from the perceptions, affections, and opinions of their psychosocial "models" passes entirely into the percepts and affects to which the character must be raised without holding on to any other life. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994a, p. 188)

Art and literature *read* "compounds of sensation" (colours, sounds, textures) and create "ever new affects and percepts as so many detours, returns, dividing lines, changes of level and scale" (Ibid., p. 193). Sensations just as concepts "answer problems," they are "questions that sometimes offer solutions" or answers, and sometimes not. Philosophy lays out a *plane of immanence*, art lays out a *plane of composition* and science lays out a plane of *undefined coordinates* (Ibid., p. 198).

The three routes of thought are specific and even though thinking is thought through concepts, or functions, or sensations, "no one of these thoughts is better than another, or more fully, completely, or synthetically "thought." The frames of art are no more scientific coordinates than sensations are concepts, or vice versa" (Ibid., p. 199). For example, an abstract sculpture "might bring art and philosophy together," but this does not result in the

merging of concepts and sensations. Quite the contrary, abstract art according to Deleuze and Guattari “creates new sensations and not concepts for the task of art is to refine and dematerialise sensation by setting out an architectonic plane of composition in which it would become a purely spiritual being, a radiant thinking and thought matter, no longer a sensation of sea or tree, but a sensation of the concept of sea or concept of tree” (Ibid.). Philosophic, scientific and aesthetic are three different thoughts and not three different styles or modes of one thought. This is because “concepts, functions and sensations intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification and a rich network of correspondence between the planes can be established” (Ibid.). Philosophy transforms life, art instaurates life through compounds of affects and percepts and science “refers to states of affairs” (Ibid.).

The correspondence or intersection of sensations, concepts and functions is not in itself problematic. What becomes an issue is when thought fails to think, or when concept becomes imbricated with affect, leading us back to opinion (Ibid.). For example, when educational thought becomes captivated by an image of brain as a container of transferable skills (computational model) or as an emotional or social container of affective communication (neuroscientific model) within the world, what is historically and geographically produced (a certain image of a western rational human mind or an image of one mode of existence of the world that can be adequately represented through some proper sense) becomes unquestioned as the sole truth of our being in the world.

This is why the question of a pedagogy of reading is interesting. If the only truth is that of problems rather than truth of some origin or condition of the being of thought, then a constructivist pedagogy of reading would not offer a correct method or program of instruction. It would not be affective, because the task of reading would be the disentanglement of concept and affect in order that when reading a text, what is encountered is a “strange land”, a “language within the language” or the “thinking in thought”.

When reading the readable, constructivist pedagogy does not strive to restore meaning to the subjective self. Rather, it would follow flows of desire as if following a witch's' flight, zigzagging, encountering other flows and other desires. When reading Deleuze, we would try to intuit why he created a concept of the plane of immanence, and why he felt that life required desire. When reading Dostojevski, we would try to intuit or get a sense of the potentiality of violence as a sign beyond the particular instance of Raskolnikov; the force of to-be-violent in *this* singular way and not any other.²⁸ Even though concepts and sensations are problems, reading intensively would mean that we take seriously that the different planes of thought (philosophic, aesthetic, and scientific) demand different responses and demand them differently. It would mean taking the question of how the three thoughts implicate us differently according to each new encounter of new problems on the different planes of intensity (construction, composition, coordination).

During the process of the scientification of education, questions of thought, reason, truth, method, and development, became confined to the horizon of scientifically and technologically plausible and achievable goals. A major loss in this process is teachers forming a community that is expected or believed to hold power and control over their own reading. Not only should we look for educational propositions that differ from the existing educational paradigms, in form as well as content; perhaps what is needed are the principles that follow philosophical rather than psychological and epistemological (scientific, functional) frames of *doing* in education. How do we avoid the domestication of reading to the administration of information and the reduction of pedagogy of literacy to the drill in proper, good or critical reading? Rather than oscillating between scientific objectivism and relativism as two styles of transcendental thought, we can turn to immanence of life, as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari's pedagogy of concepts. Ideas, theories and concepts are not relative to or foundational to life in order that we can represent life because for Deleuze, these are not something prior or other than life, but are productive of it.

²⁸ For more on artistic and other signs see Deleuze's *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text* (2004).

Chapter 5.

Conclusion: Pedagogy Without Bodies

Perhaps more than ever, humans are confronted with the impinging possibility that the future might not include humans. Education, however, continues to intimate a culture of harmonious living and joyful affects. In the midst of pressing climatological and ecological concerns, educational theory seems to remain ardently ignorant to the fact that its foundational orientations, be they ontological or epistemological, are destined for obsolescence in a not too distant inhuman and impersonal future (after the event of man). As a whole, this dissertation has sought to set the terrain upon which a confrontation between educational thought and the speculative implications of the Anthropocene²⁹ could take place. Through invocation of the Anthropocene, I hope to set in motion a notion of time in which the geological impact of man is readable in the earth's strata and organizes life after the life as 'we' know it. This conclusion aims to open the problem of limits to *education as predicament* of a singular mode of existence of man and his readability.

In addressing the global environmental crisis and the ecological destruction of the planet, theoretical approaches such as posthumanism and new materialism sustain a commitment to de-centering the human primacy and attending to the various, non-human material forces with which the human is entangled—thus offering a point of view from which 'we' can better appreciate our dependence on and within the environment. What is not pursued in such approaches is the challenge of thinking beyond or before the point of view of man. In not accounting for the monstrous 'outside' to educational thought, what remains entrenched in the contemporary foundations of educational theory is, following Whitehead, the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" – the correlation of reality (world) to man (thought) according to the narrow perception of what counts as life. Colebrook (2014) has challenged these approaches by pointing to the hyper-humanism and active vitalism they entail, given that they frequently arise from an unquestioned anxiety to sustain human life. In other

²⁹ For more on pedagogy and the Anthropocene see *Pedagogy at the brink of the post-anthropocene* by Jason J. Wallin (2016).

words, posthumanism's turn to matter and material "comes precisely at the moment when we face our extinction". In the conclusion, I wish to revisit some of the concepts from previous chapters by elaborating on Colebrook's counter-proposal, which is perhaps best described as an impassive vitalist approach, and discuss its relevance for the 'future' of education and pedagogy, which necessarily entails some form of thinking about the dominant notions of human environment and ecology. I wish to conclude this conclusion by considering seriously the possibility of not maintaining the necessity of education or cultivation for the sake of sustaining human life as we know it.

What seems to be challenged by the Anthropocene is not only the question of how to re-think education and educational research so that it can account for the possibility that the human will be read from inhuman points of view or those indifferent to human perspective and desire, but also, following Colebrook, how to account for other "timescales and horizons not compatible with the story of the human geological impact on earth" (2016, p. 2). There might or might not be human extinction. But if there will be such a thing as an evolution of the human of the future as a new and yet again stable mode of existence, this will have been manufactured from the human mode of existence that has always already been futuristic, apocalyptic, multiple, impossible and indifferent to its milieu.

The purchase of such speculative thought for education today is less futuristic than it is urgent, for it takes into consideration the counter-factual logic of education. For all the talk of the loss of good and proper thinking and reading by the post-computational brain of the millennials and the generation X, such accounts continually re-manufacture a stable human nature or mode of existence of a child as a bounded human organism with singular and continuous history and progressive cognitive developmental trajectory. Writing through Colebrook it is possible to say that what is occluded from these foundational orientations of educational thought is precisely its condition – the loss of proper and good thinking and the unknowability, unmalleability, unpredictability and unsustainability of what has come to be known as the nature of a child is the posited condition from which (philosophy of) education mandated something like a stable or predictable nature of a child and its development that can be commodified.

The posthumanist turn in philosophy of education has begun to challenge some of these core and normative values of the humanist philosophical tradition. What is being challenged is not only the centrality of human mind and perception to life *tout court*, but the questions of how we conceive *life*³⁰ in the first place. We are training teachers (and in turn students) to think in terms of the development of an individual life-course, from children incapable of abstract thought through to ‘fully formed’ rational individuals. But contemporary theories of evolution, geological and reproductive studies (among others) have shown that evolution does not necessary proceed in this progressive manner; instead change is arbitrary (Souriau) and it appears randomly. It is indifferent to the sustenance of distinct kinds – emerging in and through contingent possibilities, fleeting contractions and impersonal upsurges in particular moments and chance encounters (as opposed to the individual subject).

Contemporary philosophers (Grosz, 1995; Morton, 2013 and 2016; Cohen, Colebrook, & Miller, 2016 to name just a few) provide us with many thought experiments that can help us to begin thinking about thought itself in different ways. The expansion of thinking is not a fixed, linear and predictable process, nor is it limited to the human cerebral networks and operations. As I have tried to argue in this thesis, thinking is not *of* the human mind, but rather it is an intensity, a force or dynamism, a potentiality both virtual and actual. Though critical pedagogy is preoccupied with human/sociological and cognitive differences (i.e. between categories and bounded organisms), speculating a future in which humans will have become extinct, we might begin to explore these differences in altogether different ways (i.e. as destructive intensities, deposited fragilities, “sexual indifferences”, infinities, disjunctive processes, contrasts, and discontinuities). Contemplating the future of philosophy of education in geological terms with a scale in which human is read through the Anthropocene and the promise of human extinction allows for engagement with the progressive and the humanistic then situated as *just one way* of reading. To reiterate, the indifferent or the inhuman (i.e. geological time, intensities, the virtual and inorganic)

³⁰ On the question of philosophy of life and its application to “educational life-forms” see Cole (2012).

modes of existence as a speculative tool used in the context of education could push thinking experiments that concern themselves with the exploration of current theories of how humans read. With this notion of the speculative exploration as a tool to push thought, the aim of this dissertation is to open new spaces for discussion rather than critique. In this sense, therefore, I have consciously sought to avoid the endeavour to critique the posthumanist (Snaza et al, 20xx) or the affective (Semetsky, Boler, Cutler, MacLure) and the vitalist or materialist (Noddings, Maturana and Varela, McCullough, Straus) ‘turns’ in philosophy of education. Rather, I suggest that these turns can *also* be read as though they continue to be based in a certain topological reading of life and bounded organisms, where the relation between parts (body to body) and parts and wholes (for example the developmental stages of human cognition, the relationality of individuals to society, etc.) assumes ontological continuity of becoming of form and phenomena as productive, reproductive and necessarily self furthering.

That is, while vitalism is maintained throughout this dissertation, the vitalism of Whitehead, Souriau and Deleuze assumes a particular notion of relationality of bodies as parts to parts, but unlike active vitalism, immanence is not imagined as an interconnected web or a whole that is nothing but a multiplicity of its parts. What these philosophers further is a notion of distance and alterity which thought can never incorporate or master as its own. What they imagine is a thousand other modes of existences and plateaus (for example stupid, malevolent, opaque and indifferent) that construe life not through literal proximity (subsuming pure events of alterity), but through positive logics different from those of man, including ones yet to come and ones that perished.

In contrast with relational ontologies in the context of posthumanist conceptions of mind-body dyad and its non-human relations, I suggest that these ontologies are not abstract enough to engage with *life* robbed of sense and subjective coherence. In other words, the post-linguistic and post- or anti-Cartesian turn has marked the philosophy of education (postulating cognition in corporeal terms as assemblage, network, relationality, etc.) in the hope of de-centering rationality and abstract thought as the founding faculty of learning. However, as Colebrook has shown, the postulating of a Cartesian error and the ‘turn to the

post-human' is conceptually very modern and produces something like an elevated and 'ultra-humanistic' perception of the place of the human in contemporary theory, particularly in those strands that are now explicitly turning towards the environment and ecology.

As shown in the preceding chapters, one of the most obvious examples of the maintenance of human (as subject-agent) is the allocation of human-like quality of agency to the non-human, the material and the inorganic. In the conceptualization of this form of 'secondary agency' once again take form in the bounded 'primary' with a power to allocate. When emphasis is placed on the milieu which allows for *critique* in the post-linguist or post-Cartesian sense, it is difficult to claim that philosophy has not always been environmental and ecological in as much as it has always situated its transcendental, ontological and phenomenological premises on a very particular notion of space, place and time as that which envelops and sustains the bourgeois subject of production.

In addition, what is highly normative in such accounts, according to Colebrook, is the question of what counts as life. If pedagogy is about leading students away from what is considered to be *mere* life towards ways of living that are *proper* and *good*, then it is possible to say that such an idea has always taken the form of vitalism "as the imperative of grounding, defending or deriving principles and systems from life *as it really is*" (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77). That is, the attempts to open new possibilities and alternative models of education (for example environmentalist, ecological, post-humanist, and corporeal to name a few) can be vitalist, because what is appealed to is always some ground or "life beyond humans" (Ibid.).

The consequence of discerning pedagogy as a *problem* of vitalism is that it obliges us to rethink what it means to educate well in order to live well and the images of life, thought and perception that are presupposed (a speaking, reading, contemplating, communal and creatively self-maintaining subject). If the task today is to consider the future of education on the brim of human extinction, then the process through which these assumptions are maintained must be opened for reading in its own right. If the endeavour is a habit of

reading that allows for continual reengagement with readings itself, then what needs contesting is first and foremost the moral and temporal privileging of an active, creative, living body of a child and an “already constituted image of life as necessarily fruitful, generative, organized and human” (Colebrook, 2014b, p. 77).

To frame modernist pedagogy as we know it begins from living human bodies and recognizes that there is something like living well. It is organized and modeled on a premise of ‘life’, and following Colebrook’s take on Deleuze and Guattari, such ‘life’ refers to “acting and well-organized bodies” (Ibid.). These bodies are imaged as actively vital, corporeal and bounded organisms furthering their existence through actual life.

However, there is another way of understanding ‘life’. I have tried to think through Whitehead (and his concepts of *events* and *prehensions*), Souriau (*instauration* and the *work to-be-made*) and Deleuze and Guattari (*pedagogy of concepts*), and have attempted to align the real and the virtual in ways that lead to what Colebrook terms *passive vitalism*. In my reading of Colebrook, passive vitalism considers ‘life’ as a pre-individual plane of forces *acting* (I understand this verb through Souriau’s concept of *action* as a pure event) through chance encounters. Here, life is not figured as a process of intention and choice imposed by an acting organism striving for self-maintenance onto an otherwise undifferentiated matter (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77). For example, the “eye does not just take the sensory input, but censors, edits and decides in advance how the non-perceived will be fabricated” and narrated. The eye as an organ “actualizes pure potentialities of what it is ‘to see’” and ‘to read’ but can “only proceed efficiently with a high degree of *not seeing*”(Colebrook, 2011a, p. 14). This makes sense as the organism is oriented towards manageability, productivity and self-furthering. In education, we focus on the functional aspect of the ‘reading eye,’ that is on its ordering, actualizing and categorizing tendencies. But that does not mean that this is the only logic or sense of how pedagogical practice needs to proceed.

What if the task in thinking the Anthropocene does not lie in the challenge of overcoming the human species now finally united in the awareness of its destructive and malevolent

impact on earth, that is, it “is not to become self aware of its violent, arrogant and indifferent tendencies in order to *live on*” more harmoniously in one grand web of life (happily united under common *Anthropos* of the Anthropocene), “nor to go *beyond* the human,” but would be to “actualize pure potentialities released from function” (Ibid.). To become hyper-human. And that would, among other things, according to Colebrook’s reading of Deleuze, require more *racism*, for humanity is not distinguished enough

Race or racism are not the results of discrimination; on the contrary, it is only by repressing the highly complex differential forces and fields that compose *any* being that something like the notion of ‘a’ race can occur. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue for a highly intimate relation between sex and race: all life is sexual, for living bodies are composed of relations among differential powers that produce new events; encounters of potentialities intertwine to form stabilities. Such encounters are desiring or sexual because they occur among different forces that create new and dissimilar outcomes. If sex and desire refer to the relations among different quantities of force, race and races occur when those productions of differences are taken to be differences *of* some relative sameness. In the beginning is sex-race or race-sex: the encounter of different potentials to form new emergent (relative) identities. (Colebrook, 2014a)

Following Colebrook’s reading of Deleuze, it might be possible to suggest that “if the logic of self-efficient and system-practice-oriented human” organism were to be “radically recalibrated” in the future of *living otherwise*, what might be needed is an education that fosters “machinic autonomy released from function – oriented towards disequilibrium, splitting, unbinding and dissolution” (Colebrook, 2011a, p. 14). That is, in pedagogical theory and practice oriented toward the uncertain or not-yet-imagined modes of future human existence, emphasis might need to be moved away from determining in advance the “quality and quantity of potentialities” that can be actualized in the myriad of every day pedagogical encounters and events (away from pre-imagined, and stabilized potentialities as they *appear* in forms of identity, self, race, sexuality and gender). However, as Colebrook warns, this might require “something like a violent threshold to be crossed” (Ibid., p.14).

In contrast with such a passive notion of ‘life’, educational theory today seems to be premised on a distributive thought; *either* on students’ bodies perceived as unified entities, as self-maintaining and ongoing forms that can be recognized and represented, *or* as with some post-humanist and new materialist accounts, as just this one entity, emerging and interconnected among a myriad of others in a world, understood as one organic and reproductive whole. This raises certain problems and certain questions, the solution of which presents us with specific tasks of thinking about curriculum planning, as well as ethics and politics in education. For example, the agency and body of the individual student are maintained in educational theory regardless of the ways the problem is expressed (Cartesian subject of mind/body opposed to the Neoplatonic subject as an expression of the One). What is pursued is either a universal subject and his human right to be educated and skilled well enough to live well and to be a good and productive citizen (thus there ought to be generalizable and standardized elements of curriculum); or, there is a notion that we can only know subjects in their individuated and socially determined expressions, and thus curriculum is integrated as much as possible (bestowing individual differences in ability and access according to diverse social contexts), as is evident by the upsurge in individuated and differentiated learning plans tailored to each individual student.

But we can also think of bodies in light of Souriau’s passive vitalism, where there are different kinds and intensities of existence that are not necessarily corporeal (phenomenal, objective, virtual, “super-existent”) to which attest neither through intention nor through knowledge. This is passive vitalism, for bodies are composed of instauration and virtual passages, transitional realms, and realities still in the making, all of which constitute a materiality and multiplicity of the power to life, the sense of which is never determined in advance. With Souriau, each body unfolds its own time and space. This or that body is composed of a myriad of *actions*, chance encounters between this heart and this beat, where the *work to-be-made* is not necessarily productive, for at any given moment, it can fail. In addition, these encounters involve passages from virtual to actual, where the passage is itself an ontological existence in itself, demanding to be instaured. For Souriau, ‘life’ is composed of actions that unfold in monumental as well as barely perceptible events, where

what is being encountered in the work to-be-made are not pre-given individual bodies (subjects, objects, relata, particles, etc.) but different milieus. We would then not begin designing literacy curriculum by looking at the already constituted *things* (individuals, bodies, texts, development, nature, innovative learning environments, etc.) nor would we strive to harmonize things, terms and forms into one grand reproductive transcendental whole. Following Souriau, what we are left with are actions (pure events, forces) that generate their own spatio-temporal correspondences beyond any need for individuation. There are a thousand little events echoing, reprising, happening at any single moment in a classroom, such as an inflection of the tone or pitch of the student's voice. These events generate relations and responses beyond the sense we make of them and beyond any subjective identity we might adhere to in trying to make out their meaning. And further, all that exists in singular encounters is prone to error, each stage of progression of the encounter itself existing in its own mode of existence.

Whitehead's metaphysics, more precisely his concept of prehensions also suggests an option where abstract and actual entities are not simply merged or separated, but rather explains how abstractions infect actualities. Whitehead does not start with substances or enduring objects nor with the perception of such entities. He suggests a different way of asking the question of the origin, that is, the condition for the possibility of sustaining the actuality of a particular entity without endorsing the subjective experience of it. That is, in education today, we might have to conceive of a self not in terms of a bounded organism individuated from the condition of a sustained continuity of evolutionary (sexual) becoming and instead think of an infinity of qualities and quantities as a nexus of potentials from which something like indeterminately differentiated selves are individuated. Such individuation does not assume an autopoietic system of self-reproduction grounded on sexual difference, familial and heterosexual man, but rather it remains differentiated in forms of infinite play of becoming and perishing. In contrast, current turns to matter, material and materiality (for example and particularly in environmental education and ecology) maintain a redemptive and reproductive notion of life and the environment which, according to Colebrook, "precludes any thought about climate change because it does not

account for all those pre-individual forces that do not act by a process of intention and burgeoning self-maintenance but act through chance encounters” (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77).

That is, it is possible to say that a different ethics is needed for the future of education and pedagogy if we are to “think multiplicities beyond the world of man” (Colebrook, 2011, p. 19). By understanding life as virtual it is possible to conceive of a *pedagogy without bodies* (I am here playing on Colebrook’s title *Matter Without Bodies*, 2011). Pedagogy without bodies as a *concept* (in Deleuze and Guattari’s sense) would be an *orientation for educational thought* where we would no longer begin with the image of a living, active, corporeal body, but would consider intensive forces of composition that are different from those of the reproductive man and the productive organism. These forces are material and virtual, if “material complexities” are understood to be “dispersed beyond any single intention” (Colebrook, 2011, p. 18). *Pedagogy without bodies* as a concept alludes to the incorporeal *and* material composition of sense which, I believe, is an important orientation for thinking education and pedagogy in terms of dispersed, intensive and non human forces and processes intricate to any singular learning event.

For example, following Colebrook, it is possible to say that there is no way of knowing the *proper sense* of Rousseau’s *Emile*. This is not because *Emile* as a text (as material) conveys an absolute presence of Rousseau’s intention and sense at the point of its composition, but because “the complexity of sense never takes the form of a body, a ‘meaning’ that was once in the mind of a psyche and that had a certain integrity only to be fragmented in its passage to transcription” (Ibid. p. 19). That is, even at the “absolute present moment of the composition of the first sentence” of *Emile* (“Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man”) there “would have been material complexities dispersed beyond any single intention” (Ibid. p. 18) that Rousseau might have had. Reading through Colebrook we can say that if Rousseau wrote that sentence with the intention of marking out a new philosophical question regarding the relationship between an individual and society, that intention would have been made possible by histories of philosophy, philosophical inscription, reading, conventions of

philosophical and novelistic interpretation, “distinctions of reading protocols by more or less literate publics, and certain anticipations of future readers” (Ibid. p. 18). According to Colebrook, this is how *sense is material* but not taking a form of a body. Materiality of sense attests to “processes of language and meaning operating in the absence of human command, understanding and imagination” (Ibid. p. 18). And the material world in which Rousseau wrote already included the virtual potentiality for the world of Dewey, a world “in which the materiality of humanity, and human psychology has altered radically” (Ibid. p. 19).

Or, taking a different scale of reading, this time in connection to human animal communication. In *Riding in the Skin of the Moment: An Agogic Practice* (2015), Stephen Smith offers a phenomenological reflection of an event that took place while riding with Mojo

I am riding in the outside dressage arena on a blustery, noisy afternoon. Pastures alongside are being mowed, intermittent gun shots fired in nearby blueberry farms scatter flocks of Starlings, while in the arena other riders and their horses are in motion. My horse, Mojo, feels the commotion, distractedly, going forward but tracking rigidly, steeling himself to the concerns swirling about. I slow him to a walk, calming him through the rhythmicity of the gait when, suddenly, explosively, the revving of an engine nearby fires his legs into scurried motion. He shies, scoots and, before I can hold him, bolts across the arena. I try to wheel him round, turn his head and disengage his hindquarters, but this unbalances him and forces a further clamping of the jaw on the bit and a collapse on the outside shoulder. He begins to crumble forward, racing over the front end, trying to get under the weight of himself with me atop. I am unseated, pitching forward, toppling, cartwheeling with no place to go but the ground. I land ungainly. Hard. Stunned. I try to stand, but crumple again to the ground. (Smith, 2015, p. 47)

To make sense of the happenings in the duration or the “skin of the moment” narrated above, we can follow the modernist tradition and turn to the intentions and actions of the rider. We can follow certain posthumanist tendencies extending agency to the animal, in this case to Mojo – his intentions, affects and perceptions – as well as to the other nonhuman factors involved (such as the sound of the engine and gun shots). The materiality

of sense we make of this event is also bound to, for example, the history of regimes of dressage, the different training scales and instructional systems etc. But the incorporeality of sense (bound neither to the body of the rider nor to the body of Mojo) is lucidly reflected upon in Smith's reconceptualization of the "almost universally-adopted scale of dressage (German National Equestrian Federation, 2003)" as "registers of interspecies communication"

The scale is first an emphasis on rhythm and relaxation which is about breathing, suppling, strengthening, energizing horse and rider into enlivened co-presence. Next it is about contact, con-tacting, touching and being touched, sensing, feeling, resonating, reverberating, and intuiting a responsive contemporaneity. Impulsion is about kinaesthetic attunement to the rushing, bursting, ebbing, charging, pulsing vitalities of synchronization. Straightness is about the moment to-moment achievements of good form, which is the desired aesthetic frame, through the laterality, verticality, circularity and ultimately the directionality of cadenced duration. And finally, collection is about walking, trotting, cantering, half-passing, gait transitioning, changing leads, passáging, and piaffing with gathered, energetic flow. (Smith, 2015, p. 51)

As Smith goes on to write "these phenomenological registers of the dressage training scale – as co-presence, contemporaneity, synchronization, duration and flow – draw attention to the living experience of an interspecies relation that is essentially and ecstatically temporal" (Ibid.). It might be possible to say, that it attests less to a corporeal dimension of sense we make of the interspecies relation (though immanent to it), and more to the materiality of sense that is not *essentially* bound to bodies. In other words, it attests to an incorporeal assembly of vital yet passive forces and desires in the duration of an event.

The example above is also important when contemplating the precariousness of human survival because of Smith's emphasis on "phenomenological registers" of events as "temporalized durations". If we agree with Colebrook, that what is needed today, is a *mode of thinking* "that frees itself from folding the earth's *surface* around human survival" (Ibid., p. 23, my emphasis), it is possible to say that in addition, what is needed is a mode of thinking that releases itself from "phenomenological registers" of events as *temporalized* durations and is therefore able to consider all those forces of composition (inhuman, virtual,

potential, intensive, atemporal), that differ from those of man and his point of view. For example, Smith considers “registers of interspecies communication” as events of “co-presence, contemporaneity, synchronization, duration and flow” rather than lateral and temporalized movement of intention, action, discipline, reaction and interpretation.

And going back to the opening statement from *Emile* that "Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man," it is possible to say that the materiality of sense is evoked not only by material complexities dispersed *beyond* the author’s physical, corporeal and spiritual intentions. Despite the humanized, vitally temporalized, figurative and corporeal image of the generative “hand of the Author of things” and the destructive hand of Man, the opening statement *also* invokes a ‘grasp’ or prehension of this event. Materiality of sense (of the *good*) is here bound to movement and “action” (i.e. leaving, generating, degenerating) in a duration of an event freed from insistence on the necessarily productive and human “phenomenological registers” of temporality.

In the preceding chapters I attempted to follow and contrast a number of concepts which assemble a notion of *pedagogy without bodies* (as a concept or orientation for thought). Such a pedagogy would be *constructivist* if one scale of reading would not trump all others; *impassive-vitalist* if it was speculative stratigraphically; *ironic* if it was impersonal, destructive and indifferent of meaning and sense for humans; *instaurative* if it was always to-be-made in singular events; and *genuinely material* if it was incorporeal, that is dispersed, synchronic, inorganic, and insubstantive. In other words, such pedagogy would be abstract enough to consider the thousand tiny potentialities, events and multiplicities reverberating beyond the point of view of man and his world.

By implication, a given curriculum would then be conceived less as a stream or a *course* with the underlying assumption of an essential connectivity and relationality of elements and parts in a whole (stages, aims, outcomes), and more as a *construction*. With Whitehead, Souriau and Deleuze versed in (differential) calculus, the underlining is a notion of assembling elements architectonically, of reading and modulating (in terms of curriculum)

side by side of what seems impossible (considering for example that a preschool child is as much of a concrete and abstract thinker, side by side as a student at any other level of education thereafter, capable of grasping a mathematical circle as well as irony, but in her own singular way).

The direction is not that of a *course* (as in a temporal organization of a curriculum), progressing from stage to stage or point to point (from concrete to abstract thought for example; or from one measurable standard to another; one more or less predictable outcome to another), but of random change at any of its points. Such curriculum would be more akin to a construction of building blocks – without an image of a whole. Educational thought would read side by side all the impossible, impossible and contradictory images of what, for example, a student is or ought to become; a rational subject *and* an affective being *and* a corporeally entangled entity in a network of relations *and* a being destructive of environment *and* a noncorporeal material multiplicity of virtual and actual forces beyond human point of view. Place-based education, ‘standards’ as benchmark issue of education, traditional, environmental and aesthetic education, for example, would all be considered side by side, wherein one scale of reading (if particular philosophies of education can be seen as different scales of reading) would not undermine all others. This would be the virtue of thinking pedagogy (as a concept) stratigraphically

Are we really thinking if we accept the value of a concept (such as ‘the Anthropocene’ or ‘the human’) and then qualify all the ways in which either the concept or our attempts to respond to it will fall short? Rather than accept the globe and its stratifications as the strata that explain all others, one might say—following *A Thousand Plateaus*—that events should be considered stratigraphically, as creating thresholds that tend in contrary directions; concepts, events and encounters create multiple tendencies that unfold various worlds, some of which are not readable in terms of the other. This is not to say that everything is relative; it is to say that the complexity of concepts requires acute analysis and that a concept’s contrary tendencies should be intuited precisely rather than distributed into degrees of more and less. (Colebrook, 2016, p. 445)

If pedagogy as a concept were to be thought of stratigraphically, it would not figure as an extension or expression of some life as represented and codified through language, always

re-lived in the present moment as an independent point in a succession of time, but would be a section or a fraction of chaos, of synchronicity and superposition of temporal establishment. This is because concepts for Deleuze are intensities. Thus, the task of pedagogy, if considered stratigraphically, would not be the task of responding to the given. It would entail an intensive ‘construction’, not in terms of some higher truth but, as with Souriau, in terms of its success or failure. Following Deleuze’s reading of Souriau, we can say that success or failure cannot be predicted in advance, for it cannot be identified before being *constructed* as we go along and on the premise that each part or terms succumbs to a mutual reconfiguration. It is the solution that modulates the truth of the problem, its plane of intensity. The task of pedagogy considered stratigraphically would be a desire for *stammering*, for *plug-in*, for disruption of common sense, consumption and opinion, where desire is always transmuting the questions and problems we pose, depending on the field of sense we occupy. We would not look for the truth of the already established terms and relations (for example cogito which would explain all other possibly resistant notions or forms of subjectivity in relation to that dominant image of Cartesian cogito) but turn to the intensity or power of the problems and concepts (not as a transcendental condition but a power of invention, obligation and risk) in order to “invent new horizons of sense” and create new concepts of pedagogy that can transform life. Stratigraphy, according to Colebrook,

sees every event at every point in time in virtual relation to every ‘present’. Not all these relations are actualised. It may well be that nothing is to be gained from seeing this grain of sand here and now in relation to the invention of the steam engine or the invasion of what came to be known as Australia, but the grain of sand, the steam engine and white Australia (like all events) converge and diverge. One may be able to read the planet in a pebble (Zalasiewicz 2010) or a grain of sand, even if most of the universe is too dim and distant to be rendered with any distinction. Understanding Mahler’s symphonies requires intuiting the rhythms and refrains that compose emergent birdsong and animal territories, but those territories, in turn, are intuitable as refrains because of the compositions of every composer from plain chant and Bach to Mahler and Messiaen. (Colebrook, 2016, p. 448)

Privileging chance encounters, singularities and ambiguities over curricularly, developmentally and pedagogically fixed points in a progressive trajectory might bring us closer to the “power of imaging that is not oriented to the eye of recognition, the eye that views the world according to its own already organized desires (Colebrook, 2014d, p. 77). And speculating such a point of view might perhaps orient the educational thought about its future, its readability after the event of men, and its climate differently, beginning with the thought of the environment and climate not as this one all-encompassing envelope managed and sustained by and for the human species. And finally, such an orientation of educational thought, at least in terms of environmental politics and ethics of human survival, might consider seriously the lack of necessity for education as we know it.

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