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So how does it work? – rhizomatic methodologies

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Abstract

My intent, in short, is to extract from Deleuze's project an apparatus of social critique built on a utopian impulse. Its insistent question is 'how does it work?' (Buchanan, 2000, p. 8).

In this paper, we explore two different approaches to the development of a rhizomatic methodology. In a rhizomatic fashion, we map the connections and disconnections between and across these different pathways. Three connections are described: first, writing a rhizomatic text that is non-linear and self-consciously part of the research method; second, using rhizomatic thought to analyse the discourses operating within data; and third, following Deleuzian lines of flight that connect and link disparate forms of data so that (im)plausible readings can connect analysis of writing, artworks, video, and interview transcripts. The various disconnections are provided to illustrate the impossibility of establishing some kind of formulaic methodology that would neatly answer Buchanan's question of "how does it work?". Rather, we are aware of the dangers of "methodolatory" (Harding, 1987) and offer this paper as one particular and specific reading of the contributions that Deleuzian theories can make to educational research methods.

Introduction

This paper is a contribution to a growing body of work that applies Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical work (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) to educational research (see for example, Semetsky, 2004; and others in this special issue of Educational Philosophy and Theory). We are interested in the application of rhizomatic thought to educational research and have both developed rhizomatic methodologies for our research. The commonalities between these rhizomatic approaches to educational research include:

- ❖ An approach to writing that is partial and tentative, that transgresses generic boundaries, and allows the inclusion of the researchers' voice.
- ❖ Understanding that discourses operate within a text in rhizomatic ways – that is they are not linear, or separate. Any text includes a myriad of discursive systems and these discursive systems are connected to and across each other. A rhizomatic discourse analysis follows the lines of flight that connect these different systems in order to provide accounts of plausible (mis)readings.
- ❖ Data collected for educational research, while appearing to be disparate, can be analysed rhizomatically to find connections between writing, artworks, video, interview transcripts, and textual artefacts. This kind of analysis allows (im)plausible readings of connections between and across and within various data.

While these commonalities are evident to us as Deleuzian researchers, in writing this paper it has become obvious that the disparate methods of approaching these three issues are more important. In what follows, we attempt to present, in a rhizomatic fashion, our different, yet common, thoughts on developing Deleuzian methods for educational research. We begin this representation by following a line of flight through the rhizome that explores some of the figurations used by Deleuze and by us in our writing.

Rhizomatic figurations

In *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari introduce the figuration of a rhizome to explore multiplicities in thinking and in writing. While they are careful not to engage in the construction of the type of binary thinking they are attempting to disrupt, rhizomes are compared and contrasted (but not opposed) to the arboreal metaphors that are often taken up in linear and modernist expressions of thought. Rhizomatic thinking and writing involves making ceaseless and ongoing connections:

Any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be... A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, social sciences, and social struggles (Deleuze & Guattari,

1987, p. 7).

Mapping these connections can involve following “lines of flight”, another figuration used by Deleuze and Guattari. “There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. There are only lines” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 9). In our own writing, following lines of flight means making connections between quite different thoughts, ideas, pieces of data, discursive moments. These “assemblages” form “plateaus” – “we call a “plateau” any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities by superficial underground stems in such a way as to form or extend a rhizome” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 24).

This kind of rhizomatic thinking and the construction of plateaus through following lines of flight through and across and within various assemblages is very difficult to portray in a linear text such as this paper. Indeed Deleuze and Guattari draw attention themselves to these difficulties in their introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*. We begin our attempts to explore what rhizomatics mean for educational research methods through a reflexive section on the acts of attempting to write rhizomatically – both in this paper, and in our separate research work. One of the first decisions we had to make in our representations here was around the use of the first person, the “I” that connotes individual authorship. We take our lead here from Deleuze and Guattari themselves who point out the ‘we’ of their writing partnership also points to the multiplicity of subject positions taken up by each author at any one moment. So while each of us wrote separate sections of this paper, we refer to ‘we’ in our thinking and writing.

Writing a rhizomatic text – this text

The logistics of bringing together a text that meets academic requirements and has the possibility of making sense to readers is forever ‘steering’ us in the ‘direction’ of producing a ‘linear’ text – an ‘ordered’ ‘progression’ of ‘theoretical ideas’ and ‘practical applications’ that ‘leads’ to a ‘coherent’ ‘conclusion’. All of these concepts are potentially problematic to rhizomatic thinking as it works to overcome binary polarisations, to go beyond dichotomous thought and linear thinking, instead working towards producing points of intersection, overlaps, convergences, twisting and weaving through infinite folds and surfaces (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1993).

Trying to work within sections, by default, bounds our thinking and writing – any kind of segmentation creates boundaries, albeit blurred. As asides are forever appearing and we want to create a horizontal text as we ‘attempt a nomadic journey, to...travel in the thinking that writing produces...’ (St.Pierre, 2000, p.258); a text that continuously appears in new spaces, is fragmented and does not have to explain how it got there. But, how to produce a text, particularly when two of us are working together – as each and every, separate and together – that is workable and readable when we are enmeshed, albeit unwillingly, in conventional vertically linear ways of writing, which expect we will trace a straight path from beginning to end, and which inevitably permeate our thinking and understanding?

Writing a rhizomatic text – educational research texts

These linear constrictions, of sections, chapters, pages, headings and footnotes, impact on us as we attempt to write rhizomatically for research purposes. We follow various pathways through educational rhizomes in order to produce writing that is rhizomatic, in that it transgresses generic boundaries, is partial and tentative, but that will also be accepted within the educational community. We have used poetry, lyrical stories, unending sentences, drawn on the personal to explain the abstract, and other techniques in this production. So for example, in our writing about teachers and teachers’ work, we cannot ever forget that we are teachers ourselves, and our memories of those teaching days hang like dark clouds over the lines of flight we take through sets of data we collect as researchers. The ambivalence we feel as we are positioned as teachers is expressed here in this memory-poem of one of our experiences as a teacher:

*The boy has been labelled, ADD
Requiring special treatment, consideration
He sits sullen at his desk
Refusing to work, to write, to obey
You will do what I say
This is my classroom
You will stay there until you have finished
No play
No lunch
No football
This is my classroom
In here, you do what I say
I sit at my desk
While he cries, and sobs, and throws paper and pencils around the room,
Until finally he scrawls something on the page
Only five minutes left in the lunch hour
No time to eat, or play, or go to football
You can go now I say*

*And remember
In here you do what I say*

These kinds of memories form part of our collections of data, become the focus for reflexive analysis of the positions taken up by teachers, just as much as the data collected through interviews or classroom observations. So is the teacher here a bad teacher? Or a disciplinarian? (and is a disciplinarian a good teacher or a bad teacher?) Is she a moral force, contributing to the moral regulation of the boy, teaching him how to be a good school boy, or is she a drill sergeant? Is she a professional or an abuser? Reading this as a representation of a bad teacher and drill sergeant, we could tell the story that follows this one, of parents at the school office, complaining to the principal about the treatment of their son. Reading this teacher as a professional, we could tell the story that ended that school year, when the boy has stopped taking the medication prescribed for his condition. The children in the classroom on one of those play days that mark out the end of the school year, saying, 'you know, he could do what ever he liked last year, he used to do that stuff and the teacher would let him go outside and play under the trees, he never did any work last year, not like now'.

It is not easy to tease out the complexity of these subject positions; to hold a moment where one is in the act of becoming teacher (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Deleuze and Guattari remind us not to dwell on fixing that moment of becoming, but instead to follow the lines of flight that connect these subject positions. Writing rhizomatically allows the following of these lines, mapping the pathways through and across disparate data by re-presenting these data in myriad forms.

Thinking rhizomatically also allows for a certain kind of discursive analysis of re-presented data. A rhizo-textual analysis (Honan, 2004) depends on understanding that discourses operate within texts in rhizomatic ways – that is they are not linear, or separate. In the next section of this paper we discuss these forms of analysis.

Rhizomatic discourse analysis

A rhizomatic discourse analysis follows the lines of flight that connect different systems in order to provide accounts of plausible (mis)readings. Many accounts of discourse analysis lead researchers to believe that discursive systems operate alongside each other within any text. We believe that discourses operate within texts in a rhizomatic fashion, intersecting and separating, over and under lapping. A rhizo-textual analysis involves mapping these discursive lines, following pathways, identifying the intersections and connections, finding the moments where the assemblages of discourses merge to make plausible and reason(able) sense to the reader.

For example, in discussing the teaching of literacy, some commentators present a linear historical view of the development of certain approaches (for example, Green, 1995; Lo Bianco and Freebody, 1997), in which each approach supplants and replaces what has come before. In our analysis of policy documents related to the teaching of literacy we find that discourses associated with all these approaches are present (Honan, 2005; Rowan and Honan, 2005). One does not render another invisible. Bronwyn Davies (1994) uses the concept of palimpsest to describe the complex layering of discourses within a text. Understanding texts as rhizomatic helps make sense of this layering – each discourse interweaves and interconnects with each other forming a discursive web.

As well, and following Deleuze and Guattari, each text's complex web connects with other texts, so that forms of discourse taken up within one policy text can be mapped across and into other policy texts. This mapping work can also produce a Foucauldian genealogical analysis, in that the discourses can be mapped across historical contexts, so readers find similarities, for example, between versions of teaching literacy in 1886 and in 1997 policy texts.

Analysing policy texts reveals that there are particular lines of flight that connect contemporary discourses about literacy teaching with particular discursive constructions from each of these approaches that are connected to each other by linkages that are commonalities and taken-for-granted assumptions that seem reasonable and unquestionable. These discursive linkages are like the lumpy nodes that can appear within a rhizomatic root system, or like the coupling bands that connect varied systems of pipes in some underground water systems. The linkages allow the discursive construction of a particular version of what counts as literacy, and a particular version of the child who is the subject of literacy teaching.

This rhizo-textual analysis can provide insights into the connections between different policy texts. For example, the P-10 Queensland English Syllabus published in 1994 (Department of Education Queensland, 1994) and the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program (Victorian Department of Education, 1997) are two policy texts related to the teaching of literacy, developed at different times and in different states, and by different groups of curriculum writers, yet a skills-based or functional approach to the teaching of literacy is taken up in both sets of documents. In the Queensland Syllabus this discourse is called on to establish the value of literacy:

Individual communities and the nation as a whole are more likely to function well when their members are able to use varieties of English effectively and efficiently. People who are

literate in standard English can more readily gain access to essential services, employment, further education and recreational opportunities. They can also more easily participate in decision-making activities at local and national levels

(Department of Education Queensland, 1994, p. 2)

The benefits of literacy are not only restricted to the advancement of individuals, but are seen to be of value to the 'nation as a whole'. Literate people are better people because they can take part in activities related to employment, further education, and recreation. There is an implicit assumption here about the relationship between the social development of the individual and the economic development of the nation (Rose, 1999). Expressing ideas about individuals, in terms of their human capital, allows a relationship to be constructed between individual well-being and a 'better' society.

In the Early Years Literacy Program, this skills-based discourse is called on when explaining the optimal conditions for literacy teaching. In the organisational framework, these optimal conditions include:

- ❖ literacy is best taught in uninterrupted two-hour blocks of time
- ❖ reading and writing are two distinct and separate components of literacy that should be taught separately
- ❖ speaking and listening learning occurs as part of reading and writing while at the same time separated from the other modes (<http://www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/eys/lit/scp.htm>)

The isolation of the teaching of literacy, and the division between the different language modes reflects the traditional skills-based approach resembling that found in historical contexts in Australia at least as far back as 1886. In New South Wales in 1886 for example, Inspector Wilkins wrote:

The first subject that strikes us as necessary for a primary school is Language, by which is to be understood a full knowledge of our mother tongue, including Reading, Writing, Grammar, Analysis of Sentences, and Composition (quoted in Green & Hodgins, 1996 p. 213).

And in 1941, again in New South Wales, the syllabus:

prescribed eight aspects of curriculum activity under the general auspices of 'English'

Reading (from the School Magazine and a large supply of supplementary readers from Third Class onwards)

Poetry

Oral Expression

Written Expression

Formal elements (phonics, punctuation, sentence and paragraph structure)

Formal grammar

Spelling

Writing (handwriting)

(1941 NSW curriculum quoted in Reid, 1996, p. 151).

This 'back to basics' discourse affirming the value of skills that can be separately defined and addressed connects closely with the discourses used in popular media accounts of what counts as literacy. Its presence within the EYLP could be seen as an attempt to assuage the anxieties and tensions that arise whenever debates about a 'literacy crisis' is mounted in popular media contexts (see Comber, Green, Lingard, & Luke, 1998).

A rhizo-textual analysis not only draws to the surface and makes visible discourses operating within and across various texts, but it also focuses our attention on the discourses that we ourselves as researchers engage with in talking, reading, writing and re-presenting our data. This is especially important in our research with young children. We are aware not only of the inclusion of our voice, but of enabling the voices of the children involved in the research to become audible. However, ensuring this happens is not straightforward. Because of the discourses in play, entering the children's world as (co)researcher is problematic. While discursive plateaus of children, childhood(s), and curriculum emerge as open and connectable maps, they are inevitably affected by various tracings of power(full-ness). Thus, plugging tracings of

power back into the map of children, their childhoods and curriculum is significant to growing the rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Deleuze, 1988).

We need to signal the discursive pathways that we use, around childhood, children and curriculum, remembering each informs and works alongside the others, that each is a plateau to be moved across horizontally. Childhood is both a period in which children live their lives and a part of society and while it is a temporary period for children, it remains a form in society. Also, while childhood is exposed to the same societal forces as adulthood, children themselves create their childhoods (Corsaro, 1997). Children are thus inseparable from their childhoods as they grow through them. However, as becoming-children their childhoods evolve around them – they become power-full players in their childhoods and ‘influential actors’ (p.54) in adult society.

Working within early childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand, we are cognisant of the Te Whāriki [NZ early childhood curriculum] explanation of curriculum, namely:

the sum total of the experiences, activities and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.10).

In young children’s everyday experience, curriculum may be understood as:

investigation and exploration, walks and puddles and cuddles, books and blankets and anything that is part of the child’s day, play and routines (Rouse, 1990, cited in Anning, Cullen and Fler, 2004, p.59).

Rhizomatically, curriculum becomes every situation, event and person happened upon during children’s learning journeys as well as the journeying itself and the territory negotiated.

Our intention is to attempt to de/re/territorialize various aspects of power-full relationships and interactions towards enhancing young children’s learning. This means paying critical attention to what voices we hear and how we hear them. In acts of data collection of these children’s voices, we are aware of the limiting affect of the videocam’s LCD screen (the lens). While it allows one to focus on particular activity and this illuminates the intensity of the activity and the interactions in/at play, inevitably there are frustrating moments of happenings beyond the screen.

The technique of panning in order to capture images of all the children working in a particular space can mean that significant exchanges between two particular children are missed. Picking up the audio of a conversational contribution from children, outside the particular group and outside the game, that seems to have meaning, but without seeing who was speaking, who was there but not speaking, what they were doing, where their attention was directed, it becomes contextually meaningless data. So the videocam both enables and frustrates the task of a power-full re-presentation of children’s voiced understandings (Reid et al, 1996)

It is a messy process (Hargreaves, 1996; Law, 2003). Also, even in theorising about power relationships, we presume to speak *for* children, despite wanting to learn *from* and *with* them and despite promoting them as becoming-articulators of their own expert understandings. The voices of children are integral to this research, not only for producing and analysing data, but also as a plateau from within which they may speak of their understandings of curriculum and what that means for their learning. However, de/re/territorialising children’s understandings, introducing the becoming-child, is a struggle. This becomes even more of a struggle when we begin to produce readings of the data collected, as we attempt to deterritorialise children’s understandings through our interpretations of their actions, words, and drawings. In the next section of this paper we explore these (im)plausible readings of data.

(Im)plausible readings of data

In responding to the question, ‘how does it work?’, we are aware that in the process of problematising methodology, curriculum also becomes problematic as we explore young children’s understandings of the importance of the what, how and why of their learning experiences. We are mindful of not speaking for the children who, in various moments, participated as co-producers of the data and as co-analysers (co-)producing more data. Rather, what we provide here is one particularly (im)plausible reading of moments in these children’s learning experiences.

Children themselves are like rhizomes within early childhood settings that provide smooth spaces for them to work and play in, that is, uninterrupted and unhurried, where they have the space within the setting, and time within the programme, to go about their learning in their own way supported by adults who believe in children’s powerfull-ness to enact optimal learning situations. Within the Kindergarten in which this data was co-produced, the children performed

as rhizomes as they flowed through the spaces of the setting, through the programme and with/in relationships they encountered. Within the flow through the physical environment, they follow lines of flight conversationally and within their game¹, they explore various folds and surfaces (physical and imaginatively) that they happen upon, they slip in and out of discursive spaces. In this attempt to re-present this play, we focus on one particular aspect of the rhizomatic space: three girls engaging in mapping, both in the figurative sense in relation to the learning spaces they are territorialising as well as in the literal sense as they created actual maps and then used them to negotiate the territory of the game and the play space.

These girls flowed nomadically through smooth spaces, re/de/territorialising spaces that they needed to occupy for their game to work. It was like Deleuze and Guattari's (1987, p.23) description: there was 'a flow of children; a flow of walking with pauses, straggling and forward rushes... a collective assemblage... one inside the other... plugged into an immense outside that is a multiplicity'. This multiplying space involved forty other children, several adults, the physical surroundings, resources at hand, the uninterrupted space of the programme. We saw these three children 'space themselves out and disperse, or else jostle together and coexist, [and] begin to dance' as the game grew (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, pp.23-24). There was continuous ebbing and flowing of ideas and energy, as the tracing was continually plugged into the map.

Libby proclaims, "We better be strong girls."

Lee objects strongly, "No!"

Libby continues, "We can be strong girls now...and...WE...CAN...DO...IT!" punching her arms in the air. Then, "We have to have maps to see where to go." They run inside to the drawing table.

Their use of mapping is intriguing and demonstrates a tacit understanding of rhizome. Emerging here, and continuing throughout their game, there is continuous moving through virtual/possible, actualising/realising (Deleuze, 1993) mapped spaces, through the map of the imaginary game; through deciding they needed to create a real map; through mapping the next part of their game; through consulting their drawn maps; and so on...they flow rhizomatically through a Deleuzian middle, negotiating virtual and possible spaces of the game and of their childhoods... Mapping becomes a way of affirming the roles they each play and exploring their relationships with each other, of confirming the next movement through the informally improvised script of their game, of working out which part of the playground they will flow into next, of exploring their understandings of the physical and social context(s) they are playing with/in and how this might relate to the outside world. (Re)turning to the game:

They draw similar maps – Libby selects yellow paper (A4 size) for them all, and the others eventually follow her choice of a felt pen. Alice was the last to choose and while Alice was choosing the colour to write her name, Lee says, "[...] you have to do it in girlish colours."

The power relations enacted within this rhizome of (the) play interact in rhizomatic forms, in that the forces of power cannot be ascribed to any one person, or set in any essentialised form. As Deleuze (1988, p. 27) reminds us:

Power has no essence; it is simply operational. It is not an attribute but a relation: the power-relation is the set of possible relations between forces which pass through the dominated forces no less than the dominating

We map here the moments in which power is enacted in the process of mapping and playing. At one moment, Libby is in charge, as she takes up a leadership position. Lee had earlier objected strongly to becoming strong girls, but other than a loud "No!" in response to Libby's idea, there was no lasting indication of challenging her leadership. Within the rhizomatic flowing that eases contributions from everyone, Lee seems happy to accept Libby's decision. While Libby exhibits her powerfull-ness as leader; Lee claims powerfull-ness in that moment by choosing not to resist, instead following the line of flight – creating a map – that Libby declared as their next action. Lee's powerfull-ness comes to the fore again as she gives instructions, explicitly to Alice, implicitly to Libby as to the colours to use. Lee also brings the powerfull-ness of becoming-girl into (the) play. Now, more about (the) mapping...

Libby: "Now we can draw a map." As she begins drawing she says, "Ok!...now!" which seems to be a signal for Lee and Alice to watch, which they do. Libby draws a stick figure in the centre bottom of her page. Lee then makes a comment, inquiring of Libby about "[...] what you did." Libby indicates the legs first and then, without further instruction, Lee replicates Libby's figure in the bottom corner of her page. Alice has watched as well and by now is drawing a more detailed figure that takes up most of her page (positioned as portrait whereas Libby and Lee's is landscape).

Libby continues as leader with Lee her ardent follower. Alice, the quietest of the three now enacts her powerfull-ness. The orientation of her paper suggests she was less intent on doing things exactly as Libby dictated, while her drawing – a large person, with round body, detailed facial expression and hair – appears deliberately different from the stick

¹ We use 'games' not in the sense of a light-hearted, fun activity nor in the sense of planned competitive activity. Rather, in this text, to ease the conversation, 'games' are situations of imaginative play, dramatic play and informal, improvised, enacted storytelling that flows from the imaginations of any particular group of children.

figures that Libby and Lee are drawing. She demonstrates powerfull-ness in both not following Libby's lead exactly and in not being overt about doing it her own way. Although she does not claim a leadership role in this moment, she is also not operating as conventional follower, thus destratifying (adult?) understandings of leadership. In the process of using their powerfull-ness in ways that are not destructive to the others or to the game, all three are mapping (as Deleuzian figuration and within their actual drawings) their understandings of being children within childhoods.

Libby meanwhile is drawing a line, leading from her person, which wiggles and zig-zags and loosely follows the edge of her page. As she draws, she explains, "You need to do [...] in here so we know where to go...we go through the prickly grass...by the tree...[...]." She joins another line to the first, indicating the prickly grass with zigzags along the top of her page and the tree by a thinner zigzag in the top right corner. The line then loops back onto the initial line around the page. Lee draws a line surrounding her person, a 'pathway' with less detail and without explanation. Alice meanwhile has discarded her first drawing and is drawing another figure in black, again large and detailed. The lines around the edge of her person are a series of disjointed squiggles.

Their maps now indicate the pathway they intend to negotiate as strong girls. Libby explains her pathway as she draws it, communicating verbally to the others how she is thinking their exploration will proceed. She creates a pathway with no beginning or ending, indicating they will process through a middle. Just as this game did not 'begin' as being one about strong girls (the strong girl theme emerged through playing mums and dads) it appears there is no explicitly planned ending of it either. Lee's simpler pathway is similarly positioned on her paper while Alice's is again (powerfully) different. The map Alice has created is dominated by the large, rather beautiful figure, surrounded by several unconnected wiggles. That her pathway did not form a complete circle around the page and the figure was of no concern to any of them. What seems important was the indication of various spaces that they would pass through. Perhaps lines of flight to be followed. More experiences of powerfull-ness come to the fore, as well as further understandings of mapping (within) their childhoods and how these relate to their playing out their discursive understandings of becoming child/ren.

They each write their name on their map, then spend several minutes conversing about the similarities and differences in the spelling of their names. They have each folded their maps by now and because of the different paper orientations, Libby and Lee make a lengthwise fold while Alice folds hers crosswise. Lee notices the difference and points this out: "She did a long one." Libby responds, "That's ok. She's fine...C'mon, let's go...to save the world outside."

At this point, the discursive understandings of curriculum, in conventional terms, becomes visible as they share their understandings about literacy, both reading and writing. This also involved affirmation of each other's abilities to form the various letters and affirmation of each other as children with/in childhoods, foregrounding their social learning experiences (of curriculum). Some maths learning appears also as Lee notices the different shapes created by the different folds. While they enjoyed the interchange about their literacy and maths skills and knowledge, Libby was mindful of ensuring all were included as successful performers of their understandings – she was ensuring they were each affirmed as individuals and using her leadership skills to make their rhizomatic game work.

Once outside Libby pauses, pointing to her map, "Start there and y' go all the way round...We need to go to the playground...it said playground." They twist and weave through the playground, pausing to play on various pieces of equipment, to interact with other children and with me, to seat themselves on a large log. Libby does the map-reading: "Our map says to go to um to go to..."; "Treasure...the treasure is here...see the little x here"; "Hey...hey, wanna go to the pool? If you want to go to the pool, that's OK." They continue to negotiate the outdoor equipment – over, under, through, across, balancing, jumping... And so they continue to map their play(ing), to flow through the middle space of their game, interspersed with pauses and rushes, together an assemblage, but with/in a multiplicity. As they danced through their game, they played out the discourses of child/ren, their childhoods and curriculum with power-full affects appearing in various folds and surfaces, twisting and weaving through all.

Conclusion

In this paper we have re-presented some of the Deleuzian methodologies used in our educational research. We began by pointing out some of the commonalities in these methodologies, while at the same time alerting the reader to the differences we have encountered during the writing of this paper. We think that these differences are important, in that they remind us of the impossibility and undesirability of prescribing a set of methods to be used in following Deleuze and Guattari's work. Like St. Pierre, we are "not much interested in any search for originary and correct meanings of their work, an impossible task (trying to fix meaning in language), but rather in the multiplicity of the effects of their work" (2001, p. 150). We have illustrated these multiple effects throughout this paper as we have re-presented our rhizo-analyses of diverse educational data, drawn from diverse research experiences.

Yet, while we are careful not to engage in any kind of "methodolatory" (Harding, 1987), we do believe that there are signposts along the pathways through a research rhizome, that may be useful for educationists interested in using

Deleuze and Guattari's work. The first of these signposts, first as in the one we come across initially in our journey rather than in any hierarchical ordering, is that associated with the writing of a rhizomatic text. Deleuze (1995, pp 6 -11) writes of treating writing as a flow, as one flow among others, a flow meeting other flows. Writing this paper, as two merging into one writer, has involved shifting, slipping, dislocations, hidden emissions, affects, intensities, experiences, experiments, points of contact, chance encounters, coincidences. Deleuze (1995, p. 14) says: "I'm interested in the way a page of writing flies off in all directions and at the same time closes right up on itself". This paper is an enactment of the attempt to close off into a particular structure our writing that wants to fly off in all directions.

In the writing of this paper, and in our writing in other forums, we work reflexively to avoid linear or structuralist metaphors or figurations. Each word or phrase is thoughtfully produced. It is our contention that one cannot think rhizomatically without writing rhizomatically. Our use throughout this paper of ellipses, unending sentences, broken and re-constructed words are some examples of this kind of writing. Our use of the pronoun 'we' as we move across and within different discursive spaces is another. It is important, we believe, to continually and reflexively focus on the minutiae of the written text when producing rhizomatic writing.

The second signpost along our journey through an exploration of rhizomatic research points to new understandings of the interactions between discursive systems within any rhizome. Discourses do not operate as straight lines through a text: rather, they merge, connect, and cross over each other. We, as rhizo-analysts, can map discursive journeys through a text, and such mapping can illuminate the moments of convergence, when connections allow reason(able) readings of contradictory and conflicting discourses. This provides a constructive and transformative approach to discourse analysis, perhaps replacing that kind of analysis that has previously focused on the deconstruction rather than the transformative possibilities that are produced through a re-construction. For example, a re-constructive reading of teachers' understandings of policy texts focuses on the plausibility of their disparate and contradictory readings. While some policy makers and curriculum writers decry teachers' use of policy (in common terms, they just don't use the curriculum in the way it was intended), a rhizo-textual analysis provides researchers with the possibility of describing much more productive and agentic relations between teachers' work and policy documents (Honan, 2006). Similarly, engaging with transformative possibilities with/in children's map/ping(s), for example, enables linkages between adult understandings of children's learning experiences and young children's expressed understandings of their curriculum, played out through their games. In the moments described here, this involves understanding how to decide what spaces of learning they are going to de/re/territorialise and how they enact powerfull-ness. The children's (im)plausible readings of what is important to their learning in any particular moment (can) become ours through reading re-constructively.

The third signpost in our rhizomatic journey is a multiplicity of signs that point to a variety of paths that can be taken in the interpretation of data. Reading, analysing, interpreting particular fragments of data is a highly personal and individual task, even in deciding which fragments to read alongside others. As well, we have described the complexity of attempting to interpret data that involves young children's voices, voices that we want to vocalise while at the same time acknowledging our part in silencing them. These rhizomatic interpretations of data can only produce (im)plausible readings, or "scrupulous and plausible misreadings" (Spivak, 1996, p. 45) following poststructuralist understandings of the impossibility of forming generalisable findings, not only from any particular educational context, but also from any particular reading of that context.

While these signposts indicate various directions, and allow educational researchers to follow a myriad of paths through Deleuze and Guattari's work, they also can provide some guidance to those who are interested in exploring what it means to work in rhizomatic ways within educational research. We offer these signposts as guiding possibilities for negotiating rhizomatic spaces. We hope that others will join us in our journeying as we continue to explore what it means to attempt to answer the question, "how does it work?".

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