

# A posthuman reconfiguring of philosophy with children in a government primary school in South Africa

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LWRROS001

Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The School of Education  
Faculty of Humanities  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

6 August 2021

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# Declaration

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Signed by candidate

Rose-Anne Reynolds

6 August 2021

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisor Professor Karin Murriss for inviting me along on this journey. For your time, the energy you have spent reading chapter drafts, providing feedback, resources, listening, theorising, dreaming, philosophising and imagining with me. For your wisdom and expertise and for Philosophy with Children and how it has changed my life. I have appreciated all I could learn from you and am excited by our future collaborations. Thank you for the rigour with which you have approached my PhD.

To the children of the research site, the principal, the teachers, the ants, animals, stone pines, the land, this has been the story of 'my' life and I am so grateful for the love, care, enthusiasm you have all shown about my research. Thank you for the immeasurable ways you have taught me and helped me unlearn unhelpful ways of teaching and being in the world. Thank you too for igniting my passion for Philosophy with Children and its pedagogy the community of philosophical enquiry and for allowing me to engage in it as a teacher and then as a researcher/facilitator/difficultator, what a privilege. Thank you too to my teaching colleagues who are now dear, dear friends and have been cheering me on, from the sidelines. Special thanks to Ann Morton, for your love, your mentorship, your guidance and vitality. I learnt from you, that anything and then anything else is possible.

Deep gratitude to the various communities of theory/practice I am entangled with: The DECD Reading Groups especially the 7am Monday Reading Group because we have been reading Karen Barad's works for years! Thank you to fellow PhD students Sumaya Babamia (and graduates) Theresa Giorza, Judy Crowther and Robyn Thompson. Thank you Professor Vivienne Bozalek for your time, energy and input in the first two years of my doctoral studies, your expertise and wisdom is very deeply appreciated. Thank you, Sara Stanley for all I could learn from you, it has been a delight! Thank you to my wonderful UCT colleagues who are part of the New Academic Practitioners Programme (UCT). To the amazing team at the Emerging Researchers Programme/Project (UCT), thank you for places to write, additional funding, guidance and support. Thank you to Caro McKinney and the School of Education PhD group which has been an invaluable resource and opportunity to learn from and with other postgraduate students in the School of Education at UCT. To my colleagues in the School of Education, becoming a full-time lecturer and part-time doctoral student in 2019 was not easy, so special thanks to Karin Murriss, Xolisa Guzula, Joanne Hardman, Azeem Badroodien and the 2020 & 2021 PGCE team, thank you so much! Thank you to the staff of the UCT library especially Ingrid Thompson, Staff in Special Collections and the African Studies Library, for answering every email and helping me find every far flung resource. To my wonderful international P4wC / ICPIC community thank you, we have become friends through a shared love of Philosophy for/with children, thank you for the many ways and places in which I have been able to grow.

Xolisa (Dr. Guzula☺) we met so many years ago at UCT studying to become teachers, and now we are friends and colleagues, thank you for your encouragement always. Being on this doctoral journey with you has been hectic and I am so glad we could share this long road together! Judy (Dr. Crowther), thank you for your friendship, for reading, thinking, philosophising together. For your gentle appreciation of my work and for offering suggestions about where I could take it next, or simply affirming the place I was heading. To my various walking companions and dear friends around the world who have helped me keep my head, heart and body above water when things were tough, especially as we have endured this terrifying and traumatic Covid-19 pandemic, thank you, for the many prayers and messages of encouragement you mean the world to me. Yvette Andrews and Michele Visser for being my constant friends, cheerleaders and daily sources of love, encouragement and accountability. To my mother-in-law,

Elizabeth Reynolds thank you for your love and constant encouragement and understanding when I could not be at family gatherings as I needed to work. Alex Reynolds (my father-in-law) would have been so proud. I miss him. Thank you Merle for all your encouragement, love and support. Thank you to my family Tony, Celeste, Denzil, Doran and my nephews and niece who accepted when I was thinking/stressing/working and when I could not attend numerous family gatherings and celebrations. Your love and constant care is appreciated. A special thank you to Andrew and Luke for allowing me to learn from and with you always. Thank you to my extended family, my loving grandparents, amazing aunts and uncles and cousins, some here, many who have passed on. All who have continued to cheer me on and shower me with love and affection.

Thank you to Joyce West and Brandan Reynolds for helping with the videography of some of the research sessions. To Veronica Mitchell for kindly reading drafts of some chapters and providing detailed and clear suggestions. This act of care was a big source of comfort. To Shuvai Finos who came along at exactly the right time to help with formatting, your patience, gentleness and deep respect for my 'work' was deeply appreciated. Thank you so much.

I am grateful for the financial support I have received on this journey. Thank you to the NRF Doctoral Scholarship Innovation Scholarship SFH 160705175979, which made it possible to study as a full-time student in 2017 and 2018. Thank you to UCT for additional doctoral funding and the UCT staff rates for doctoral study have been deeply appreciated. Thank you too for the DECD NFR project for funding when I was a full-time student which enabled me to attend the ICPIC conference in Madrid and conferences in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

To my incredible parents, Jane Lawrence and Gilbert Lawrence, you are the most amazing examples of love and grace. Your deep desire for me to work, achieve, dream, change lives and change my own has been inspiring and exhilarating. Your deep passion for social justice which you instilled in Joy-Marie and me as we were growing up and now as we are 'grown up' with you – friends, able to philosophise, dream, imagine, argue, question together. You always let me question everything – and I am grateful – even though I know you were exhausted sometimes. Thank you for your enduring love, I love you both so much. To my sister Joy-Marie Lawrence who has been with me through this all, always there to help and guide. Your encouragement and kindness a gift, your grace a source of peace. I love you so much!

♥ To my darling **Kai** and **Ella**...I love you both so much. This is for you. You have endured a distracted, always working/researching/trying to study/write, mother for most of your lives. Yet, you have both been active and excited participants on this journey. Talking to me about my research, philosophising together, reading picturebooks and then engaging in multiple communities of philosophical enquiry. Helping with planning, dreaming, imagining what this research could be. Always engaging in my mindbody thought experiments. You have both been such incredible teachers to me with your philosophising, giving me ideas about where to go next with my research, showing me ways to think in the world I had not thought possible. You are both incredibly creative and your lives are etched into the pages of this PhD, changing it, shaping and making it possible to see how life can be different. Kai with your incredible art, wisdom, gentle, caring and loving nature. Ella with your incredible creativity, assertiveness, independence, insight and loving ways. Thank you for accepting so many sacrifices so I could do this work!

♥ **Brandan**, the hours and hours you have spent walking, talking, philosophising, drawing, photoshopping, reducing images in size and creating others, reading and checking and reading again. Listening to me dream about what the world could be like. Helping me through my ranting and raving

about the injustices and inequalities we live with now and the multiple complexities of child not considered fully human and what this means for all kinds of schooling. Participating in philosophical enquiries and carrying, drawing, making materials that I have used since the first day I walked into a class as a student teacher. You have taught all the children and students in my care from Cape Town, to Atlanta, to Johannesburg, back to Cape Town and now my students at UCT! ***The way you love me is astonishing, astounding, and I love you. Thank you.*** You helped make this deep yearning an intensity... and I have tried very hard to learn from you ...it does not have to be perfect, maybe just perfectly done? It is exhilarating being in this partnership of love, friendship, marriage, parenthood, justice-as-life with you especially as it all matters!

In loving memoriam:

**Olivia Barron, Thembakazi Rala and Bongiwe Ndamane.** How I wish I could email or call you (for we are still in this ever changing Covid-19 pandemic so we would have had to be careful) to tell you I was submitting my PhD. I know you would all have been so happy for me. Olivia, because you encouraged me when I started my Master's in Education all those years ago and always told me more about funding at UCT than I ever thought of asking. Bongiwe, you showed such grace and immeasurable kindness when you moved a mountain for me when I made an error. I am so glad I thanked you and you knew how much it meant to me and for my NRF doctoral funding. I remain grateful. Thembakazi, my friend in the School of Education at UCT, always cheering me on and encouraging me. I miss you all and know we would have celebrated!

# Abstract

This thesis reconfigures Philosophy with Children and its community of philosophical enquiry pedagogy through posthumanist theories and practices. Philosophy with Children is an emerging movement in South Africa and there is currently very limited research on its implementation, especially in a whole primary school setting in the South. Critical posthumanism provides the theoretical framework to analyse philosophical enquiries as more than linguistic and always already material. I theorise with and draw on transdisciplinary scholarship and practices of philosophers/ theorists/ researchers/ practitioners in the fields of Critical Posthumanism, Philosophy for/with Children and Philosophy of Childhood.

In this study, the community of philosophical enquiry is both the methodology for my teaching as well as my research methodology. I facilitate thirteen communities of philosophical enquiry with all seven grades of one government primary school in Cape Town (159 children in total). An embroidered tapestry of the school is used to provoke each of the thirteen intra-generational philosophical enquiries. Temporal and spatial diffraction (Barad, 2007, 2010, 2014, 2017) is adopted as a posthuman methodology to re-turn to the data in this experiential, dis/embodied and experimental research project.

The communities of philosophical enquiry as pedagogical events generate video-recordings, audio recordings, photographic images, video stills, artwork and transcripts. The co-created data is diffracted through each other and re-turned to again and again. Through tracing the material-discursive entanglements in each of the methodological 'steps' of a community of philosophical enquiry, my research contributes to the importance of doing justice to the more-than-human as well as children in educational research. The land, school, tapestry as provocation, making of the circle, thinking and drawing as enquiring and other materials show the inclusion of the more-than-human and why this matters. My research does not only give different answers about the inclusion of child and the more-than-human but also asks different kinds of questions that cannot be separated: ethical, philosophical, political, ontological, epistemological and aesthetic.

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## List of acronyms

DBE	Department of Basic Education
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Standards
CPE	Community of Philosophical Enquiry
FP	Foundation Phase
OP	Oakwood Primary
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
P4C	Philosophy for Children
PwC	Philosophy for/with Children
PGCE	Post-graduate Certificate in Education
ICPIC	International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children
UCT	University of Cape Town



# 0. Introduction: How can I be response-able<sup>1</sup> to that which I love?

## 0.1 A partial, gentle re-telling of a life in South Africa during Apartheid

12 June 1964 Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is imprisoned at what became known as the Rivonia Trial. He and his co-accused are found guilty of sabotage and attempting to violently overthrow the Apartheid government. Apartheid acutely and painfully has defined my life and every aspect of my pre-school and primary schooling. Compulsory schooling in South Africa during Apartheid is racist, undemocratic, unjust, and unequal. The government schooling system is controlled by Apartheid legislation and policies. My high school years will be marked by the transition from 'Apartheid' to 'Democracy' 1989-1993.

11 February 1990. Nelson Mandela is released from jail. I am 13 years old and in my second year of high school. I impatiently wait at the Grand Parade outside the City Hall in the centre of downtown Cape Town. I am with my parents, sister and other family members waiting for Nelson Mandela to arrive to give his first speech since his imprisonment 27 years before. He is delayed for hours and hours and there are nearly a hundred thousand people waiting for him to arrive. Tensions are high, the affect is one of intensity, uncertainty and excitement mixed with fear. I am exhausted from the hours of waiting. I leave with an older cousin, before he arrives to make his speech. I never regret this decision for I am grateful I was there for it was a wild and wonderful day.

During Apartheid schools are sites of the enforcement of Apartheid laws, which pervade the curricula and every aspect of schooling. All government schools are racially segregated. The children and teaching staff at each school only represent one racial group<sup>2</sup> as categorised by

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<sup>1</sup> I have adjusted 'responsible' to Donna Haraway's (2016) theorising of response-able. The original quote from Karen Barad in (Juelskær et.al 2021, p.119) is how can I be responsible to that which I love: physics.

<sup>2</sup> The population registration Act of 1950 and its 1967 amendment introduced racial categories into which everyone in the country had to be classified.

the Apartheid government. A school with black children and black teaching staff, would be in an area where only black people could live. During Apartheid there are exceptions to the racial segregation in schools in white areas, with white children and white teaching staff. At these schools the cleaning and maintenance staff are mainly black and coloured. This is a legacy of colonisation, slavery and Apartheid and is still prevalent in South Africa today.

For 4 years from 1990-1993, well documented complicated negotiations take place and there is violence that permeates all sectors of South African society. It is a complex time in South Africa. It is radically different to the 48 years of Apartheid rule prior, but perhaps not radically different enough. 27 April 1994. South Africa holds its first ever democratic elections. I queue for hours with my parents and sister who are eligible to vote for the first time, as I am 17, I miss the voting cut off age by 1 year. 10 May 1994. Nelson Mandela is inaugurated as the first democratically elected black president of the Republic of South Africa.

## 0.2 Schooling imagined after Apartheid

Join me in a thought experiment. **Imagine**<sup>3</sup> the years 1990 – 1993 in South Africa. Imagine that during this time of complex transition from the end of Apartheid, leading up to the first democratic elections, every school is closed. Learning and teaching ceases so all can grieve, mourn, and re-imagine the new South Africa. The children are gathered into communities of enquiry to philosophise about what this new South Africa could look like, feel like, be like. As schooling is compulsory the children are also invited to philosophise about re-imagining schooling and the new national curriculum. Notes are taken. There are video recordings, audio-recordings, careful listening and different kinds of questions are asked again and again. Drawings are co-created between children, crayons, colouring materials, paper, the spaces, the land, and the earth. Thinking happens between the drawings and the histories, philosophies, imaginings, dreams and desires. New curricula heavily informed by the children's suggestions, their yearnings, inventions, and philosophising are developed for the compulsory government schooling which the majority of children of all races attend.

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<sup>3</sup> There is an urgent use of colour in the images, drawings, illustrations and photographs throughout this thesis. I am bound and constrained by black and white for the words of the text. I therefore use bold occasionally to highlight, feature, arrest, draw attention to and or make distinct from. It is deliberate methodological strategy.

**This does not happen.** From 1990 the violent Apartheid policies are abolished in law, in those books, on those pages and declared dead in the national parliament. But the practices that should accompany these revolutionary promulgations are slow to materialise in everyday life (and death). Schools never close during this transition period from 1990-1993. Rather government departments desperately develop new policies within existing policies.

Not only are children not asked or included in the dream for the new South Africa but only bruised, broken **adults**, who themselves have lived and died during Apartheid, develop the curricula which will be implemented for compulsory pre, primary and high school and for tertiary education in this to - be- democratic new South Africa.

### 0.3 Marks on bodies in 1997

1997. I am a teacher in training at the University of Cape Town and spend one month at a primary school as a pre-service teacher. This particular school is not the research site. At the end of the month on my last day at the school, two children, two girls in the Grade 4 class present me with a thank you gift for being their student teacher.

**Figure 0.1**

*The colours of childhood<sup>4</sup>*



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<sup>4</sup> All photographs in this thesis have been taken by the author unless there is a different source indicated.

They tell me excitedly that they spent the afternoon together and drew the whole class, including the class teacher and myself. It is a drawing of the class co-created with an array of bright wax crayons, using a beige shade of sugar paper. They have joined three A3 size sheets together to make into a poster size 'thank you'. It is 1m in length and about 35cm in width. They have rolled it up like a scroll to present it to me. In the drawing I am the adult figure wearing a green jacket with my hands in the air (see Figure 0.1). I frame the drawing and am grateful for this act of preservation.

This drawing is personally and politically significant to me. Janks (2010, p. 151) argues that "the personal is political." For me and in this work, the personal and political are also not separate but always entangled as ways of responding in the world. The children in the class are drawn in wax crayon in every colour they appear to be in real life. The stark difference in the colours in the bodies in the classroom are replicated in the drawing, which has only faded slightly over time, 24 years ago. The children in this classroom 6 years earlier would all have been racially classified as white. The drawing would have been very different. I would not have been in it.

I think-with this drawing to tell **some** of the story of race in South Africa. During legalised Apartheid from 1948-1990, people in South Africa are classified according to racial designations. Race exists as a mark on bodies and racism is the heartbeat of Apartheid. In 2021 it remains a part of the South African story. I use the designations of black, white, coloured, Indian in this thesis and they perform very specific functions in their materiality. I am classified as coloured during Apartheid but would consider myself a black South African. The 'colour of people' in South Africa is the focus of one of the philosophical enquiries, a question brought up by the children covered in detail in Chapter 7. Throughout this thesis I deliberately use a small letter and not a capital letter for the racial classifications: black, coloured and white.

## 0.4 An auto-ethnographic re-telling before the ontological turn

1998. I start my career as a class teacher at the school which is to become the place of  
im/possibilities for this research. I am the first teacher classified as coloured to be employed in  
the school's 50-year existence. The rest of the staff complement is racialised as white. I mark  
the start of a change in the border and boundary for the staff that has been fixed for 50 years.  
Apartheid has not been legal since 1990. It is 1998 when the make-up of the staff starts to  
radically change. In 1998 the staff photograph will be markedly different from the year before.  
The school is open to children of all races from around 1993. This is when the end of racial  
segregation in schools is not that common in South Africa in 1993, or even in 2021.

1998 marks the beginning of a close 24-year association with *this* school and it leads me to  
ask, how can I be response-able to that which I love? "Response-ability is not an idea or an  
ideal, response-ability is material, it is integral to the en/actions of the field" (Barad in Barad &  
Gandorfer, 2021, p. 43). January 1998 is also the year the most comprehensive post-  
Apartheid curriculum, Outcomes Based Education is implemented in all government schools.  
South African educationalist Jonathan Jansen (1998) argues that Outcomes Based Education,  
hereafter OBE was "primarily a political response to Apartheid schooling rather than one  
which is concerned with the modalities of change at the change at the classroom level"  
(p.322). I would argue that change at the classroom level is also deeply political but because  
young children are 'in the classroom' what happens in the classroom is considered a  
pedagogical and not political imperative. Hoadley (2017) comments on Curriculum 2005 which  
had as its philosophy, OBE and says:

the imagined learner that had been defined progressively in the  
Apartheid curriculum in relation to skills is sustained in this curriculum,  
but is also defined in relation to the democratic project. The model of  
the teacher reflects perhaps what the new democracy held as its ideal,  
but couldn't have been further from the reality of teachers emerging from  
the personal and professional degradation of Apartheid schooling. The  
curriculum is learner-centred.

(p. 86)

The 'imagined learner' is defined as an individual subject, in relation to the broader democratic project, but the distinction between adult and child is clearly defined in the parameters of the curriculum and more broadly schooling. The personal and professional degradation applies to the teachers but not the children, as if Apartheid schooling has not also affected the children subjected to it. The learner-centred nature of this curriculum is one of epistemic inequality (Murriss, 2013), because of the way learner, curriculum, knowledge, and adult teacher are positioned.

Through the exclusion of child as unable to contribute politically or pedagogically, to make determinations of what and how schools could work, or even what the im/possibilities could be, this frames child as deficit. Child is deficit in terms of the expectations of what children are capable of bringing, being, embodying and creating. Mathebula and Ndofirepi (2011, p. 127) argue that in "modern societies, including South Africa, children are still viewed as citizens-in-waiting, and as citizens who need to be inducted into their future role." This deficit model of childhood is reflected in the construction of democratic citizenship education in post-Apartheid South Africa." What questions can we ask about this image of child in South Africa? Who is this child? What purpose does this child serve? How does schooling and education work for this child? Although writing from a Western European context, Moss (2014) helps answer these questions. He argues that child is seen as a "fixed entity, with an essence that can be known, represented and predicted; as a reproducer of knowledge and values, whose task it is to acquire what we, in the adult world have designated as normal and necessary ... (p. 45)". There is an accepted adult/child binary that is supported by the current and past education system in South Africa, where the authority is held by the adult teacher (Murriss & Haynes, 2018a). The work of this research is to contest this concept of child, in South Africa and beyond. I read a reframing of the inclusion of child in all aspects of schooling through this profound insight:

...we are accountable for and to not only specific patterns of marks on bodies-that is, the differential patterns of mattering of the world of which we are a part-but also the exclusions that we participate in enacting. Therefore, accountability and responsibility must be thought in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering.

Barad (2007, p. 394)

The reconfiguring of the inclusion of child in school matters. Children endured the violence of Apartheid, which is not in a fixed past, but endures through the dynamic present(s) and future(s). Child<sup>5</sup> (as concept) are habitually excluded not only from participating fully in all aspects of schooling, but also from making a difference to pedagogical choices and political imperatives affecting their schooling. Some of the work of this thesis is about reconfiguring the manner of including, how we include, and allows me to question in which ways I contribute to and am complicit in exclusions that child endures in schools. What are the structures which enact exclusions particularly of child? Philosophy with Children and its pedagogy, the Community of Philosophical Enquiry has helped me think about what matters and what is excluded from mattering in school. Who and what else is routinely excluded?

## 0.5 Philosophy with children and the communities of philosophical enquiry

In 2013 when I was working at what later became the research site, I was introduced to Philosophy with Children and its approach to teaching and learning, the Community of Philosophical Enquiry (CPE)<sup>6</sup>. I had been doing Philosophy with Children (PwC)<sup>7</sup> with small groups of children at the school from 2014-2016 and came to experience it as a democratising pedagogy - disrupting the adult/child binary and the power dynamics implied in these relationships. Under certain conditions, the CPE has the potential to be a democratising and transformative pedagogical practice (See, e.g., Echeverria & Hannam, 2017; Gregory, Haynes & Murriss, 2017; Kennedy, 2010; Kohan, 2015; Michaud & Väilitalo, 2017; Reed-Sandoval, 2019). The CPE also creates the possibilities for child to be included in the pedagogical decisions that affect their teaching and learning (Costa-Carvahlo & Mendonça, 2019; Stanley & Lyle, 2017; Vansielegheem & Kennedy, 2011; Elicor, 2017)

A PwC session usually involves a class or group of children, and an adult seated in a circle. The children are presented with a provocation which could be a picture book, story or picture, cartoon, news article etc. (Michaud, 2020; Green & Murriss 2014; Haynes, 2008). It provokes questions that cannot be easily settled by observation or looking it up in a book or on Google. The children are invited to create questions, usually in small group, based on a curiosity that

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<sup>5</sup>Child is theorised throughout this thesis as a concept, not 'a child'

<sup>6</sup>CPI is widely accepted as the abbreviation for Community of Philosophical Inquiry, but I use the British convention Enquiry, so I use the acronym CPE.

<sup>7</sup> I use the acronym PwC. However P4C and P4wC are all widely used and accepted.

emerges from the provocation. These philosophical questions are shared with the larger group and a vote takes place which determines which question will lead the discussion.

Philosophical questions make us wonder about the key concepts involved in the questions. The philosophical questions become conceptual questions, and this is explored in further detail in chapter 6. The group then engages in a philosophical discussion based on questions the children have co-created. According to Haynes (2014), “regardless of age or status, a principle of P4C is that all those taking part are valued equally in the collaborative dialogue and quests for truth” (p. 463). This egalitarian feature of the CPE immediately disrupts the habitual roles of more powerful teacher and less powerful student (see also, Kohan, 2015; Haynes & Kohan, 2018). In the research I report on in this thesis, I work with 159 children, across grades 1-7, their teachers and some parents who consent to participate. Child, adult, age, childhood, adulthood, teacher, pupil, all work as unstable concepts, not fixed categories in this research, for example, by giving definitions. I facilitate 13 communities of philosophical enquiry and analyse these using critical posthumanism as my apparatus.

## 0.6 The tapestry as provocation

An embroidered tapestry of the school, the research site in this study, is hand-made by the principal of the school in 1998 (Figure 0.2). It is used as a provocation for each of the 13 intra-generational philosophical enquiries for reasons explained below and later on. Haynes and Murriss (2012, p. 1) in their book *Picturebooks, Pedagogy and Philosophy*, “offer reasons to challenge censorship and risk avoidance...and propose [that] exploring controversial subjects is of critical importance to education”. I would argue that using this embroidery as a provocation is experimental, playful and also seeks to challenge the censorship embedded in the curriculum, which determines the material that should be used to ‘teach’ children and teachers of different ages. So why did I choose it, or maybe why did it choose me?

The tapestry is an embroidered visual of the school created in 1998 and is used in 2017 with the children for this study. It hangs in the school foyer and has been there since 1998. I am stitched into the embroidery as Miss Lawrence, above the letter ‘W’ the only brown body stitched next to all the white adult teacher cartoon sized bodies. I expand on this tapestry and its significance for the research in much greater detail in Chapter 3.



for transgressing the created borders between Foundation<sup>8</sup>, Intermediate and Senior Phase Schooling. What Moss (2013) calls "...a disjointed set of different educational 'enclosures', each providing for arbitrarily defined age groups" (p.43). These decisions perform as "agential cuts" which is a boundary-making practice within the apparatus that is this research" (Barad, 2007, p 148). This tapestry as agential cut also works to destabilize the age/grade binary that is fixed in schools, that children will do particular activities and be exposed to particular 'content' only at a particular grade. The South African National Curriculum Statement for Foundation Phase hereafter FP, states as two of its core principles: "high knowledge and high skills: the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and set high, achievable standards in all subjects; Progression: content and context of each grade shows progression from simple to complex" (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p.4). Barad (2007, p.185) reminds us "the separation of epistemology from ontology is a reverberation of a metaphysics that assumes an inherent difference between human and nonhuman, subject and object, mind and body, matter and discourse." This separation of epistemology and ontology can be seen in the way compulsory state curriculum is generally 'delivered<sup>9</sup>' and received at the research site. The school has to deliver a linear Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), national curriculum, mandated by the national government of South Africa. It determines, month by month, the concepts and knowledge the children need to know in separately defined subject areas like Mathematics which is seen as separate to Language or Life Orientation.

## 0.7 Critical posthumanism and how this matters

I came into life as a PhD student through an invitation from Karin Murriss<sup>10</sup> one of the principal investigators on a National Research Foundation (NRF) funded project called *Decolonising Early Childhood Discourses: Critical Posthumanism in Higher Education* (DECD). The co-

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<sup>8</sup> Foundation Phase is the first phase of the school curriculum, Grade R-3; Intermediate Phase is the second phase of the school curriculum Grade 4-6 and Senior Phase is the third phase Grade 7-9 (DBE, 2011).

<sup>9</sup> This is an enactment of what Freire (1970/2000) was deeply concerned by and developed a critique of, the banking model of education.

<sup>10</sup> In 2016 Karin Murriss was based at the University of Cape Town

investigator was Vivienne Bozalek<sup>11</sup>. One of the main aims of the DECD research project was to:

provide intellectual spaces - both face to face and virtual, for philosophers, theorists and practitioners to interact across diverse geographical contexts to engage in debate and deliberation about posthumanism, the affective turn and the impact that these bodies of knowledge have for decolonising early childhood, in particular developing approaches which have resonance for southern perspectives and contexts.

(<https://www.decolonizingchildhood.org/research>)

I was able to learn, practice, theorise, experience with, and in so doing, come into an understanding about critical posthumanism as a theoretical framework with an embedded practice. Some of the international project members and experts in their particular fields included Karen Barad, Fikile Nxumalo, Erica Burman, Walter Kohan, Sara Stanley, Vivienne Schwarz, Joanna Haynes and Affrica Taylor, who all visited South Africa and worked with us in the project<sup>12</sup>.

As critical posthumanism was the guiding framework for the DECD project it provided and provides me as an emerging scholar and doctoral candidate with multiple opportunities for deep theoretical learning, immersion and practice. I would suggest I experience an embodied enactment of what Dahlberg and Moss (2010, p. x) propose that, “theory and practice do not represent a divide – an either/or binary; rather practice is in fact continuously and already doing and enacting educational theories.” The opportunity for me to enact educational/political/philosophical theories through educational/political/philosophical practice came through the DECD project. A book edited by Karin Murriss and Joanna Haynes, *Literacies, Literature and Learning: Reading Classrooms Differently* (2018a), emerged from the DECD project with many members of the project, co-authoring chapters. The whole book was centred around one Philosophy with Children lesson, based on its pedagogy, the community of philosophical enquiry (CPE), and facilitated by philosophical play specialist and

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<sup>11</sup> In 2016 Vivienne Bozalek was based at the University of the Western Cape.

<sup>12</sup> All with the exception of Erica Burman, who presented her work in a webinar.

author, Sara Stanley. I was able to learn about emergent, experimental research and research writing through the encounter of re-turning to this one lesson and the created data over and over again. All these entanglements are part of the process of becoming a lead-author of a chapter in the book. In Chapter 5, in the section entitled: *Let's make a circle*, I discuss Sara's philosophical play with children and how it gave me ways to think and enact how the community of philosophical enquiry works as theorypractice.

On 21 November 2016 as part of the DECD project, a Critical Posthumanism Research Seminar was held at UCT. The group who met developed a tentative 'definition' of Posthumanist Research.

Posthumanist research is based on a **relational ontology** that includes the **entanglement** of the **human** and **more-than-human**, **intra-acting** as part of the world. The epistemic implications of this require humility and **response-ability** on the part of the researchers. The research disrupts **power-producing binaries** through **emergent, experimental practices** and **non-representational analysis**.

Some of the concepts from this 'definition' slip out of the citation, take a walk and make new connections possible. They generate new ways of thinking/being/doing throughout this thesis and I have highlighted them in bold in this next section. My posthuman, post-qualitative research draws deeply on the scholarship of feminist philosopher and quantum physicist Karen Barad and their diffractive methodology. Diffraction involves troubling **power producing binaries** such as theory/practice; adult/child; white/black; writing/drawing, word/art; work/play and contests their apparent separability.

Chapter 4, *Re-imagining the role of the teacher in the Community of Philosophical Enquiry*, re-imagines and reconfigures the role of the child and the teacher in and through the CPE. The normalised unequal relations are disrupted, thereby making different ways of being adult and child in relation possible. In PwC child is listened to and so what I am proposing in this chapter, is a **non-representational analysis** of how this process where child is listened to transforms the adult child relationality. A different figuration of child also expresses a different discourse about who is included and who and what matters. In Chapter 4 there is work done on the role of the CPE to foster these changing relations.

In Chapter 6, *Queering democracy: voting as pedagogical practice*, the focus is on how a CPE creates the space for children's thinking and deep wonderings. Daniela Gandorfer in an interview with Karen Barad (2021), suggests that critical thought "is to encounter what is unrecognizable and imperceptible, yet sensible and constructive of sense without separating it from the physical world" (p. 20). I would agree and apply this to the critical thoughts of child. This thinking is not located *in* the child, in their mind and does not emerge only through the thoughts, child verbalises. Rather, this critical thinking is made possible relationally as part of a pedagogical encounter in between adult - child - art - floor - space - land - history - philosophy and so forth. This **relational ontology** assumes that "we [humans] are part of the nature which we seek to understand" (Barad, 2007, p. 352 - drawing on quantum physicist Niels Bohr). In other words, as researcher, I do not stand outside of the research peering in at a distance. I am part of all that can and cannot be understood. Similarly the children, the questions, the enquiries are not separate from the world, they are all already entangled with the world.

I am trying to articulate and show through the thoughts embodied in the words that are typed, that which I love – which is child. I think with Murriss and Haynes (2018b, p.13) who describe the concept of child as "complex material-discursive *relationality*". So, I think of the dominant discourses of child and childhood and now use the work of this formulation of material-discursive as:

neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulated or articulable in the absence of determining the other, matter and meaning are mutually articulated.

Barad (2007, p.152)

This child as material-discursive relationality is "more than his or her body, always connected, embedded and embodied, dynamic and active" (Murriss & Haynes, 2018b, p. 13). I would also add that the child is porous and unbounded, diffracting through spaces and times. It is difficult to reject the dominant discourses of child and childhood, for example the developmental, binary logic that juxtaposes children against adults..." (Bohlman & Hickey-Moody, 2019, p. 1). This binary logic firmly locks child into a very particular relationship with adults and closes down relationality – which is about possibilities. Disrupting the developmental binary logic and

investigating why schooling seems locked into these definitions and ways of being, is what some of the work of this thesis seeks to do.

The inclusion of child and what else matters, and what has been excluded from mattering (Barad, 2007, p.395) in the CPE is central to this thesis. **More-than-human**<sup>13</sup> is first offered as a formulation by David Abram in his book, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996) which served to disrupt the nature culture divide. In this way, humans are always a part of the more-than-human world. Animals, ants, the cosmos, paper, crayons, drawings, thoughts, atmosphere are all more-than-human. There are other formulations used by critical posthumanists including nonhuman and other-than-human, but I use more-than-human throughout this thesis. It is worth noting that the category more-than-human only exists in relation to human and some humans matter less than others. Braidotti (2019, p.35) reminds us that the formulation of human in more-than-human is not a neutral category. In Chapter 3, *What is a school?* I spend time carefully tracing the animals at the school as pets, products, pests and prizes and show the multidirectional relations between the multiple species at the school. Attention is also paid to how relations between the human and the more-than-human impact the pedagogical spaces of the school including the communities of philosophical enquiry. These more-than-human multispecies relations are foregrounded because they disrupt the firmly held beliefs that schools are mainly about humans. The influence, impact, absences and presences of the more-than-human in relation to schooling as part of pedagogical practices cannot continue to be erased and ignored.

**Entanglement** of the human and more-than-human as a concept and as a doing is used throughout this thesis. Barad (2007) offers a helpful formulation when they suggest that “a diffractive methodology is respectful of the **entanglement** of ideas and other materials that reflexive methodologies are not” (p.29). I use a diffractive methodology throughout. For example in Chapter 2: *The land is a constellation*. In this chapter, settler, colonial and Apartheid relations are paid attention to so as to politicise, unsettle and shape the research site for the CPE’s which follow (Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017, p. 99). The hauntings of the human and more-than-human of the land are implicated and embedded in each layer of the CPE’s. The philosophical discussions are not located in the ‘present’ of the enquiries, but are threaded through the past, present and futures that have been and are to come. Barad in an interview with Gandorfer (2021) argues that “listing entanglements is not in any way sufficient;

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<sup>13</sup> David Abram first uses the term more-than-human in his book *The Spell of the Sensuous* (1996).

it is necessary to trace the entanglements in their specificity – that is where the work is” (p. 61). Therefore, the particularity of this specific land contextualises and contributes to the data creation about these specific CPE’s. Material conditions form part of the entanglements that are relevant to this research, partially traced through multidirectional relations in each CPE.

This is a much more experimental, creative and affirmative way of thinking - a working through and with ‘data’ which is being re-created again and again.

Throughout this research process I have had multiple opportunities to experiment and engage in experimental theory/practices. Thinking and being different in this way has been joyful. This has been inspired by the transdisciplinary scholarship and practices of philosopher/ theorist/ researcher/ practitioners in the fields of Critical Posthumanism, Philosophy for/with Children and Philosophy of Childhood. It has also been inspired by the children as co-researchers and by paying attention to the more-than-human in ways I have never done before. Chapter 8, *Absence as Presence* is an enactment of the emergent and experimental practices throughout this whole research process. Ants walk across the pages of this thesis and are first introduced in Chapter 3. The ants are drawn into an image created for Chapter 3 and the visual disturbance serves to disrupt what matters and what gets included in this posthuman research. If I matter and am included in this research, why should the ants not matter and not be included? Drawings and images are specifically created to think with and through a world that we are not separate from. Materials that are used to think with and through are photographed and documented. Throughout, there has been a careful curation of images to interrupt the ‘whiteness’ of the ‘walls’ of the pages of this thesis and to disrupt the language/visual power producing binary. The dominant discourse which argues that words mean more than images, that adult words mean more than child art and that drawings can be discarded as epistemologically, ethically, politically and ontologically insignificant is disrupted. Chapter 8 is an opportunity to experience the affect and power of child art as enquiry and philosophising created during the research process. The deliberate use of watermarks of child art created between the children, art materials, paper, the microbes, ants, dust, ideas, fantasies, desires, and the tapestry foregrounds the visual as present. The data co-created at the ‘time’ of research and the times past and still to come makes itself known as vital matter (Bennett, 2010). The posthuman approach through the ontological re-turn has resonance with children’s becoming with the world which contests binary thinking. This has deep implications for this research as the ontological turn implies that matter and meaning have always been

entangled. This thesis is my response, and a listening to and attending to the response of that which I am response-able to.

## 0.8 Research Questions

The question guiding this research is: **How does critical posthumanism reconfigure Philosophy with Children in a government primary school in South Africa?**

These are the sub-questions, which help to answer the prior questions of the main research question. Prior not as in before, but prior as what makes the answering of the main question possible. The answers are not about the results of 'this measurement', but more about what other questions can be asked?

- a. What is the new material-discursive produced when using a tapestry as the provocation for intra-generational enquiries with one school?
- b. How does age work to include or exclude in the un/bounded enquiry spaces of Philosophy with Children and how does critical posthumanism reconfigure adult child relationality?
- c. How can the community of philosophical enquiry become re-configured as a posthuman pedagogy and a post - qualitative research methodology by including the more-than-human?
- d. What are the ethical and political implications of the ontological and epistemological shift in understanding a community of philosophical enquiry as a de/colonising posthuman pedagogy in the South African education system?

## 0.9 ~~Structure of the Thesis~~—The diffraction pattern of the thesis

The postqualitative culture nature of this thesis calls for a disruption of reflexive, routine forms such as 'structure of thesis'. I use the strike through as a deliberate gesture, to invite the diffraction pattern in as a more helpful, more generous formulation. Barad (2007) offers: "...diffraction pattern, marking difference from within and as part of an entangled state..." (p.89). The chapters of this thesis perform the diffraction pattern with and through the

diffractive methodology. A diffraction pattern emerges which is not pre-formed. It enacts the new that is continually being produced. Each chapter is therefore “illuminating the indefinite nature of boundaries – displaying shadows in “light” regions and bright spots in “dark” regions- the relation of the social and the scientific is a relation of the ‘exteriority within” (Barad, 2007, p.93).

A note on the title: A posthuman **reconfiguring** of philosophy with children in a government primary school in South Africa. I diffract through a Baradian formulation (not definition) of reconfiguring as,

...the past is never closed, never finished once and for all, but there is no taking it back, setting time aright, putting the world back on its axis. There is no erasure finally. The trace of all reconfigurings are written into the enfolded materialisations of what was/ is/ to-come. Time can't be fixed.

(Barad, 2010 p. 264)

Each title of each chapter, although separate is entangled with the concepts, co-created data, the ants, the humans, more-than-human, all bounded and unbounded in relationality. Contesting time as linear will occur throughout this thesis, and so already the entanglements of the chapters has happened as I have provided a guide to Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6 and 8 in the section 0.7 *Critical posthumanism and how it matters*, above.

Chapter 1, *Re-membering as a sacred practice: re-imagining child and childhood*, introduces diffraction as a methodological strategy by drawing on Karen Barad's theorising of a diffractive methodology. For example the way in which dates and numbers work throughout this study, is theorised with spatial and temporal diffraction. The autobiographical im/possibilities of the entanglements of 'my' childhood, 'me' as child, growing up in Apartheid South Africa and 'my' teaching career are diffracted through as re-membering which emerges throughout the thesis.

Chapter 5, *Making a Circle*

This chapter traces the entanglements in making a circle, which happens 13 times in each philosophical enquiry with all of the children from Grade 1-7. The emergent and experimental nature of the research makes every circle a different one. In Chapter 5, the act of making a circle with the child-sized chairs the Grade 2 children bring from their classrooms, disrupts

how chairs and furniture works in the CPE. Focusing on the material-discursive contests dominant modes of enquiry and what is usually privileged in research about a CPE. This experimental research also resists the human subject, (although I caution that child is not yet considered fully human) as the most important aspect of the research or as the only 'one' with agency or intentionality.

Chapter 6, *Queering democracy: voting as pedagogical practice*, by drawing on Walter Kohan's work a spotlight is turned onto the questions as the more-than-human which the children co-create and the philosophical relationships that develop between questions. Gareth Matthews' writings help me to move the work of this chapter forward as he reminds us that children as philosophical thinkers/doers have been left out of the dominant narratives about children and childhood. Voting on the questions as a pedagogical practice, which has an impact on what will be taught and learnt in the classroom is also theorised in this chapter. With the help of Toby Rollo's formulations about child as political agent, and not just moral agent, the implications for more democratic and just schooling are considered.

Chapter 7, *Troubling the boundaries of a Community of Philosophical Enquiry*, the boundaries and boundedness of the CPE is exploded and theorised as porous, leaking, and inclusive. What the child and more-than-human do, say and experience before, during and after the CPE is tuned into and regarded as important and not excluded as unnecessary. Theorising with Jane Bennett (2010) about the vital materiality of the more-than-human and why the inclusion and acknowledging of *these presences* requires an ontological shift and opens up radical ways of being in a classroom and thinking/doing research.

Chapter 9, *What is left out because it is already in?* focuses on who and what has mattered in this research and why. Also, why even though child is 'in' school and the more-than-human is 'in' school, they are routinely excluded from mattering. This chapter aims to show how diffraction is about the "entangled nature of differences that matter" (Barad, 2007, 381). This has profound implications for unequal child and adult relations and for the inclusion of the more-than-human in ways of knowing, previously reserved for adult humans. It also shows how a re-imagined Community of Philosophical Enquiry has implications for more just, loving, joy-filled classrooms and schools, where democratic practices are radically changed because the inclusion of the more-than-human and child as already capable requires an ethical/ontological/epistemological shift that should no longer be ignored.

# 1. Re-membering as a sacred practice

Memory is not merely a subjective capacity of the human mind; rather, 'human' and 'mind' are part of the landtimescape – spacetime-mattering – of the world. Memory is written into the worlding of the world in its specificity, the ineliminable trace of the sedimenting historicity of its iterative reconfiguring.

(Barad, 2017a, p. 84)

## 1.1 Re-membering

In this chapter I think and write with Barad (2007, p. iv) who urges us to recognise that “memory is not a record of a fixed past that can ever be fully or simply erased, written over, or recovered.” The memories I share in this writing are not mine. They are not held in my (individual) head or body and now shared by my hands through the keys of the keyboard I am typing on. Rather these memories are the “enfolded articulations of the universe in its mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. ix). These memories will be different. They are alive, continuous enactments of a changing universe. I am not turning back to look at these memories and they are not dropping into this present, they are already here, but gone, already past, but different.

I grew up in South Africa, Apartheid. I endured Apartheid education and compulsory schooling as a child and teenager. I then became a teacher in this same system, on the same colonised land, divided, carved up and scarred by Apartheid policies and practices. This is not a story or a sanitised history, but a re-membering of a life as a child of Apartheid and a teacher growing out, through and beyond that system in 'post'-Apartheid South Africa. I start by thinking with Nxumalo (2014, p.1) who started her dissertation stating she would do a “partial telling of my own place learning from my childhood and youth.” I too will write a partial telling, a “re-membering as a sacred practice” (Barad, 2017a, p. 76) because I will not be going back in time, but embodying and enacting a material reconfiguring of the life I lived as a child and an adult, in South Africa. I think with Kohan (2015, p. 46) who argues that “in our daily life words like child and adult are presented as common, normal, simple.” One focus of this chapter is how the concepts of child and childhood can be re-imagined. Like Kohan (2015, p. 47) I use philosophy to “recognize the arbitrary in the natural, the contingency in the necessary, the extra-ordinary in the ordinary.” So, I will work to rethink concepts like child and adult as if they

can exist without each other and how they tend to be normalised and simplified. The work of this chapter will also be to trace the entanglements of the delicate complexity of my childhood that is not past or gone, and my adulthood that is not fixed or stable.

Drawing on the work of quantum physicist and feminist, Karen Barad (2017a, p. 70) I use “travel hopping” which can be understood as temporal diffraction, as a methodology in my thesis. In order to understand travel hopping it is important to understand temporal diffraction as developed through Barad’s diffractively reading of queer theory through Quantum Field Theory (QFT). QFT troubles time as it is understood through Western metaphysics. Temporal diffraction is based on the empirical finding that “a given particle can be in a state of indeterminately coexisting at multiple times,” for example coexisting in the past, present and future (Barad, 2017a, p. 67). The implications for this doctoral research project are that it requires us to think about time (and therefore childhood) very differently as we would need to think of temporal diffraction as “an ontological indeterminacy of time” (Barad, 2017a, p. 68). I will use the method of “travel hopping” as opposed to a linear account of my schooling and Apartheid schooling including post-1994 to allow the entanglements and differences to emerge.

The title of this chapter “re-membering as a sacred practice” comes from a quote in a paper by Karen Barad (2017a, p. 70) which weighs deeply on my thinking body? I have found thinking about remembering as re-membering a powerful way to attend to entanglements of colonialism, militarism, racism and conservatism which emerge through the re-tellings of different parts of various stories of growing up in South Africa. The sacred practice as understood through temporal diffraction encompasses multiple iterations of sacredness, “temporalities are specifically tangled and threaded through one another” (Barad, 2017a, p. 67).

Come with me to 2017, it is not back from where we are now, for ‘back’ is not a direction when “times... bleed through one another” (Barad, 2014, p. 179). I agree with Barad (2017a) who suggests that “(even) linearity is susceptible to radical reworkings from within” (p. 68).

In June 2017 I had the pleasure of meeting Karen Barad at a seminar in Cape Town, South Africa hosted by the Decolonising Early Childhood Discourses National Research Foundation project. In preparation for the seminar our post-graduate weekly reading group read *Meeting the universe halfway: quantum physics and the entanglements of matter and meaning*, Barad's 2007 significant groundbreaking text. We also read a pre-published version of *Troubling time/s ecologies of nothingness: re-turning, re-membering and facing the incalculable* (Barad, 2017a), generously shared with the group by Karen Barad. The article is a diffracted reading through the 2005 novella called *From Trinity to Trinity* by Kyoko Hayashi, translated from Japanese to English by Eiko Otake. Meeting Karen Barad was a highlight for me as an emerging researcher and early years academic. I remain deeply affected by the work we did with them over the 2 day seminar in 2017. At the seminar Karen Barad presented their article by reading it aloud to us. They enacted a re-turning to their own work. I was struck by this scholarly and sacred practice, and have continued to read, re-read and re-turn to Barad's work.

Barad enacts a diffracted reading of Kyoko Hayashi's novella *From Trinity to Trinity*. Kyoko Hayashi re-members being a 14 year old child when the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945. It was dropped close to her school but as she was working at the steel factory (all her classmates were required to take shifts at the steel factory to support the war effort) she herself did not die. The novella, *From Trinity to Trinity* is her account of re-membering the bomb destroying Nagasaki. Hayashi re-calls the devastation of the aftermath of the bomb. 52 of her classmates died. There are empty desks at the schools which serve as reminders of the children who sat in them. She writes of the grief of the *hibakusha*, the survivors of the atomic bombs and the name they are given in Japanese. Many children died in their teachers' arms. Teachers needed to bury their pupils as their parents had died and there was no one left to bury them.

Hayashi moves between Nagasaki as one Trinity site to the other Trinity site, hence the title of the novella. The Trinity site in Santa Fe, New Mexico is the site of the first atomic bomb tested on United States soil. Barad (2017a, p. 64) explains that "diffraction as a methodology is a matter of reading insights through rather than against each other to make evident the always already entanglement of specific ideas in their materiality."

We do not go back in time to 9 August 1945 at 11:02am when the bomb exploded and then further back to the site of the first atomic bomb test in Santa Fe 16 July 1945 at 05:29am. According to Barad (2017a, p.70), the travel hopping used by Kyoko Hayashi shows that “what is at stake is not setting time aright (as if that were possible), but rather the undoing of time, of universal time, of the notion that moments exist one at a time, everywhere the same, and replace one another in succession.”

## 1.2 Elastic number lines

Throughout this chapter, there are many numbers and dates - they are used deliberately. The extensive use of numbers and dates works as a methodological strategy. De Freitas and Sinclair (2017, p. 77) suggest that numbers and dates as mathematical concepts are “material arrangements” and not just abstractions, and we “need to rethink abstraction as a process of creative speculation.” For this reason, numbers and dates have a “physical emergence” and “experiential history” (De Freitas & Sinclair 2017, p. 77). The numbers and dates in this chapter are not chronological signposts, within a traditional abstract notion. Nor are they dates situated in space and time.

What I have been re-membering is not a linear chronology, I am not trying to re-member where I was and what I was doing or what was occurring in the world. Numbers and dates can give the impression that it is a retelling, like placing pieces of a puzzle together. This is not the case. When I realised I was relying heavily on numbers/dates to trace the entanglements in this chapter, I wrote each date on a separate piece of paper to get a sense of the materiality of the number as a date that I could physically move around (see Figure 1.1).



Sinclair, 2017, p. 80). What is required then is a different kind of reading about 1985 and 1986, 1967, 1990, 2017 - these are not fixed points, rather they are possibilities. The number line then becomes alive, vibrant through the indeterminacy buried in and emerging from it. I also think with Janks (2010, p. 186; 2012, pp. 150-151) who distinguishes the politics of our lives, little *p* with the capital *P* of the “politics of government...Apartheid, global capitalism...” The numbers 1985, 1986, 1967, 1990, 2017 - affected me deeply in terms of the small *p* and big *P* of politics, “the personal is political” (Janks, 2012, p.151). With this feminist perspective and destabilising image of numbers on lines as dates and times, with the concept of travel hopping and re-memembering I share part of my story. My own story emerges because I grew up during Apartheid and this study is about re-imagining child and the context is South Africa which cannot be understood without the enduring presence of Apartheid.

### 1.3 Apartheid South Africa

I was born in 1977, at Bethesda hospital, a mission hospital in Ubombo, a small rural town, in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, 1 812 kilometres from Cape Town. From 1975-1980, my father, who is a medical doctor, worked at the mission hospital serving the rural community. My mother, a teacher, managed a pre-school from the back porch of our home – a large area for children to play freely. In 1980 when my older sister turned six, she needed to begin compulsory schooling. Apartheid policies dictated that she could only attend a school for children classified as coloured. There was no school that permitted coloured children close to where we lived in Ubombo. This Apartheid policy pushed my parents to make the decision to move back to Cape Town. However, in Cape Town we could only live in an area demarcated as a coloured area, by the Group Areas Act No. 36 of 1966<sup>14</sup>. This Act enforced segregation by assigning geographical living and working areas to specific racial categories designated by Apartheid legislation and practices. The Act also restricted ownership and occupation of land to specific Apartheid racial groups.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Group Areas Act No. 36 of 1966, “separated population categories by declaring certain areas African, coloured, Indian or white, and forcibly removing those who were occupying land or houses in the areas designated as white areas” (Bozalek 2004, p. 82).

<sup>15</sup> See Footnote 2.

**Figure 1.2**

*Child on swing*



I am, and am not, the child in the photograph in Figure 1.2. This is a photograph of me as a child, but it is not a child, even though when we look at the image, we see a child. When we have a concept, child in this instance, it does not refer to just one thing in the world, but a phenomenon. This is a partial telling of my own places and spaces. The work of this thesis will be to trace the entanglements and the many others that already exist through the enactment of reading data and specifically images differently. I am not an individual, solitary or bounded subject, but rather I am part of the phenomena which make up this child and childhood. I am not an...

autonomous unified subject who continues to live in the time  
'their present' while returning to a past that once was, a past that continues to exist  
and remains accessible to those with sufficient ingenuity and technical know-how, in  
an attempt to rework some crucial point in a chain of events that will then propagate  
forward in deterministic fashion in a rewriting of history.

(Barad, 2017a, p. 70)

I turn 44 years old as I work and re-work this chapter in early 2021. The signifiers child and childhood are no longer used in descriptions of me unless there is a reference to my parents and that I am their child. To disrupt this discourse, I am working with Walter Kohan (2014, 2015), philosopher of child and childhood's theories. A normalised and dominant view of childhood is that childhood is seen as negative in relation to adulthood because this line is progressive, a movement away from what is unwanted to be outgrown, to what is wanted and desirable (Kohan, 2014, p. 14).

Kohan asks us to reject and trouble this dominant view of childhood and asks us to imagine childhood as a "condition of possibility of adulthood, not only chronologically but aionically." (Kohan, 2014, p. 19). "Aionic time, which refers to the intensity and duration of time...allows us to think that childhood, much more than a stage of life, is a possibility of human experience, a potency and a vital force" (Kohan, 2014, p. 17). My childhood which exists as part of me and the entanglements with the world aionically, is brought into existence through the photograph (Figure 1.2) taken by my father in 1981. The entire process of taking photographs in those days is very different when we think of the current pervasive nature of capturing our everyday existence using digital cameras and smartphones. Photographs play a special role in the way we can 'see', have access to our childhoods and times we cannot re-member. We need those who took the photo, who knew us as children, who were located in a specific spacetime, to help us to re-member. In 1980 in South Africa, and all over the world, it was costly to pay to have a roll of film developed in colour. Frequently the developing would take months after the special events occurred, such as the birthday parties, the first days of schools, weddings and funerals. Being told to be careful as each photograph was revealed, as I carefully flipped through the sticky, shiny piles, stretching my fingers to the edges of the photographs so as not to get fingerprints on the individual photographs. Each photo revealed its own surprise and this all forms part of the phenomenon.

### 1.3.1 'Back' to the photograph

The sag of the washing line and the curved line of the two child sized legs that are holding on not to let go. There are many other kinds of lines. One kind of line is a developmental, unilinear line which starts at birth and then progresses in only one direction, towards a future that is not already here. One line guides this way of reading images into looking at what else can be noticed when looking at an image that includes a child. One line moves back and forth between my childhood and adulthood and reimagines what they can be as already entangled researcher implicated in this research. One line extends to the children as co-researchers to be researched with. Not about, and as already part of the phenomenon. All these intersecting lines are saggy, curvy, wavy, made of dots and connected. This study troubles these lines and the material-discursive practices about child and childhood they allow to emerge

The top of the toy ladder swing is tied and attached to a tree but this attachment is not revealed in the photograph, only a hint of orange in the top right hand corner of the photograph suggests another ladder rung. The canopy created by the leaves of the tree of the branch, confirm the guess that the swing is attached to the tree. The guess is informed by knowledge of Isaac Newton's comprehensive theory of gravity, developed using the principles of Western metaphysics and published in 1687 (Cohen, et al., 1999). Four year old me, the ladder, gravity, the tree, the car and all the other elements that can be seen or sensed (and those that cannot be seen or sensed by a human?) are all part of the phenomenon, 'my' childhood.

The photograph (Figure 1.2) is taken by my father in the backyard of our first family home in a suburb of Cape Town on the Cape Flats called Hazendal. In 1980 my mom, dad, older sister and our boxer dog, Gardee drove the 1768 kilometres from Ubombo to Cape Town. We take the trip in the maroon Peugeot 404 now parked in the driveway in Figure 1.2. In 2019 I decide to email my parents, because many questions about the photograph can be asked of them. I ask questions and partial answers emerge because answers are never full or complete.

In an email reply to a question about the photo, my father reminds me about the anti-Apartheid activist Ashley Kriel. In the same backyard that I am swinging in, 20 year old Ashley Kriel was tortured and killed by the Apartheid police in 1987. See figure 1.3, which is an anti-

Apartheid resistance poster<sup>16</sup> with Ashley Kriel's face diffracted through the grass he also walked on. Barad (2017c, p. G103) reminds us that "...shadows of what once was become eternal...". As I re-turn to the swing, the grass, the garden through the photograph, Ashley is there too. So much cannot be visualised, yet it is still real. His murder happened some years after we moved out of the home. On the 11 February 1990 in Nelson Mandela's first address to the South African nation after being jailed for 27 years, he declared, "I salute combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe<sup>17</sup>, like Solomon Mahlangu and Ashley Kriel who have paid the ultimate price for the freedom of all South Africans."

### Figure 1.3

*Re-membering Ashley Kriel*



I was in Standard 4,<sup>18</sup> now called Grade 6, when Ashley Kriel was killed. He is a famous anti-Apartheid activist and so his story is well known, yet the full details of his death are not known, partially because the Apartheid police refused to explain what happened to him at the Truth and Reconciliation<sup>19</sup> hearings. What is the work of memory? How do memories work? The memories not just located 'in' the humans, but in the yard, in the sounds of torture in its walls? I remember living in the home in Hazendal and playing in the back yard and hearing about

<sup>16</sup> I took a photo of the Ashley Kriel poster at the Apartheid museum in December 2019.

<sup>17</sup> Umkhonto we Sizwe in isiXhosa means Spear of the Nation, was the armed wing of the African National Congress and it was co-founded by Nelson Mandela in the wake of the Sharpeville Massacre.

<sup>18</sup> In South Africa school grades were referred to as Sub A and Sub B and then Standard 1,2,3 until 10.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.justice.gov.za/TRC/hrvtrans/helder/ct00611.htm>

Ashley Kriel's death and only later being told where it happened. I am child, researcher, co-researcher with other child participants, human and more-than-human. Through the photographs and memories I trace the entanglements with schooling and the land. The "self-evidentiary nature of bodily boundaries" as a given, for human bodies, land, schooling, learning has emerged as a result of "the repetition of (culturally and historically) specific bodily performance" (Barad, 2007, p. 155). Bodily borders are defined and performed by humans. Borders are drawn on maps to be enacted on land, or in the air or in the sea and even in the cosmos. These borders are real because they are actual and virtual (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2017, p. 79). They come into existence as they are performed.

## 1.4 Drawing the lines of the Group Areas Act

The rope I am swinging on is attached to a tree, which grows out of the land in 1981. We will travel hop from 1981 to 1966 and then back to the 1950's when the Group Areas Act was promulgated. We do not know however which year that tree was planted or how it came to grow, so there are dates and years not being spoken of which are a part of the entanglement. If we think of this swing as an elastic number line, when we think of these dates it allows us to consider the "infinite of numbers that were imperceptible a moment earlier" (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2017, p. 80). So much more becomes possible when we think about dates and also history in this way. The home where we lived from 1980-1982 is the suburb of Hazendal (inserted in red in Figure 1.4 below) which is on this map to the right of where the name Athlone is printed. It lies in the coloured area band that stretches from the beach named Strandfontein to the suburb, Bellville. We lived right opposite the railway line, across from what looks like stitches on the map. The railway lines also look like a zip, that, when zipped up from Cape Town, would eliminate the black/coloured/Indian areas to leave the white areas visible. It is a very clear demarcation between these parts of the city. This map was drawn in 1950 yet the Group Areas Act only came into effect in 1966. A map drawn about a future projection of a time that was yet to be in the present that is now the past. Times indeed "bleed through one another" (Barad, 2014, p. 179).

In December of 2019, in the course of the research for my thesis I emailed a friend who is a librarian in the Special Collections library at the University of Cape Town (UCT) to ask about whether there were any maps available about the Group Areas Act. She did some research and asked her colleagues. When I received an email with the map in Figure 4 attached, it took my breath away because of the Apartheid legislation drawn in such a rudimentary way. Janks (2012, p. 157) argues that “both the map as a visual text, and the scientific discourses which authorises it, shape our knowledge of the landscape.” As someone who lives in Cape Town, this Apartheid geography is a reality, more so during Apartheid, but the legacy remains. The drawing is an enactment of Apartheid legislation and endures to this day. The other difficulty with the map is that the librarians at UCT are not entirely sure about the date 1950 written in pencil and apparently cannot find exactly when it was catalogued, as the accession number is incorrect on this scanned map. I have found this troubling and interesting (they have apologised and are still trying to search for the correct date).

**Figure 1.4**

*Hand drawn map/drawing of Group Area Proposals*

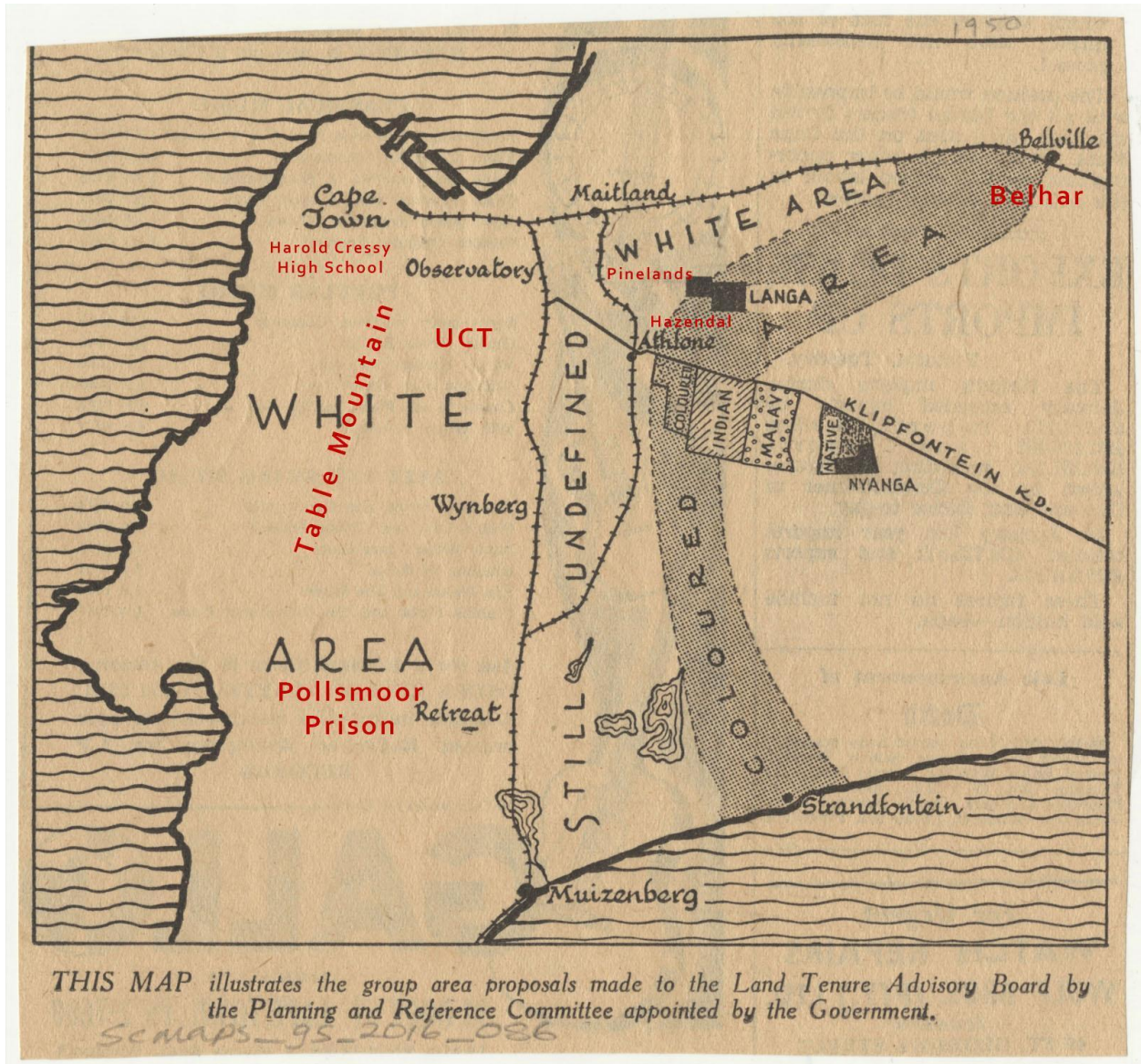


Figure 1.4 is a hand drawn map, to some sort of scale, of the City of Cape Town. It is in a newspaper, published in Cape Town, South Africa around 1950. The Planning and Reference Committee appointed by the National Party (Apartheid) Government made this proposal to the Land Tenure Advisory Board. The lines on the sea are wavy. They are rough yet smooth and stop and bleed into the darker more defined edge of the map of the coastline. The detail afforded the coastline is in stark contrast to the lines on the land. There are many curves,

parts that jut out and turn in sharply. Table Mountain is erased and not even drawn or indicated, yet it is and remains a defining part of the past and current landscape and is now one of the seven modern Wonders of the World. It is where the words WHITE AREA are written. The three railway lines are indicated with a long line crossed with short perpendicular lines. One road - Klipfontein Road - which extends across what is now known as the Cape Flats is visible. Four inland bodies of water are drawn: The Zandvlei Estuary Nature Reserve, Princess Vlei, Zeekoevlei and Rondevlei. These bodies of water are shown with concentric lines of water. They all enter the expanse of the ocean at False Bay. The writing on this drawing, when the lines make the words, name the stations and the places and indicate which population group can live in which space. The words in red have been digitally diffracted through the original map to help illustrate the rest of this re-telling.

Let us return to the map, for it helps to tell the story. The map is also the story (the more-than-human is part of the phenomenon). I read this map-drawing with Karen Barad (2007, p. 223) and consider how it works beyond the “container model of space and Euclidean geometric imaginary.” This thesis will do the work of disrupting the ideas of time and space being containers and argues why this is important for child and early childhood education. We are reminded by Barad (2007, p. 234) that “time is not a succession of evenly spaced intervals available as a referent for all bodies and space is not a collection of preexisting points set out as a container for matter to inhabit.” The map-drawing is not a container, and therefore does not just contain the historical factors of the Group Areas Act and Apartheid South Africa, but also (and not limited to) geopolitical, economic, social, psychological and educational factors. In this thesis there will be a disrupting of the language/drawing binary as if the images are less important than words. Barad (2007, p. 132) declares that “language has been granted too much power.” How does this map work as a text, which is broader than words? What makes something a map? Figure 1.4 is a hand drawn drawing, published in a newspaper in Cape Town in 1950, drawn from someone’s imagination. Maps are not real but pretend to be representations of real life. Maps tend to have an extraordinary authority (Janks, 2012, p. 157) and even today as we use the Global Positioning System (GPS) on our smartphones to take us into the unknown. This drawing as part of distributed agency and its enactment by the Apartheid government has had a profound and life altering effect on my life. The materialising effect of this drawing with its evil, complicated government policy determined where I could go to school, at which beach I could swim, where my family could live and which parts of the city were off-limits for us with brown skin. It denied me the opportunity to attend the school as a

pupil, where I would start my career as a teacher, and which has become the research site for this PhD study. I am affected by the cruelty of Apartheid depicted in the past for the future in the present. The map comes from a newspaper cutting, because it is scanned to me, it is part of the digital collection of UCT libraries<sup>20</sup>. I view it through the screen of my computer or phone, enlarging and minimising as required. I can see through the map to the other side of its yellowing page. I am intrigued by what else would have been on the pages of the newspaper in 1950. The absurdity of what it represents, and the evil discrimination laid bare is also arresting and affecting.

## 1.5 Apartheid Education

### 1.5.1 Compulsory Schooling

I begin my compulsory primary schooling in the Apartheid schooling system in 1982. I was 4 years and 11 months old when school began in January and turned 5 on 28 January 1982. The Apartheid schooling system consisted of 15 segregated and unequal departments of Education depending on the racial categorisation of the child attending the school (Christie, 2009, p. 139). January is the beginning of the school year in South Africa and Grade 1 was called Sub-A. As my mother had spent time in Camden, New Jersey in the United States of America after completing her teacher training in 1969/70, she had been part of a system where children could attend school earlier than mandated by the state. I had been informally attending the pre-school on the porch of our rural home, for years and my parents felt and knew I was ready for formal schooling. They found a school close to where my mother worked in Kensington, Cape Town. I was placed in Sub-A for "*spek and boontjies*"<sup>21</sup>. The term is an Afrikaans term for being placed somewhere as a joke. The teacher accepted me, despite 4 years being a young age for entrance to Sub-A in most South African schools. At the end of

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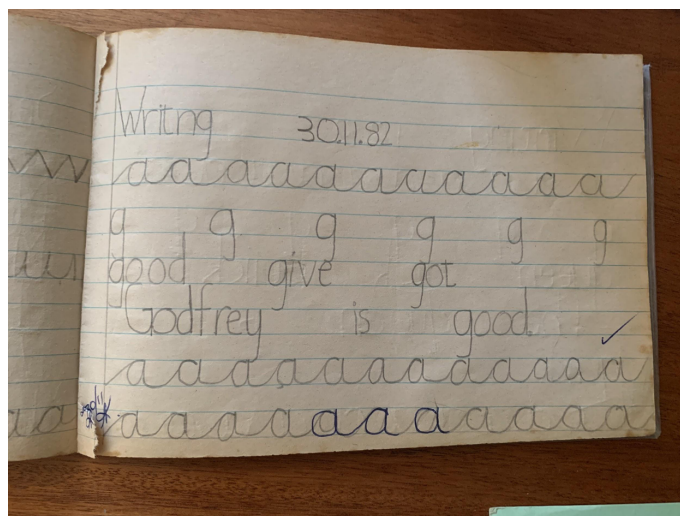
<sup>20</sup> On 18 April 2021 a devastating fire that originated on the slopes of Table Mountain, rips through the Special collections Library at UCT. Salvaging efforts are underway but most of the collection is destroyed. At the time of writing the original artefact of this map could be lost forever, I will be sharing this image with the librarians as they have asked the community to help restore what was lost in the fire.

<sup>21</sup> "Spek and boontjies" is an Afrikaans term for placed somewhere (in a particular class in this case) as a joke.

the year, it was clear that I could progress to the next grade as I had done very well throughout the year. Figure 1.5 illustrates one of my writing tasks in 1982.

**Figure 1.5**

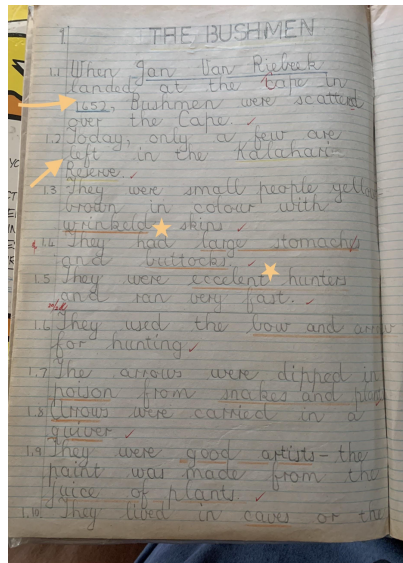
*Writing the letter g in Sub-A*



The writing in Figure 1.5 is not unlike the phonics currently taught in many South African schools – not much has changed. After Sub-A I progressed to the next grade, Sub-B at Erica Primary in Belhar, in the suburb where we lived from 1981-1996. I left Erica Primary at the end of primary school after completing Standard 5 in 1988.

**Figure 1.6**

*The Bushmen (propaganda) from my Standard 2/Grade 4 History notebook*



My primary and high school years were not easy as they coincided with the height of living in Apartheid with resistance to Apartheid. Figure 1.6 above, is a photograph of a page from my History notebook. It shows what the children in my class had to copy from the chalkboard into their notebooks. We were taught that the Indigenous peoples of South Africa were called Bushmen, that Jan van Riebeeck 'landed' in the Cape in 1652 (see the first orange arrow in Figure 1.6). He was sent by the Dutch East India Company to develop a refreshment station for Dutch ships sailing to the East and he was instrumental in setting up a colony in Cape Town. The use of 'landed' is a euphemism for the violent colonising of the lands and the people of Southern African that took place. The second orange arrow shows the word 'left' which is used to explain the fact that the Indigenous people, known as the San, were killed through sustained conflicts through ongoing indigenous tribal warfare and with various colonising powers (Adhikari, 2010).

The two stars represent spelling errors not picked up by my teacher but given little red ticks: "winkeld skins", "ecelent hunters". There is violence in these words, in the way they are strung together in the joining lettering; violence of the little red ticks and the colour used to underline the important words. The Indigenous people are written about in the past tense, as if they existed but not anymore. In what follows I want to work with rejecting the notion of

“progress as inevitable and the past as something that has passed - as if it were no longer with us...” (Barad, 2017a, p. 57).

### 1.5.2. A child of war<sup>22</sup>

My parents were politically conscious, and my older sister and I were raised fully aware of the brutality of Apartheid. We were well loved and cared for. My parents did not hide the fact that we would be exposed to propaganda at school and the discrepancies we would face there. Despite the propaganda and the obvious problems with my schooling I loved school, socialising with my friends, the challenge of schoolwork and sense of accomplishment at my achievements, but it was difficult and complicated growing up in South Africa. Most Saturdays as a family, we would be at political marches and rallies, almost all would ultimately involve police intervention. My sister and I had to learn how to cope with tear gas, knowing what it meant to disperse, following our parents’ instructions about how and where to get to safety.

Other school students who were being looked for by the police, were often hidden in our home. I remember the smell of blood so clearly when we had to take a student who had been shot by police to a specific hospital, where the doctors were sympathetic to the anti-Apartheid, resistance movement. Particular shops were boycotted by us. We adhered to the calls for boycotts of white retailers and collaborators of the state. I re-member looking out of our windows of our home to see if the neighbours were also boycotting the retailers which was made visible by the brand names on their shopping bags. We had to hide copies of banned books like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* by Paulo Freire. We lit candles and placed them on our windowsills during the State of Emergency. My mother was detained without trial for two weeks in 1985 when my sister and I were just 9 and 11 years old respectively. Allow me to share some of that story, a journey through “time, history, place, memory, in search of a way to justly mourn” (Barad, 2017a, p. 60) the child and children of the war that was Apartheid.

One Friday afternoon in September 1985 I remember...

not as if it is my first remembering, and it is not returning to a memory, it is a new memory of a time that is not only in the past, being re-created each time I tell the story

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<sup>22</sup> When I was a child I read a book about children who grew up in Germany during World War 2, titled Children of War. Apartheid was a war to me.

...walking home after school. As I cross the field and the street to reach the home where we live, in Belhar, a coloured suburb (inserted in red in Figure 1.4), I see many cars parked outside our home. I recognise the cars and feel excited about the prospect of what I imagine is a family gathering. We have a big extended family. It is 1985 and my mother now has seven surviving siblings who are scattered across Cape Town, after being forcibly removed from their home in District Six in 1968, but the family remain close. All the siblings attend the same Methodist church in the city, making their way back into the city every Sunday. The church now houses the District Six Museum. During Apartheid, restaurants were restricted to people classified as white, so we have family get-togethers as a result, always lunches, teas and suppers at some or other family member's home. We see each other every weekend at family gatherings which are frequent and fun, and where there is always plenty of food and many cousins with whom to play. So, as I reach my front door, I imagine it is just my extended family coming for a visit. It is 1985 and I am 9 years old. Immediately as I enter the front door my dad calls out to my sister and me. He takes us into the lounge, just him and the two of us. I presume he must have told us that my mother has been arrested and detained without trial. I say presume because I do not remember the conversation, I just remember feeling sadness and anxiety overcoming me. I cried while feeling the heightened levels of strange energy and nervous excitement in our home. I often reflect on the absurdity of the situation, but this was our reality. As a parent myself now, I imagine how bizarre it must have been for my father to tell us that our mother had been arrested by the security police. We did not know for how long she would be away, but we did understand that this was a consequence of resisting the Apartheid government. I think it would be ludicrous now, because of what we now understand and know about childhood trauma. We knew we lived in an Apartheid state, but the injustices we lived with, had become normalised.

Later we learnt that my mother had been informed upon by a neighbour. Informants were paid by the Apartheid government to provide information about people suspected of working against the government. My mother was an English teacher at Excelsior High School in Belhar and had taken on a role of protecting students who were running from the police. This was a time when students at high schools across the country were protesting. We later learnt that my mother was being held at Pollsmoor Prison, a prison situated in the affluent suburb of Tokai in Cape Town, notorious in connection with Nelson Mandela who was sent there (see Figure 1.4.) from Robben Island from 1982 until 1988, when he was moved to Victor Vester prison until his release in 1990. Fortunately for us my father was able to use his connections

as a medical doctor to insist that my mother get the medication she needed. My parents decided that they did not want my sister and I to see my mother in prison, thereby positioning my sister and I as vulnerable, not able to cope with seeing my mother in a prison, even though in many other ways we were exposed to the horrors of Apartheid. I remember understanding this feeling of protection, but also being confused about it. I could imagine my mother being inside the prison but struggled to imagine how these images could match with the reality of what she was enduring every day, something I knew was foreign. When my sister and I sat in the parking lot waiting outside the jail, it felt incredibly surreal. My mother was released after two weeks in prison. I have no memory of her coming home.

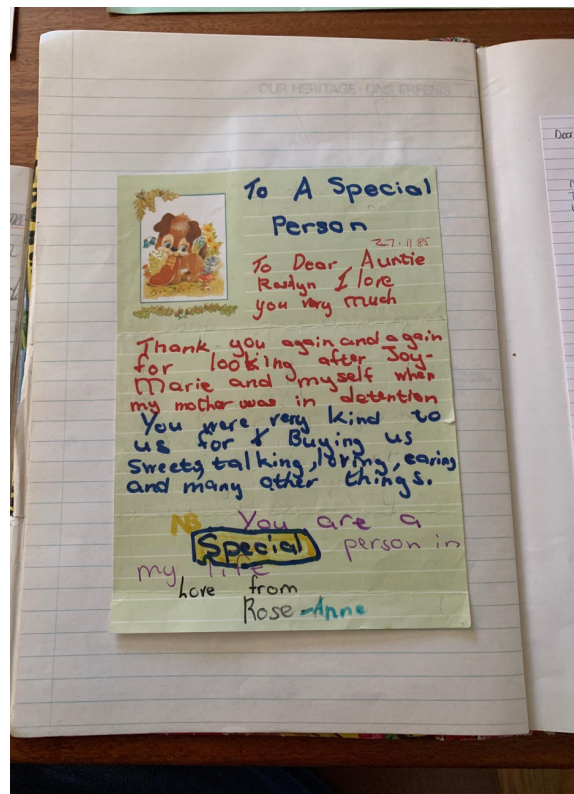
Barad's (2007) work is helpful when it comes to writing about re-membering as she suggests that "remembering is not a replay of a string of moments, but an enlivening and reconfiguring of past and future that is larger than any individual (p. ix)." When I write about what I do remember about this time, it is with Karen Barad's careful work on memory and re-membering as a guide. I am attempting an "embodied practice of re-membering – which is not about going back to what was, but rather about the material reconfiguring of spacetime-mattering in ways that attempt to do justice to account for the devastation wrought as well as to produce openings, new possible histories..." (Barad, 2017a, p. 62).

When my mother was in prison in 1985, I remember myself and that time in relation to the people and other animals and more-than-humans intra-acting with me. Always as part of a phenomenon. For example, my Standard 2 teacher (whose handwriting and comments are visible in Figure 1.6 above) offered to have my sister and I live with her for the time my mother was in prison, but my father declined her offer. I remember how incredibly kind she was to me at school. Ylitapio- Mäntyla (2013, p. 275) would argue that this is an example of the connections between power and caring in everyday educational practices and that these "caring situations contain power." I think of Hayashi's teachers who buried her classmates. That has stayed with me from my life and from Hayashi's account as I think about the work of teachers. I become aware of how I view teachers and teaching and some of the "multiplicity of force relations" (Barad, 2017c, pp. G110-111) that make up the phenomenon of 'me' and probably influenced my decision to become a teacher. These 'connections' perform as diffractive insights as I trace the entanglements of my childhood, schooling and the teachers in my life, which changes the past in its "iterative becoming" (Barad, 2017a, p. 73) . These forces have always already been in relation and that my becoming a teacher is deeply entangled with how my teachers treated me in those very difficult times. It opens up the past for new histories

of kindness. War and Apartheid can bring things into existence and the diffractive reading of Hayashi's story is a part of that. My mother was unexpectedly jailed, but also not as my parents and family knew the consequences of resisting the Apartheid government. My father, aunts, and wider family were all very kind and helpful. I remember feeling like everyone was paying very special attention to us. This enabled a different kind of community building because we were part of a resistance to Apartheid and this provided belonging and power, despite the difficulties and complexities. My mother recently came across a letter I had written to my aunt Rosalyn Lawrence (my mother's sister who married my father's brother) where I thank her for being kind when my mother was in detention (see Figure 1.7 below). The letter is dated '27-11-85' with this date added to the letter in my aunt's handwriting. She died in September 2016. The book containing the letter photographed below contains all the letters my sister, cousins and I wrote to my aunt.

**Figure 1.7**

*Letter to my aunt written after my mother had been released from detention*



In 1985 there was an imbalance of power in South Africa. This was also during the time my mother was arrested. “The government was unable to suppress opposition...and the opposition was unable to overthrow the government” (Christie, 2009, p. 274). The State of Emergency that was called by the government caused our primary school to be closed, and many more around the country. Consequently we were forced to stay home from school for about a month. Many schools had barely been functioning for about 2 years. In 1985 many anti-Apartheid organisations vowed to make the Apartheid state ungovernable. As a result there was an increase in protests, especially protests by high school pupils. I have kept all my report cards since Sub-A and have always been fascinated by the blank space left in my Standard 2 report during Term 3. There are no marks in my report in Term 3 and the dates in my schoolbooks jump from 22 August 1985 to 5 October 1985, so most of that time we were not able to attend school. This official record is an act of erasure, see the orange arrow pointing to the blank section of the report card (Figure 1.8. below). Barad (2017a, p. 73) argues that “erasure is a material practice, which leaves its trace in the very worlding of the world.” How could or would my Standard 2 teacher have described the State of Emergency, the violent ongoing protests, the increased mass resistance? There is work that is required to read this report card as an image differently. Not to read it simply as an accurate account of how well or poorly a child performed academically. This trace, the erasure leaves on the world speaks of a mother in detention, a child not attending school because the country she lives in is in turmoil because of increasingly violent anti-Apartheid protests against the Apartheid government. A child needs to learn despite all these circumstances. Even when the learning or studying is not taking place a government official has instructed the school to leave that section of a report card blank as if nothing worthy of being recorded had occurred. When I talk to a fellow PhD candidate, classified as white during Apartheid, who was in the same grade as me she comments that her report is not blank in the 3rd term of Grade 4 in 1985.

**Figure 1.8**  
Standard 2 report card

Subjects	Report		
	1	2	3
<b>ENGLISH:</b>			
Recitation	5	9	9
Reading	25	18	20
Oral Composition	20	19	15
Spelling (sentences and words)	20	16	17
Written Composition	76	30	37
Language Study	30	26	25
Symbol for the total	170	108	117
	B		A
<b>AFRIKAANS:</b>			
Recitation	5	3	4
Reading	20	13	12
Oral Composition	20	11	7
Spelling (sentences and words)	15	19	15
Written Composition	20	11	12
Language Study	20	13	16
Symbol for the total	100	63	76
	B		B
<b>MATHEMATICS:</b>			
A: Speed and accuracy	70	33	36
B: Basic operations and principles	30	20	26
C: Problems stated in words	30	22	23
Symbol for the total	100	75	91
	B		A
<b>CONTENT SUBJECTS:</b>			
General Science	10	10	10
Geography	10	9	9
History	10	9	9
Health Education	10	10	9
Environment-Study	10	10	10

Subjects	Report		
	1	2	3
<b>WRITING</b>			
	20	13	15
<b>AVERAGE PERCENTAGE:</b>			
Pupil	79%		83%
Class	71%		73%
Arts and Crafts	C		C
Basic handwork	B		B
Needlework	A		A
Days absent	2		0

**GENERAL REMARKS**

Report 1:  
Neatness:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor  
Conduct:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor

Good SUBJECTS: Spelling, Mathematics contents  
WEAK SUBJECTS: Work at home  
GENERAL: Rose-Ann responds very readily and consistently to progress. She is sensitive, and so polite too. We have to leave the Afrikaans Rose-Ann. You can spell, Leg.  
Class Teacher: U. P. Hayes

Principal: [Signature]  
Date: 17.06.85

Report 2:  
Neatness:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor  
Conduct:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor

Report 3:  
Neatness:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor  
Conduct:  Good  Satisfactory  Poor

Now Anne has obtained an excellent pass to Std 3. Congratulations! You have a wonderful nature, admirably friendly, and so industrious too. I enjoyed your loving love daily. Rose-Ann. Stay so sweet.  
Class Teacher: U. P. Hayes  
Principal: [Signature]  
Date: 4.12.85

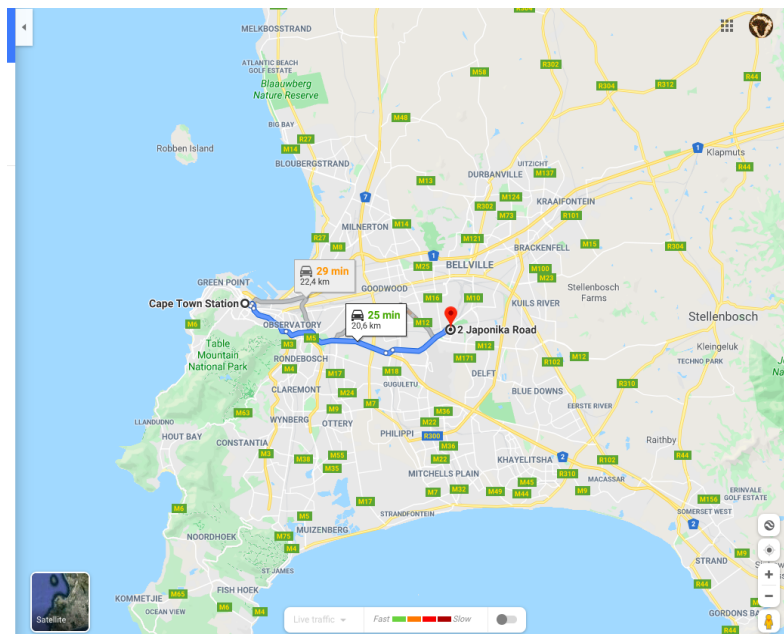
1985 like 1960, 1967, 1976, 1990, were significant years in South Africa's anti-Apartheid resistance. I offer these dates as if "motion is the ontogenetic force by which position comes into being, then 5 (I would suggest 1985) could be a vertical extension that cuts the number line or is the genesis of a fold" (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2017, pp. 79-80). Rather, I offer them up as entangled events - the schooling, murders, life, death, protests, nationalism, funerals, family, language, power, identities, uniforms, leaders, legislation, life in death and death in life. I refer in more detail to the political implications of schooling and land in South Africa, in Chapter 2.

The places in South Africa, the sites of conflict, anti-Apartheid resistance, war, pain, anguish, hope, fascination and love were our homes. The parks, schools, classrooms, playgrounds, the land on which I played, swang, ran around have all shaped my experiences of times and histories. Barad (2017a, p. 60) argues that "the experiences of time and history are shaped by places." I had developed a strong interest and fascination with schooling, in children and teachers. My mother being a teacher and her arrest for helping her students, elevated her to

hero status in my life. Living in such a patriarchal country (I would only find the name for it much later) it felt incredible that my mother did this brave act as a woman. This is so significant for me knowing I was raised by a feminist. Engaging in acts of social justice and resistance to Apartheid was encouraged and expected by my parents, friends and family and forced upon me by virtue of living in a very dangerous, complicated period in South Africa's history, which is not in the past. "The past is never finished. It cannot be wrapped up like a package, or a scrapbook, or an acknowledgment; we never leave it and it never leaves us behind" (Barad, 2007, p. ix). My parents insisted that my sister and I attend Harold Cressy High School, named after a South African teacher and activist. Harold Cressy was the first coloured person to gain a degree in South Africa, graduating in 1910 from Cape Town's South African College - now called the University of Cape Town (Adhikari, 2012, p. 19). In 2014 Harold Cressy High School was declared a Provincial Heritage site under the National Heritage Resources Act of 1999. When we started high school; for my sister in 1987 and for me in 1989, we commuted by train (and later through arranged transport) from Belhar 20 kilometres away on the Cape Flats, into the city centre and then walked the 20 minutes up to the school in Roeland Street. See Figures 1.9 and 1.10 below, an example of modern technology entangled in the mapping of the journey.

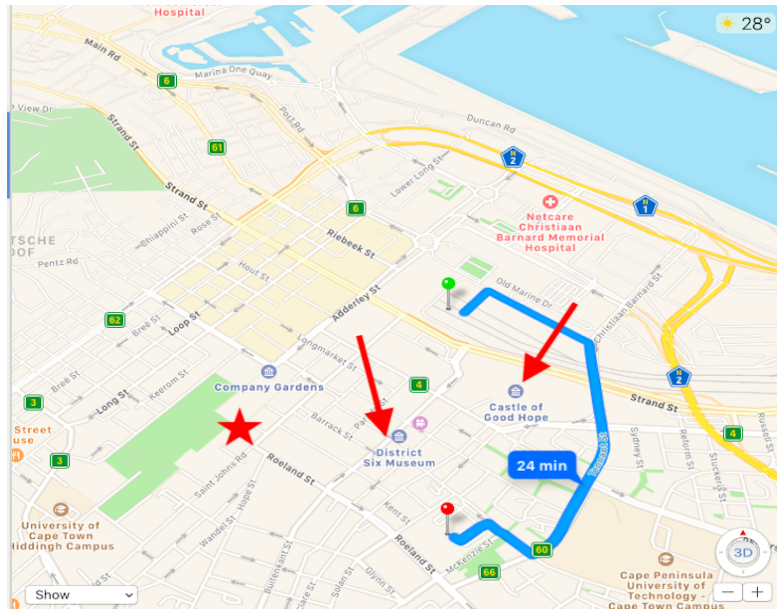
**Figure 1.9**

*Belhar to Cape Town city centre*



**Figure 1.10**

*Walking from Cape Town central station to Harold Cressy High School*



Harold Cressy High School was a school for coloured children during Apartheid, situated at the edge of the remains of District Six, only 1,5 kilometres from the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa in Cape Town City Centre. Parliament is identified by the red star on the map in Figure 1.8. The school produced many activists and intellectuals. It felt like there was a pipeline to UCT. The students worked hard, studied hard and the teachers worked from the principle of intellectual freedom, freeing the mind, even though we were living in an Apartheid state. The two red arrows on the map in Figure 1.8 identify the Castle of Good Hope, which was established as the refreshment station by the Dutch East India Company between 1666 and 1679, the oldest colonial building in South Africa<sup>23</sup> and the second arrow points to the District Six Museum, established in 1994.

In 1993 I matriculated from Harold Cressy High School and was accepted to study for a Bachelor of Social Science Degree at the University of Cape Town (UCT) inserted in red in Figure 1.10 above. I started my undergraduate degree in January of 1994, the same year as South Africa's first democratic elections and when Nelson Mandela became president<sup>24</sup>. I

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.castleofgoodhope.co.za>

<sup>24</sup> Nelson Mandela sworn in as president of South Africa, 10 May 1994  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGC0Bp7P0vU>

graduated in December 1996 at the age of 19, younger than most of my fellow students. In 1997 I enrolled for the Higher Diploma in Education Post-Graduate Primary at UCT, which would enable me to become a teacher.

## 1.6 Re-telling

In this chapter I have re-membered life during state legislated Apartheid South Africa, through a re-telling of my childhood, primary and high school years. I have tried to trace the material-discursive entanglements of the human and more than human encounters through images, re-memberings, dates and numbers. Numbers and dates have been explored as concepts in their becoming. There has been an effort to reclaim concepts as creative, indeterminate, material forces (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, 2017). The difference it makes to regards lines of numbers as elastic for my methodology, is the possibilities it creates for seeing the past not as closed but as open. Open to multiple forces, to the entanglements that disrupt the ideas of time and space being containers, which so often are the only way we work with 'child' and in early childhood education. I have attempted to disrupt age as a category of exclusion and bring to the fore the entanglement of the humans like child (more specifically black<sup>25</sup>) who are generally excluded from re-telling the stories *for* research as they are usually the subject *of* the research.

I think further with Barad (2017a) who suggests “that it is in bodily bringing together the different structures of nothingness – tracing their entanglements – that the world can mourn, and that the unnamed come to matter and are recognised as part of the ongoing reworlding of the world” (p. 86). This chapter has therefore been a material reconfiguring of the past, present and future. This has made it possible to be open to new histories with child I still am (not considered fully human), with the more-than-human and with the disruption of the bodily borders and boundaries of the maps and even images. This is an attunement to childhood as an *aionic* experience of time, which is not a specific experience of time, but is a “specific strength, force or intensity that inhabits a qualitative life at any given chronologic time” (Kohan, 2015, p. 57)

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<sup>25</sup> Even though I was classified as coloured during the Apartheid dispensation, I self-identify as a black South African.

In the next chapter I will do a close analysis of the land of the school, which is the research site, and enact a spatial diffraction of how land works in South Africa, post-Apartheid. Barad (2017a) draws on the writings of Minh-ha (1988, p. 3) who writes about South Africa and argues that difference as a tool of segregation is the apartheid type of difference. Whereas Barad (2017a, p. 65) suggests that “diffraction is allied with the fundamental quantum physics notions of superposition and entanglement, where difference is a matter of differences within, not the ‘apartheid type of difference’.”

I will argue that land as the more-than-human is a significant part of the phenomenon that makes up school as a concept and research site. I will also include the more-than-human usually not even considered as entangled in research in education. All of these which can enact Apartheid separation ‘from’ ( Minh-ha, 1988) also enact entanglement ‘with’ (Barad, 2017a).

## 2. The land is a constellation

### 2.1 Introduction

As time is not a “succession of evenly spaced intervals” and space is not a collection of preexisting points” (Barad, 2007, p. 234) it becomes possible to pay attention differently to settler and colonial relations in order to do the work of politicising, unsettling and shaping this research site (Nxumalo & Cedillo, 2017, p. 99). I specifically focus on settler and colonial relations and trouble these relations as histories as they are retold and rewritten always with different and difficult implications, specifically in *this* South African context. The personal and political, affects every aspect of child, childhood and in the context of this research, schooling. Much of Chapter 1 traced deep political connections and dis/connections to childhood in South Africa, and this chapter continues those tracings with the land of the school, the more-than-human of the research site.

Land as the more-than-human geopolitically, historically, environmentally and philosophically is important to the worlding process of this thesis. Memories are not located only *in* the human but are material reconfigurings of the world (Barad, 2017a). Land as not simply an empty landscape of this research has implications for possible histories and futures. The Apartheid separation ‘from’ but entanglement ‘with’ is very clearly implicated with all the land in South Africa and so how this land enacts those separations and entanglements for Philosophy with Children, at this specific school, the research site, will be the focus of this chapter.

Attention will be drawn to the land the school exists on as not merely a stage, a platform or simply as land to be named, that has been given ownership of. These are acts of continued erasure. Rather, the work in this chapter is about tracing the entanglements of the absences and presences for these are always changing. The questions that can be asked with the land as part of an enquiry makes further questioning possible. These further questions make opportunities available to be response-able to the multiple answers that are offered. Haraway (2016, p. 28) suggests that “response-ability is about both absence and presence, killing and nurturing, living and dying—and remembering who lives and who dies...”

This will be a re-telling of the story not just of the land, but with the land, for it is alive and lively, dead and dying all at the same time. The colonial practices related to land ownership, are not in the past, but remain in its becoming. The way land was ‘used’ during Apartheid as a

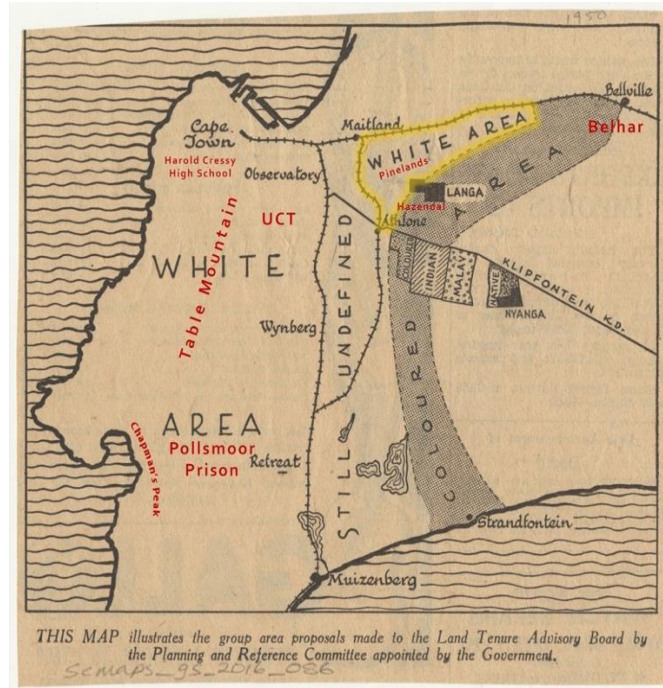
form of violence to construct the boundaries of exclusion, is still present. This is a re-storying of the land and 'its' becoming with the story of the school as the research site.

### 2.1.1 Re-turning to the map of the land

We re-turn to Figure 1.1, the map from Chapter 1 which showed some of my movements as a child. In this Chapter it is named Figure 2.1, below. The area enveloped by the yellow highlighter is Pinelands which is bordered by 2 railway lines and one road. Pinelands is important because this is the chapter where the school, the research site, and its geopolitical topology is diffracted through. The railway lines which looked like a zip in Chapter 1, easily separate/d some parts of Cape Town from other parts based on race, now they resemble the stitches applied to a wound on the skin. The stitches create more wounds as they close the original wound. The stitches also leave their own set of scars. Such is the irony that the wound could not heal without the additional wounds that become scars. Barad (2017) suggests that "landscapes are not stages, containers, or mere environments for human and nonhuman actors. Landscape is not merely visually akin to a body; it is the skin of the earth" (p. 83). The dotted line indicates a road which creates the other side of the in/visible border. The skin of human beings in South Africa determined their racial categorization, during Apartheid and the subsequent scars. How does the skin of the earth re-member the violences that create/d its scars?

**Figure 2.1**

*The land of the research site: Pinelands enveloped in yellow*



This work of tracing the map is guided by a desiring (Kuby, 2017, p. 2) to understand the land more than is necessary and more than usual in research about child and schooling. This chapter traces some of the multispecies encounters of and with the land as research site and recognises the challenging colonial, Apartheid, Indigenous and environmental legacies that have been and continue to be and will still be inherited (Nxumalo, 2019, p. 59). The multispecies encounters cannot be exhaustively traced, and are always partial and endless, undone and to be done, found and to be found, because of multiple temporalities (see also Chapter 1).

Kuby (2017) argues that, “literacy desiring, building off of Deleuzian notions of desire, explores the literacy processes of multimodal artefacts fluidly becoming, sometimes unintentionally, in rhizomatic ways, through intra-actions of humans and nonhumans (e.g. time, space, materials, nature, environment)” (p.2). Thinking with Kuby, I can imagine my writing as ‘literacy desiring’: the words and sentences intra-act with different times, spaces, material, nature and the environment and the land of the research site in its becoming. This chapter is a thinking with the land, making kin with the land, with which the school is

entangled. Karen Barad's concepts of the void-as-full and not empty (2017a, p. 56), and spatial diffraction are adopted as methodology (2017a, pp. 66-67).

## 2.2 Why this land?

On 19 April 1990, the Group Areas Act in South Africa is<sup>26</sup> repealed. This means that people assigned to different race groups by the Apartheid government policies in South Africa can now legally live where they choose without racial restrictions, from this date. This legislation, however, does not translate into people actually being able to move into areas previously prohibited to them. My parents make the decision in 1995 for us to move from Belhar<sup>27</sup> to Pinelands, a suburb about 25 kilometres away. After complex, difficult and often painful decisions about selling our home in Belhar and buying a new home in Pinelands, we move in 1996. This move brings us closer to UCT where my sister and I are both studying at the time

Because of the Group Areas Act the homes in some areas like District Six where my mother's family were forcibly removed from, were completely razed to the ground. In some areas people were forced out of their homes to live in other neighbourhoods and would drive past the home they could no longer live in, but could see the people classified as white, who were allowed to live there, enjoying their homes. Siona O'Connell in her 2019 book, *Impossible return: Cape Town's forced removals*, works with photographs taken by South African photographer David Brown in the 1960's to tell the story. He had photographed the residents before they were forcibly removed from Harfield Village, a suburb of Cape Town. O'Connell (2012, pp.198-199) comments in her PhD thesis that, "the moment of eviction is not bound by temporality. That specific moment of anger, shame, injury and torment is relived time and again."

The move to Pinelands would also facilitate my introduction to the school which is the research site of this project. The school has been a significant part of my life since January 1997. I started there doing two weeks observation of a classroom as a requirement for the Higher Diploma in Education Post-graduate Primary at UCT. The school I did my observation at, in January 1997 and where I spent one month on Teaching Practice, later in 1997, would

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<sup>26</sup> In some sections of the thesis I use the present tense as a methodological point. I draw inspiration from Kyoko Hayashi. Eike Otake writes in the introduction to *From Trinity to Trinity*, "Hayashi's narration does not maintain a linear structure. In her stories, past and present are not only related, they are intricately united" (Hayashi, 2010, pp. xx-xxi).

<sup>27</sup> See Figure 1.9 in Chapter 1.

become the school I started my career in as a teacher. In 2016, after a 19 year association with the school (with time spent teaching in the USA, Johannesburg and at home being a mother to my two children in between) it would become the research site for my PhD. The school is on the land that is currently known as Pinelands.

Pinelands is an unusual suburb in Cape Town, during Apartheid and post-Apartheid even as a well-resourced white suburb. One of the reasons is that Pinelands was modelled on a Garden City used outside London in the United Kingdom in the late 1890's (Cuthbertson, 1979, p.5). This is a colonial legacy, reinforced during and post-Apartheid. Another reason is its location, which is not along the mountain or ocean as most other white suburbs, but essentially it is on what is called the Cape Flats. Usually referring to the flat (barren) land which is the home of the large majority of coloured and black people residing in Cape Town. The overwhelming presence of the pine trees, planted in 1887, give the suburb the feeling of being in a transplanted forest (Cuthbertson, 1979, p. 4). Pine trees are not indigenous to Cape Town so the presence as strange and exotic remains obvious. This forest planting decimated the indigenous eco-system including the animals, insects, trees, bushes, flora and fauna that was already existing on the land now called Pinelands. There will be more on the pine trees later in this chapter.

The Group Areas act worked in an insidious way, the cruelty of the Apartheid system meant that the *land* was used to create the boundaries demarcating who and what could live, walk, work and be in certain areas. Pinelands as a suburb is “a direct result of race-based and colonial planning” (Motala, 2020, p. 52). These decisions made by the humans in charge, ‘about’ and ‘for’ the land had countless consequences. It affected where people could be born and where they could die and be buried. Where plants could continue living and continue dying. Where trees uprooted from Europe could be re-planted to live and die. Many different plants and trees were introduced and this created shifting ecosystems which needed to adapt or perish. New ecosystems developed for the animals and insects which lived in the trees and on, with and under the land. In Pinelands during the period governed by Apartheid restrictions, people, classified as white could live there, work elsewhere and return to their homes at any time – they were free to come and go as they pleased. During Apartheid, the homes in the suburb did not need fences to keep anyone in, or safe or show anyone who did not belong they could not come in. Because of the Group Areas Act, people who were categorised as racially other than who could be in that suburb were subject to questioning and removal by the police. For example in Pinelands, a white resident could complain to the police about anyone

other than someone racialised as white being in the suburb. This severely restricted the freedom of movement for people racialised as black or coloured and made movement through these suburbs, even if they were working there scary and dangerous<sup>28</sup>. Suburbs demarcated for white people, during Apartheid used the markings of the land to restrict movement for some and provide freedom for others. Pinelands as a suburb demarcated for white people during Apartheid and post-Apartheid enacts “the violence of the original colonial and Apartheid racialisation of the land” (Motala, 2020, p. 52).

The colonised land, the railway lines, the Apartheid laws, the roads, pine trees, ability to travel, restrictions of freedom of movement and the Group Areas Act are some of the hauntings we will turn towards and not away from in this research. They form part of the layers of complexity in each of the community of philosophical enquiries because they are there and not there. We do not turn away from the hauntings but engage with and through the entanglements. Barad (2017c, p. G107) suggests “hauntings are not immaterial, they are an ineliminable feature of existing material conditions.” These material conditions form part of the entanglements that are relevant to this research which are partially traced through multidirectional and multispecies relations.

## 2.3 Names and re-naming practices

Regulations and policies have understandably guided my research journey, at times in unpredictable and puzzling ways. In order to be allowed to conduct research at a South African government primary school I had to obtain permission from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED). My research site functions under their authority. According to the Directorate of Research at the WCED, “[p]rincipals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.”<sup>29</sup> The way schools are meant here is as material-discursive. ‘Schools’ meant in its materiality which cannot be separated from the discursive (Barad, 2007, pp.151-153).

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<sup>28</sup> Telephonic discussion with my uncle Ronald Abrahams, in 2018, who told me of his experiences during Apartheid and how he was fearful of walking through Pinelands after dark to the train station after a day at work at the factory where he worked in Ndabeni, a neighbouring area.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix 1 for the letter from the Directorate of the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

In mainstream research practices, schools which are research sites are re-named using pseudonyms because of the ethics clearance requirements. These pseudonyms are used to give the impression that this anonymity has the power to protect the confidentiality of the humans: adults and children and the 'school' associated with that site. This fulfils the logic of the Newtonian void – that the name is a placeholder, that it too is empty and therefore replaceable and interchangeable with any other name. I faced a dilemma, needing to invent a pseudonym for the school, which is the research site, which is situated on *land* which does *not* need a pseudonym according to the ethical guidelines provided by the WCED. I decided on Oakwood Primary as the pseudonym for the school, or OP hereafter.

A school named on land, swallows up the land and reduces its functioning to the surface on which the human bodies function on it. A school then becomes a thing that can be observed and described in terms of its role in the service of the humans. For example how the building as a place and space is where the learning happens. As if the boundary of a school fence demarcates a place of educational significance - but this is usually only attributed to the humans (and mainly the adult humans). In chapter 3, I theorise what a school is when it is not mainly about the humans.

The fact that the land does not need a pseudonym for ethics clearance speaks to the negation of 'the' land as important in the research about a 'school'. Nxumalo (2019) argues that the land of the research site should not just be seen as a "backdrop for children's learning" (p. 7). The land of the research site is deeply entangled with the research practices and must be paid attention to. In this posthumanist research, the land takes on a focal role and is considered crucial for its contribution to data creation. Its particularity and materiality matters. It is assumed that the research project would not be possible without paying attention to this specific land. The land is significant. I want to imagine and become curious about what would be possible if attention was more carefully paid to the land as educationally, historically, philosophically, scientifically and geo-politically, significant for schools. Land in relation to school, to the humans, more-than-humans, the histories past and present, and still to be re-made.

This land is named Pinelands. I felt a desire to trace the naming processes that had taken place for this place to become Pinelands in 1921. It was named Pinelands after the pine trees. Researching why this land is called Pinelands takes me on a convoluted, complex journey.

The knowledge creation I am engaged with/in through the histories encountered is a *worlding* process. I need to defamiliarize myself with the ways histories have been told, taught, and emerge myself in a "...worlding time, not container time, entangled times of past/present/yet to come" (Haraway, 2016, p.11). Worlding disrupts ways of human-centred being and knowing. I notice through my research, not unexpectedly, that the stories of this land are written by men, about men and for men. These men are also white. The language used in these old reports and singular species histories is of conquest and violence. I pay attention to the affect the racialized and gendered violences being performed have on me as part of this entanglement. Braidotti (2013, p. 26) painfully reminds us that the male is the "universalized format of humanity." This male is also white, European, and able-bodied (Braidotti, 2013, p. 24). Canella and Viruru (2004, p. 21) argue that "the logic of Enlightenment/modernism that has been forced on the colonized is a linear, male constructed form of reason and hierarchical power that reinforces the notion that one group is superior to another."

Male, white, able-bodied. Critical posthumanism disrupts the implicit power producing binaries, with the dominant binary on the left and the less powerful on the right of the forward slash: male/female, white/black, able/disabled, human/more-than-human. Barad (2007, p. 136) argues that posthumanism is "not calibrated to the human, on the contrary it is about taking issue with human exceptionalism while being accountable for the role we play in the differential constitution and the differential positioning of the human among other creatures (both living and non-living)." If posthumanism is not calibrated to the human, then it not only disrupts positioning the human as white, male, and able-bodied, but at the very same time also as black, female and disabled. The reason for this is that posthumanism is not about identity, but difference. The calling into question of human exceptionalism is important because it diminishes all else that the world is in its becoming. "The world and its possibilities for becoming are remade with each moment (Barad, 2007, p. 396). Critical posthumanism calls on us to decenter "...human concepts, human practices, human knowledge..." (Barad, 2007, p. 334) which then creates opportunities to think about the more- than- human differently. I would add that the human does not automatically include child as theorised in the introduction chapter, and so contesting human as a neutral category is important (Braidotti, 2018, p. 5).

In order to understand Pinelands, in its specificity, and the land of the school, it becomes necessary to carefully navigate some of the histories, always acknowledging how partial they are. It is also necessary to explode the idea of what land is, as if it is 'only' soil, mountains and

rocks. What about the animals, minute species, the plant life, the living and dying that has occurred for millions of years through these ongoing multispecies relations. The plagues, the pollution, and wars<sup>30</sup> that have been fought in and on, and because of this land. It will require a multispecies storytelling which Haraway (2016, p. 10) suggests “is about recuperation in complex histories that are as full of dying as living, as full of endings, even genocides, as beginnings.” These are the traces I tunnel through and explore in the next section of this chapter.

## 2.4 Multispecies stories to come

I continue to trace the materiality of the land as a ‘doing’ with words / numbers / playdough / sand / concepts / wool / Covid-19 hand sanitiser. See Figure 2.2. below.

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<sup>30</sup> Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem *Dirge of the Dead Sisters (for the nurses who died in the South African war)* in 1902. Some of these British nurses were stationed at Uitvlugt which became known as Pinelands.

**Figure 2.2**

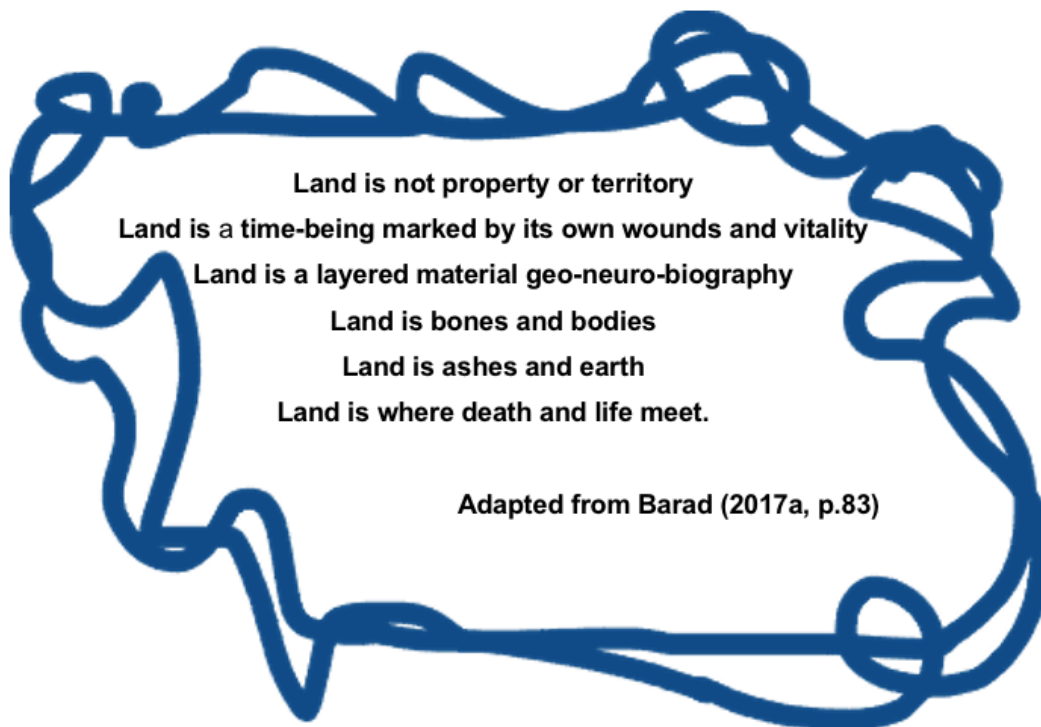
*Tracing some of the multispecies stories to come*



The words and the numbers from this chapter find their way out of the koki (marker) onto the small pieces of cardboard. I use some playdough I have made for a Philosophy with Children workshop and I mix it with sand from my garden, outside. The texture becomes rough and smooth, the flour, sand, oil, food colouring all encountering new relations, the physics experiment readjusts to new compounds and coalescences. I pick up the wool I am crocheting with and the striation of colours play with the brownness of the mahogany dining room table, allowing new questions to emerge. These rich colours disrupt the sharp edges of each uniform white rectangle. This is the time of Covid, a new awakening to the pandemic, so the small bottle of hand sanitizer does the work of marking the chronological date with this land. I wonder, how can I offer some ways to justly honour the land of the research site as the school exists with/in the memories, the hauntings, and the liveliness of the land? I think with Barad

(2017a, p. 83) who offers a revelatory methodological starting point, which is not at the beginning, but a re-turning to a middle and an end. “Land is not a property or territory, it is a time-being marked by its own wounds and vitality, a layered material geo-neuro-biography of bones and bodies, ashes, and earth where death and life meet” (Barad, 2017a, p. 83).

As I read this quote over and over again, I re-write it using land to start each sentence. It becomes a form of poetry. It arrests my thinking-as-usual about land.



## 2.5 The land is a constellation

When we are staring at a constellation, we are witnessing multiple different pasts in the present, some more distant than others. Constellations are then images of a specific array of past events a configuration of multiple temporalities, a constellation in being.

Barad, 2017b, p. 34.

Instead of looking 'up' at the stars we could look 'down' at the earth and then trace the entanglements and multiple temporalities of past, present and future in order to better know the land also as a constellation.

The suburb of Pinelands, where the research site is situated, is about 25 kilometres away from Chapman's Peak Drive on the Atlantic coastline which I refer to because of its geo-political and historical significance. It is one of Cape Town's popular tourist attractions due to the beauty of the rugged coastline and the closeness of the road with the mountain and sea. The road nestles between the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the stone of Table Mountain. (See Figure 2.3, where Chapman's Peak is marked in red). McCarthy and Rubige (2005, p. 190) write "[t]he sedimentary rocks that form Table Mountain, which are part of the Cape Supergroup sequence, were deposited in the Agulhas Sea between 500 and 460 million years ago." In Figure 2.3, the underlying granite rocks, closer to the ocean, are well exposed. The difference between the sedimentary rocks and the granite rocks are clear in the photograph below in Figure 2.3. The suburb of Pinelands exists alongside layers of rock, soil, and earth millions of years old, which were established in the sea, and the evolution of reptiles and mammals can be recorded by the traces they have left behind. The particular argument being put forward here is that the school as a research site is not just a school - housing - children where 'teaching and learning' takes place. This land is dead *and* alive with hauntings of sea life, sands, rocks, mountain ranges, continents now adrift.

**Figure 2.3**

*Chapman's Peak Drive*



Martinvl (2015). [Chapman's Peak Drive, a scenic road between Cape Town and Hout Bay carved out of the cliff-face between Chapman's Peak on the Cape Peninsula and the Atlantic Ocean]. [Photograph]. Creative Commons.

These material forces help to trace the entanglements of the research site, rather than ignoring them just because they are currently not visible to the human eye. Humans access the world through our senses but at times perhaps choosing not to sense what is not 'there'. It is only when the more-than-human is reduced to its usefulness for humans that we encounter the void. I diffract with Barad (2017c) and the way she theorises the void as it helps to think through the void in a way that is of great philosophical and practical significance:

The fact that the void is not empty, mere lack or absence, matters.  
The question of absence is as political as that of presence. When has absence ever been an absolute givenness? Is it not always a question of what is seen, acknowledged, and counted as present, and for whom?

(p. G113)

Humans sometimes get stuck on what is visible, but forget about what has been built upon, grassed over, covered up, and fenced in. Often what is 'built' is made in the name of progress. So, the earth has to whisper, to be heard and ghosts are forced to haunt and yet we humans refuse to acknowledge these 'other' beautiful presences. "Forgetting, in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others. Yet ghosts remind us. Ghosts point to our forgetting, showing us how living landscapes are imbued with earlier tracks and traces" (Gan et al., 2017, p. G6).

The task is therefore not to forget what is built – in this case the school – but also to trace what was erased. Kuby and Rowsell (2017, p. 292) remind us that "spaces, contexts, locations and ways of being within these" are always changing and open to reconfiguring. What are the ghosts with/in the land trying to remind and bring back to life, where are these tracks and traces? The ghosts referred to are not only human ones, but also ghosts of the land, animals and the more-than-human in all its multispecies configurations. The land like the sky hosts a "configuration of multiple temporalities" (Barad, 2017b, p. 34). The ghosts can remind us that this is a living and dying landscape. The land is a constellation.

My imagination about the land is enhanced by cognition and affect and not limited by human optics. When I look at the land that I can see but I also have come to know from my own schooling, history books, the internet, and magical stories that the earth literally broke apart. Africa was once part of the supercontinent, Gondwana. Those tremors, the memory of the land and the noise and the vibrations cannot be reduced to a human experience of tectonic plates shifting and creating earthquakes. Barad (2014) reminds us that "sedimenting does not entail closure, mountain ranges in their liveliness attest to this fact" (p. 168). The earth and all in the cosmos is open to what it is becoming. I use this notion of time, temporalities, ghosts, being and becoming to tell multispecies stories. In telling these stories, I disrupt the idea that history is closed or over and only about humans. Let's begin to trace a multispecies story, with a Stone Pine tree on the research site.

## 2.6 Disrupting colonial histories in the shade of a Stone pine tree

My imagination about this land as the more-than-human is enhanced by cognition and affect and not limited by human optics. When I look at the land that I can see but I also have come to

know from my own schooling, teaching, history books, the internet, and the magical stories that the earth literally broke apart. Africa was once part of the supercontinent, Gondwana. Those tremors, the memory of the land and the noise and the vibrations cannot be reduced to a human experience of tectonic plates shifting and creating earthquakes. Barad (2014) reminds us that “sedimenting does not entail closure, mountain ranges in their liveliness attest to this fact” (p. 168). The earth and all in the cosmos is open to what it is becoming. I use this notion of time, temporalities, ghosts, being and becoming to tell multispecies stories. This kind of storytelling works to disrupt the ideas that history is closed or over and only about certain humans.

These stories as re-storying also work as a response to a sub-question of this research. *How can the community of philosophical enquiry become re-configured as a posthuman pedagogy and a post - qualitative research methodology by including the more-than-human?* In this specific case, the land is the more-than-human that we turn our attention to. This land of this research site is being troubled as a being in a particular time and taking up particular space. Let's begin to trace a multispecies story through a Stone Pine tree on the research site to open up this enquiry even further. A hand drawn<sup>31</sup> image, see Figure 2.4 , digitally diffracted through a photograph of a Stone pine tree on the school grounds will guide this enquiry.

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<sup>31</sup> Brandan Reynolds drew the specific individual images that I requested and then created the digital diffractive image with the photograph of the Stone pine, that I had taken.

**Figure 2.4**

*Stone pine tree at the research site*



*Digital image created by Brandan Reynolds and Rose-Anne Reynolds*

Pinelands 2019. The Stone pine tree on the school grounds (the research site) is enormous - it stretches deep into the sky. Trees and green grass in abundance only occur in some South African schools and are markers of socio-economic status. They mark the relative wealth of the specific community in one of the most unequal countries in the world. South Africa is a country where running water and sanitation cannot be taken for granted at schools as they do not exist as a given for millions of children (Louton et.al, 2015). In South Africa, spending money on watering a lawn and a garden filled with trees to keep it green is a privilege (and waste of potable water) reserved for the wealthy. The green water storage tanks (Figure 2.4)

that can be seen behind the tree are a reminder of the severe drought experienced in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape province from 2015 - 2018. The 5000 litre tanks collect and conserve rainwater, which can be used to water the plants and grass at the school. The tanks also serve as a reminder about responses to climate change and being responsible to the changing climate of the earth.

This Stone pine is not here by accident, but by a very specific colonial design. Tens of thousands of Stone pine trees were planted as a forest reserve by the British in the area now known as Pinelands in the late 1800's (Cuthbertson, 1979, p. 6). This particular tree is likely to be a descendent of the original forest. The original forest which was planted in 1887 with a vision to cover the entire area, which is now called Pinelands. The tree is not innocent in the sense that it is political, and is a phenomenon, not just an object in the world, and so we ask how do we interrupt these colonial histories? We think with the entangled pasts and how the co-habiting with more-than-humans in a multi-species world might look (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015). What hauntings does this tree bring into this space of the school that are ignored or not paid attention to? The tree and its ancestors have been witnesses to the establishment of Ndabeni, the area neighboring Pinelands. This was the only place that black men who had been brought into the city as labourers, could live as part of the "Cape of Good Hope's governmental strategy for rural, migrant labour control" (Coetzer, 2009, p. 2). The tented roofs in the image in Figure 2.4 attest to the brutal colonial policies endured by the black people working in Cape Town who were moved out of the city even more quickly, to Ndabeni when the bubonic plague started in 1901. This was pre-apartheid, but black African people could not live anywhere else in the Cape, except in Ndabeni.

The tree drinks up the water, nutrients and poisons from deep in the earth that once ran through Ndabeni. Water used for ablutions, water used for washing wounds, drinking, cooking water and what may have been used to grow vegetables or fruit. Water used to wash and then bury the dead. The water from tears wept into the earth. These are the ghosts and hauntings that reside above and below the ground. Haraway (2016) reminds us that "neither the capacity nor the practice of mourning is a human speciality" ( p. 38). The expanding ecosystem underneath the earth moves in ways we cannot or choose not to recognise above the ground, connecting, entangling, and engaging in response-ability to the other, made other. This is a commitment to "tracing the entangled violences of colonialism, racism and militarism" (Barad, 2017 a, p. 75).

The drawing of the man in Figure 2.4 is King Langalibalele who was king of the Amahlubi tribe. He led a rebellion against the British in 1873 and after his capture, trial and imprisonment on Robben Island, was sent to Ndabeni. He was also “conscripted and was one of the labourers who planted the stone pine trees at Uitvlugt where Ndabeni was established” (Coetzer, 2009, p. 7). From August 1875, the farm Uitvlugt was used by the British Authorities to detain Langalibalele. He was held as a prisoner for 12 years. Haraway (2016) reminds us that, “without sustained remembrance we cannot learn to live with ghosts and so cannot think ( p. 39).

This stone pine tree is not just about being here and now, but ghosts haunt from pasts and futures and it is difficult to think with the tree about what justice needs to be done, to include the tree as a significant part of the pedagogical process at this school. As already a part of the complex eco-system of the school. This school is filled with wooden desks, work benches, reams and reams of paper and posters. Multiple products made from trees. Most schools are full of wood. How do we draw attention to these entanglements?

The half-eaten pinecone lying on the ground in front of the tree in Figure 2.4 traces squirrel-tree relationality. A family of ducks who live (and die) at the school sometimes sit under the tree or peck in the grass searching for food. The birds, rats, and mites nibble on the food left behind deliberately, and the food left behind unwillingly. These animals and all the animals we cannot see are there. Caring about them and the ants who are there when we are not and when we are matters. “As humans reshape the landscape, we forget what was there before” (Gan et.al., 2017, p. G6). I think of how the green grass has been reshaped by ground staff at the school, for the children, into cricket pitches, soccer fields or tarred over for netball courts. So too these actions mimic the acts of the settler colonisers who demanded that forests be planted over the San and Khoi land, disregarding the animals, plants and trees. Disregarding all who were born and died there and are still living and dying. We do this for the children at the school, in the name of progress and much more sinister motives, for example to win during sporting competitions.

Returning to this image, I am drawn to the sand, sand from nearly 500million years ago, indicating a well-worn path to the school gate about four metres away. Besides the sign with the name of the school, the fence and gate demarcate this space as a school. The fence

serves to keep the children and staff in, and safe, and others without permission to be there, out. In South Africa the fence is also a response to crime in the country, which schools are not exempt from. The dominant message of this school fence is that some are allowed in and others not. It is supposed to suggest safety and protection. Fences can also appear as “signifiers of colonial history, of powerful and contradictory lines of ownership...inclusion and exclusion” (Power & Somerville, 2015, p. 63). The fence does not create a boundary for the tree above the ground. This is only a human boundary, again showing who matters most, the humans in this space, and some more than others. The tree is not alongside the fence, and if it had been the lower branches would most likely have been removed to stop people from using the tree to scale the fence. This Pine tree reaches metres and metres above the fence and its branches and leaves reach even farther above it. The fence also cannot make a boundary below the ground, that affects the tiny bones of moles, the gases, the decomposing and growing happening under the ground where vast networks of pipes, and waterways, wires and fibre connect the world with WIFI. We think of the insecticides that seep slowly into the ground that keep the lawn weed free but kill much more than the weeds. The boundary of the fence remains on the surface of the earth, on the land, the skin of the earth (Barad, 2017a, p. 83). The other boundaries the fence is entangled with are not skin-deep.

The well-worn path, that is, the absence of green grass and the presence of sand (see the orange arrow in Figure 2.4) is a moving arrow that shows the path to a school gate, the opening and closing of the fence which makes it possible for humans and some more-than-humans to move in and out of the school. Smaller more-than-humans are not constrained by the gate, they go through, around, above, below. Matters of scale certainly matter in terms of inclusion and exclusion. In the image in Figure 2.4, the green grass is visible and then an area with the sand showing through is evident. Sedimented in the sand are the (webbed) foot and paw steps that have walked and waddled that path, with only some of the marks visible to the human eye, but nevertheless present. Some of these feet moved in and out of the school gate, past the tree for access to and from the school.

How does tree-child-lichen-bark-sun-shade-planets-photosynthesis-colonisation-planting-underground networks come into being through their relationality? On Athletic days parents, grandparents, children migrate into the shade of the tree. What about the ghosts of children long gone, children who died and were buried, children that were never born, and other animals, insects, trees, play dates that never materialised, games that had to come to an end

and animal-child-plant relations disrupted by the ringing of a bell. The intra-generational nature of the relations between the children at the school and this old tree, are a matter of scale. The fence around the school and the presence of the houses probably meant the family members and closest friends of this tree, the other stone pines planted as a forest in 1887 (Cuthbertson, 1979, p. 4) were cut down to make way for the humans, when the dream of the British colonisers to have a forest like the ones in Europe did not materialise because of the shifting sandy soil of this land. At the time of writing this chapter, the world is experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic with many countries in various stages of so-called 'lockdown', which is an attempt to stop infections spreading between humans. The result of the restriction of human movement on earth is affecting seismic activity, in a way that the Earth's crust is moving a little less<sup>32</sup>. I wonder what questions the tree would ask?

## 2.7 Diffracting through colonial histories

This chapter shows the difference it makes when memory is understood as not located *in* the human. The method of re-membering what it means and how it works for the school profoundly affects the learning, teaching, doing and being in those places and spaces. The work of this chapter has been to pay attention to the land and to trace specific entanglements of the phenomenon of the school. The school is not just an object in space and time, but also always political. This chapter stays with the trouble of the land of the school, the 'research site', and asks questions about land as familiar, contestable, colonised, vibrant, problematic and political. The inclusion of the land as more than merely landscape is an enactment of doing justice to the more-than-human and brings to the fore matters of scale. Scale profoundly matters when tracing who, or what, is (and is not) fenced in. So what difference does this chapter make in terms of reconfiguring the community of enquiry? The pedagogy of Philosophy with Children already intra-acts with the land as a form of worlding. Taking account of matters of scale disrupts human-centred ways of being, knowing and mourning and reconfigures the community of philosophical enquiry. The hauntings of the land offer wisdom about the multidirectional and multispecies relations that matter and should not be ignored.

In Chapter 3, we continue with the work of the more-than-human and ask what is a school when the more-than-human is included in the enquiry?

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<sup>32</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/04/02/world/coronavirus-earth-seismic-noise-scn-trnd/index.html>

# 3. What is a school?

## 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the question ‘What is a school, if the humans are not at the centre of the conversation?’ is enquired into. I do not ask the question to find out what a school is and what it is not. I do not want to pin down the essence of a school in terms of its definition, as if it can be contained in one place or at one time. Rather, I ask this question to continue begin an enquiry because school can only exist in relation to something else. Often a question associated with school is: what does it mean to know and who does the knowing?

An image created for this chapter in 2020 and the tapestry created for the research site in 1998 are diffracted through the question ‘What is a school?’ This question generates other questions. There is a focus in this chapter on continuities, connections and commitments, not radical separations (Barad, 2010, p. 266). In Chapter 2 some of the multispecies encounters of the land as research site were traced and this chapter continues that tracing into the school as research site. The questions and the images are equally important and are read through and with each other to trace the colonial/Indigenous/Apartheid/’post’-Apartheid/pre-Covid/ Covid<sup>33</sup> relations. These tracings form part of the story, which is not a story, but rather “...a complex, tightly knit tissue of activities and events that have no single explanation, as in life” (Minh-ha, 1999, p. 231). The questions and the images create a path for more questions to follow, like ants walking in a line, but walking out of human sight. The question which underpins this research is: How does critical posthumanism reconfigure Philosophy with Children in a government primary school in South Africa?

My children were much younger when I started my PhD and so it has been a part of their lives for the last 5 years. At dinner one evening, in 2020, I asked my son, Kai (16 years old) and my daughter, Ella (12 years old) to think about what is a school? Kai attended the school which is the research site from 2010-2016 and Ella from 2014-2020.

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<sup>33</sup> “SARS-CoV-2 is the virus. COVID-19 is the disease that it causes” (Yong, 2020).

I ask Kai<sup>34</sup> if he will create an image, a drawing of what else is at this particular school, if we don't only think about the humans. I ask this question because I am struck by the "partial but exhaustive list" of all the others that make up a school besides humans (Snaza, et al., 2014, pp. 39-40). I have been reading the Snaza, et al., (2014) article entitled, *Towards a Posthumanist Education*, so I pass Ella my phone and she reads the opening paragraph and the list aloud:

Consciously or not, we educators and educational researchers are used to looking at schools as places where humans dwell together to learn what it means to be human and to accumulate the kinds of skills and habits required to participate in human societies as adults. This occurs in spite of the fact that schools are connected with the nonhuman world in so many explicit and implicit ways. For example, in addition to the many humans inhabiting various spaces and roles within schools, schools are also sites that contain: networks of wire and pipe linking the buildings' architecture to the subterranean infrastructures of cities and beyond that to the swirls of the oceans and global deposits of prehistoric dead organisms waiting to be mined and refined; dead nonhuman animals on plates in cafeterias, as well as on feet, human bodies, athletic equipment, and biology dissection trays; innumerable microorganisms, weeds, and insects colonizing every nook and cranny; pheromones and other less "natural" chemicals passing among hormone-addled adolescent humans and slightly less hormonal adults; and stockpiles of books, computer equipment, office supplies, light bulbs, cleaning chemicals, historical records, sporting equipment, and cooking utensils. This partial list should be enough to demonstrate that anthropocentrism puts us at the center of the universe and the center of the conversation when, in fact, we are not the center of the universe. Indeed, we should not be the center of conversation.

(Snaza et al., 2014, pp. 39-40)

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<sup>34</sup> Kai and Ella have agreed to have their real names used in this PhD.

During dinner we discuss the sights and smells of the research site. Ella says there is a lot of blood in the passages, Kai thinks there is more on the gravel quad than on the grass on the field. Injured, bleeding children are often led, helped by caring or curious peers down the long passage from outdoors to a room in the school that holds a limited, but treasured first aid kit. They both agree that vomit is something that occurs frequently at the school. Now there are not just fully formed words in the discussion but sounds mimicking their disgust “uuuughhhh, eeeeewwwww”, even closing of noses as if the smell has suddenly rendered itself in their noses. They talk about vomit for a long time. Ella talks about the time she saw bright pink vomit. Kai remembers a friend vomiting after getting off a long bus ride after a school camp. He says the nikkaks are now on the pavement. We all laugh, nikkaks are a South African crisp, they are bright orange. The text on the packaging assures parents and children alike that no tartrazine has been added. The colours of childhood are bright pink and orange so far. I groan feeling queasy. We are still eating dinner. Kai and Ella are laughing out loud. I ask about the smells - where do the smells go? My husband asks about the noise and where do sounds go? Kai comments on the bricks in the school and says he has always been fascinated by them. We move ‘under the ground’ to give him some more ideas about what else could be there. We have so many ideas and speak them as if they will magically appear through his fingers when he draws. I give him a couple of days to work on the image. I write some more ideas on small pieces of paper. The list keeps growing. Kai goes through a couple of rough drafts and then gives me the final drawing, see Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1**

*Kai's drawing of the more-than-human that is the school, April 2020*



The image immediately makes me think of Loris Malaguzzi's poem titled *No way. The hundred is there* translated by Lella Gandini (Edwards, et al., 1998, p. 3). Children have a hundred languages and a hundred more, but adults steal ninety-nine and give the children one and tell them that:

*Reality and fantasy  
Science and imagination  
Sky and earth  
Reason and dream  
Are things  
That do not belong together*

But they do, they exist in every school in abundance, but are silenced, erased, avoided, ignored, not noticed. I had never really thought about everything that could be 'there', that is 'there', that will be 'there'. This is a partial image, only some entanglements emerge. Kai has drawn (and not drawn) and has and (has not) included relata that have emerged through specific intra-actions of this phenomenon - he is very much a part of the phenomenon. Kai as child, student, artist, knowing subject; made of stem cells, atoms, electrons, red blood cells, corpuscles, never-ending chemical reactions... to be known and and and.... Barad (2007, p. 139) explains that "relata do not pre-exist relations; rather relata-within-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions." All the more-than-human others in the image exist together at the same time, even when they are not being noticed by the humans. Barad (2007, p. 136) argues that "posthumanism doesn't presume the separateness of any-'thing,' let alone the alleged spatial, ontological, and epistemological distinction that sets humans apart."

I ask Kai what the small grey lines are on his drawing (see Figure 3.1), he says they are the ants. His use of the definite article 'the' makes me think. I imagine them here on this page too. I draw them walking from the image onto and into my writing and off the page. When they are off the page, I remind myself that they are still 'here'. Just because I cannot see them 'now' does not mean they are not 'here'. If I am here the ants are here. "Relations do not follow relata, but the other way around" (Barad, 2007, p. 136). The ants and the image, the school as a research site, me birthing two children who spent years having their brown skin flake off in microscopic segments and possibly land in the same passage in the school that the ants are living in, walking on, being bled on, the entanglements are there. It is real and unreal.

April 2020. South Africa is in a level 5 lockdown (the most restrictive) in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus which is sweeping across the globe affecting some humans more than others - especially those living in resource-constrained environments. Schools are closed but closed only for humans. It is clear they remain open, always already inhabited by the more-than-human. In this next section I discuss further, more-than-human connections at the research site, the school.

### 3.2 Noticing more-than-human connections

My interest in the Indigenous, colonial, Apartheid, post-Apartheid, post-colonial, relations of the school, and the research site guide me to now trace some of these relations that are always political.

Pinelands 1948. Oakwood Primary School<sup>35</sup> (as represented in Figure 3.1), opens to humans. It functions as a government primary school open only to children classified as white during Apartheid (1948-1990). When tracing the some of the colonial and Apartheid relations, one aspect of schooling flashes up, that is, only white children were allowed into the school. A black child would not have been allowed to enter the school gates. This is the brutal tiered system developed by the Apartheid government and the 15 separate education departments<sup>36</sup> which makes some 'more than' and others 'less' in the way they can be in the world. The (National Party) government spent a disproportionate amount of money on white children in state schools as compared to any other race group in state schools during Apartheid. "In 1982-3 the Apartheid government spends R1211.00 annually on each white pupil, R711.00 per Indian pupil, R498.00 on a coloured pupil and R146.00 on an African (black) pupil" (Christie, 2009, p.108). The school in my research in 1948 is located in an area demarcated as a white area, by the Group Areas Act<sup>37</sup> (1966); (see Chapter 1). As explained earlier, this Act enforced segregation by assigning geographical living and working areas to specific racial

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<sup>35</sup> Pseudonym as explained in Chapter 2

<sup>36</sup> The separate education departments are for different population registration groups and other divisions as well, for example according to language and the various homelands in South Africa during Apartheid. (Christie, 2009, p.139).

<sup>37</sup> The Group Areas Act No. 36 of 1966, "separated population categories by declaring certain areas African, coloured, Indian or white, and forcibly removing those who were occupying land or houses in the areas designated as white areas" (Bozalek, 2004, p. 82 ).

categories designated by Apartheid legislation and practices. The Act also restricted ownership and occupation of land to specific Apartheid racial groups.

As a child growing up during Apartheid (as described in Chapter 1) I am classified by the Apartheid government as coloured – this is a racial category, one of many, established by the National Party government. I add black South African as a political category. It rejects the notion of only being one thing. I disrupt the category as if being white, coloured or black is only one way of being in a world. “Anzaldúa<sup>38</sup> understood the material multiplicity of self, the way it is diffracted across spaces, times, realities, imaginaries” (Barad, 2014, p. 174). The white children at the school are not only white, they are white and every other colour they could be categorised. Not every child categorised as white can be essentialised as a white child for what would that be? The borderlands exist here too.

During Apartheid, if I were to trace the imprint of the footsteps outside the school in terms of scale: small ‘white’ child size footprints would be all over the school everywhere and there would be no ‘black’ child size footprints anywhere. The white adult size footprints outside the school leave deep impressions on the soil because they could linger, sink into the soil, they were meant to be there. The impressions of the black adult sized footprints occur outside the school with a lighter impression on the sand, not lingering on the ground, the soil, the land that they were not allowed to be on. When I explain the footprints: white and black, this is not meant symbolically. These two colours exist in relation to each other and during Apartheid and post – Apartheid. This phenomenon makes certain conditions possible, for thinking about the racialised other. These footprints, these impressions on the soil, in the sand, on the concrete are still there now, just because they are not visible to the human eye does not mean the land is not heavy with grief and joy, elation and suppression.

At the start of the National Party gaining power in South Africa in 1948, the all-white government immediately began enforcing existing policies of racial segregation under a system of Apartheid legislation. The children currently at the school in 2021 would have been a legislated impossibility 30 years ago, in 1990 as they would have been classified at birth by the Apartheid government as black, white, coloured or Indian. The past and future are intricately tied together in post-Apartheid South Africa, and the evidence of the legacy of Apartheid policies affects schools as an apparatus. Barad (2007, p. 218) explains that

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<sup>38</sup> Karen Barad diffracts with Gloria Anzaldúa’s writings.

“apparatuses must be understood as phenomena made up of specific intra-actions of humans and nonhumans where the differential constitution of the “human” (and its “others”) designates an emergent and ever changing phenomenon.” Apartheid is not past or even in a past. Apartheid government policies were only formally eradicated/abolished in 1990, thus from 1948-1990 the money spent on the infrastructure of the suburb and resources at the school, was provided by the Apartheid government, because the children and suburb were for those designated as white. In white schools like Oakwood Primary the infrastructure of the school was well-established and developed because “under the Apartheid system, patterns of inequality were entrenched” (Christie, 2009, p. 110). The patterns of inequality continue to play out in schools, more than 30 years after the ‘start of democracy’ in 1994.

Oakwood Primary unlike many other under-resourced schools (black, Indian and coloured schools) has a swimming pool, a school hall, corridors that connect the various parts of the school, a large school field and tennis courts. These were made possible because of the way funding for white children and their schooling was prioritised over children of other races during Apartheid. Oakwood Primary is considered to be a former Model-C<sup>39</sup> primary school in Cape Town, South Africa. Model-C schools were state-aided and additionally received funds from parents through school fees. School fees at former Model-C schools are relatively high and are used by the Governing Body of the school to employ additional staff and to pay for extra resources like grand pianos and maintenance of infrastructure.

The Apartheid-colonial relations show the anthropocentric focus on schooling in South Africa. Schools are for some humans, about some adult humans, but definitely not for the more-than-human. Snaza et al., (2014, p. 44) remind us that children become part of an “anthropological machine... where they learn quickly to be quiet, stand in line, and place their finger over their mouths<sup>40</sup> in a hallway – or they would be punished by having privileges taken away.”

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<sup>39</sup> Model C schools were schools that were state aided by the Department of Education and Culture Administration: House of Assembly prior to 1994. During Apartheid this was the department that provided education to children classified as white (Reynolds, 2013, p.41)

<sup>40</sup> This was my experience at school and is still prevalent in many schools in South Africa today.

I re-turn to the quote put forward by Snaza et al., (2014, p. 39) that I refer to at the start of this chapter to tell this second half of the story of the school...

“anthropocentrism puts us at the center of the universe and the center of the conversation when, in fact, we are not the center of the universe. Indeed, we should not be the center of conversation.”

The category more-than-human only exists in relation to human and some matter less than others. Relata (in this case) the broad concept ‘animals’, does not exist prior to relations in a phenomenon. The “ontological primitive” is the relation (Barad, 2007, p. 429). I enquire into ontological relationality while discussing how animals are the more-than-human in schools, specifically this school of the research site. When we consider what Snaza et al., (2014) suggest, that there are ongoing connections with the nonhuman world, I start thinking about the different kinds of animals inhabiting this school. In what follows I discuss animals as pets, products pests and prisoner/prizes in schools. If the ants could tell the story, what questions would we ask of them?

### 3.3 Animals in schools

#### 3.3.1 Animals as pets

Schools, the school grounds and buildings are generally built, managed and maintained with the security and comfort of the adult teachers and child(ren). These are the humans that belong in schools— again humans in this case are the relata that do not exist prior to the relation with the more-than-humans. Many different kinds of animals inhabit this specific school where some are more welcome than others. Some seem to belong whilst others like cockroaches, rats, SARS-CoV-2 and even lions and cheetahs do not belong. Tracy Young and Jane Bone (2020, p. 1384) argue that animals as nonhumans can be placed into three broad categories: “pet, pest and product”. These categories express the processes of “hierarchy and commodification.” Some animals that live (and sometimes die) at *this* school are considered as pets, for example, birds, hamsters, a family of Muscovy ducks and fish. Some of these pets have their movement controlled and curtailed as they live in cages, aviaries, an aquarium, hutches and ponds. The Muscovy ducks (Figure 3.2 below) have free

movement within the school being able to fly from place to place (their wings are not clipped), however other animals like the fish are confined to certain spaces such as the aquarium in the foyer of the school. All these places where they live and have their movement restricted to, are made by or for the humans at the school. These animals are colonised and enslaved in order to live as pets in this particular way at the school, dependent on the humans for safety, food and shelter (Young & Bone, 2020, p. 1392).

**Figure 3.2**

*Muscovy ducks and signed consent forms from the children and parents*



In this mini collage below there are three photographs. The photo with the grey rabbit shows the rabbit nibbling on food scraps of carrots that families have sent to the school from their homes, to feed the rabbits and other school pets. In the photo on the bottom left hand side is a

Muscovy duck and a duckling resting together. Roger<sup>41</sup>, a cat who is the pet of a neighbour of the school, is seen in the photograph on the right, on the first day of school in 2020. He is walking through the school hall during the school assembly. He spends most of his days at the school wandering around the different classrooms, through the indoor and outdoor spaces of the school. These animals fall into the human-made category of pets. I imagine that there would be collective outrage if anyone harmed these animals. No one would suggest dissecting them for educational purposes or cooking them to eat. The pets seem to exist in the service of the humans at the school, for pleasure, as companions and with less freedom than the adult humans but possibly more freedom than the child humans.

**Figure 3.3**

*School pets at the research site and a visiting pet cat, Roger*



The animals diffracted through each other in Figure 3.3 exist within the phenomenon of animals as pets for humans. These specific animals are the relata that do not exist prior to a

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<sup>41</sup> Pseudonym

set of relations between animals, children, school, animals in service of humans, animals as pets. A partial tracing of the entanglements in this phenomenon would include: vets, animal medical aid, the pet food industry, pet homes, toys, puppy schools, animal behaviourists, books, movies, apps, pet graveyards, photo shoots, legislation, trade of pets, pet care products including clothing, pet shows and pet tracking systems. Haraway (2008, p. 49) reminds us that “industrial pet food is a strong link in the multispecies chain of global factory farming.” We do not think about how the food humans create and distribute to feed pets, contributes to the mass killing of other animals. What I have highlighted above is that all these relations are enacted in the school; some are noticed and others, erased and avoided.

### 3.3.2 Animals as products

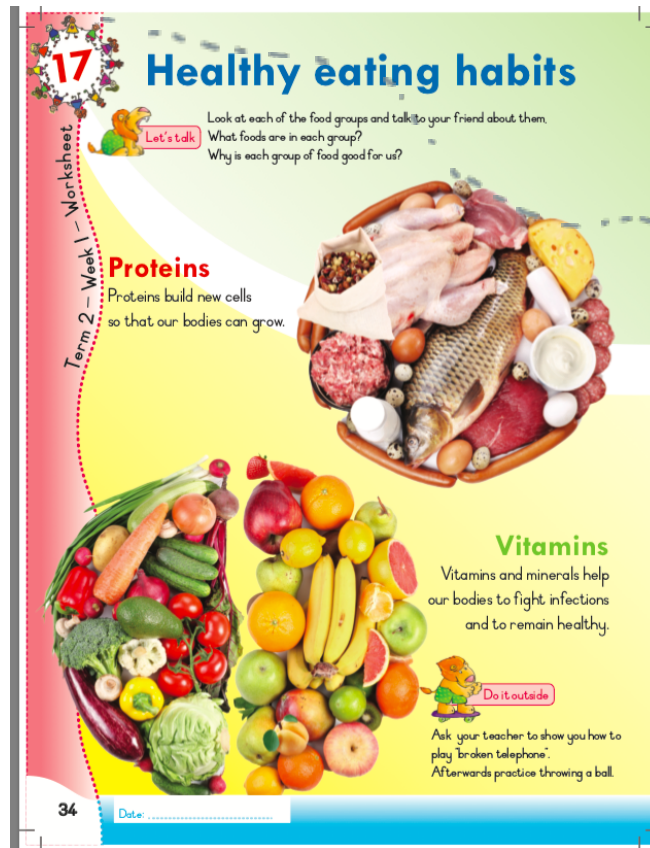
There are many ways that animals as products are present in schools in South Africa and at this research site. Animals are taught as products to be consumed or dissected in the service of Life Sciences education (Kavai, 2013). They are part of the pedagogy of practice for understanding animal bodies, life cycles and processes in Biology. “Education is always political as pedagogies, curricula, policy, and governance are formed by epistemologies of what we think we know, what is valued to pass onto future generations, and how this knowledge frames what is possible ” (Young & Bone, 2020, p. 1382). In a core subject like Life Skills in the South African Foundation Phase National Curriculum<sup>42</sup>, the activity about ‘Healthy eating habits’, does not trouble meat eating, but rather sets it up as a norm. See Figure 3.4 as an example of an activity from the Grade 3 workbook. This Department of Basic Education workbook is part of the National Curriculum for all children in South African government schools. Animals are considered food and meat products and are equated with proteins which support a healthy diet for humans. I wonder what the ants make of these human-made books and images of dead chicken and fish.

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<sup>42</sup> <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B58DNwxz7lqERlpDVTRENjV4ZG8/view>

**Figure 3.4**

*Dead animals in workbooks*



Animals as products at the research site may be present in the meat products on the children's lunches. For instance, this could include the biltong<sup>43</sup> suggested as a healthy snack and the hot dogs sold on Friday's as part of a charity tuck shop. Hot dogs are composed of animal meat by-products. In respect towards the Muslim population of children at the school, a decision was made years ago that all meat products sold at the school would be halal<sup>44</sup>. This strategy would make it possible for the Muslim children not to be excluded from eating the hotdogs at the school or even asking them to stand in separate queues. Animal products at schools constitute problematic relations which Young and Bone (2020, p. 1362) characterise

<sup>43</sup> Biltong in South Africa is a very popular dried and flavoured meat product similar to beef jerky found in the USA

<sup>44</sup> Halal is an Arabic word which refers to a food product which is permitted for consumption by Muslim people.

as the “war on animals” which is enabled at schools through curricula, unexamined practices and overriding norms about human exceptionalism.

### 3.3.3 Animals as pests

Rats are considered pests at schools and at this school. A way to control (kill) the rat population is to buy and place rat bait boxes around the school (Figure 3.5). There are also other animals who unexpectedly are lured into the bait boxes set for the rats and are killed. Pesticides like those used in rat bait boxes have consequences for entire ecologies. They help create boundaries between what is wanted and desired at a school and what needs to be eliminated and destroyed. We can trace an entanglement to child/animal relations which includes a multibillion dollar industry of chemical poisons specifically formulated to kill animals on behalf of children in schools. What about other insects killed by pesticides? See Figure 3.5 below for an example of a rat bait station at the research site. The red arrow points to the caution: CONTAINS RODENTICIDE / DO NOT TOUCH.

**Figure 3.5**

*Rat bait box at the research site*



The three animal categories of pet, product and pest are not neatly contained; rather I will suggest that they transgress into what is the borderland in animal/child relations in schools. I think with Anzaldúa (1987, p. 3) who suggests that “a borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.” If a Cheetah wandered onto the research site, it would be considered a predator (or pest) and treated as a danger, yet if it were seen at a National Park or a Cheetah outreach park only 30 kilometres away, it would be admired with awe. Even bees, essential to the very life of the planet, are insects that are sometimes seen as pests, to be feared at schools because some children may have an allergic reaction to them. Yet in other spaces and places and even in the textbooks the children are given, bees are recognised for the life-giving properties they provide planet earth.

#### 3.3.4 Animals as prisoners

What matters is marked off from that which is excluded from mattering but not once and for all. Intra-actions enact specific boundaries, marking the domains of interiority and exteriority, differentiation the intelligible from the unintelligible, the determinate from the indeterminate.

(Barad, 2007, p. 181)

**Figure 3.6**

*Stuffed ostrich in school*



I suggest and put forward a fourth category to Young and Bone's (2020) categorisation of animals, that of animals as prisoners in schools. The imprisonment comes into being in relation to the rest of the phenomena: school, room, cube, bird, animal, wings, dead, alive, child, silenced, muted, immovable, on display, available.

In 2018, during the course of my PhD research I visited a school in Denmark, as a participant at a Philosophy with Children conference. As part of a research project with the University of Southern Denmark we watch Philosophy with Children lessons taking place at local schools. As we enter one of the school buildings of a private school, we see many stuffed animals and

other strange things, but I specifically want to draw attention to a taxidermied ostrich that had been shipped to Denmark by the principal of the school, see Figure 3.6.

The ostrich is an ostrich and is not an ostrich, the boundaries of its ostrichness are stretched like the skin of the ostrich that was used to create this impression of an ostrich through the taxidermy process. This ostrich is considered dead, no longer able to fly away, kick with strong legs or bury its head in the sand when in danger, according to the idiom. So, the physical outer body is preserved, stuffed, held together as an object of perfection, yet imprisoned in a large glass cube. The decaying state is halted, it is not about discontinuity, but about interruption, by humans and chemicals which preserve it in its likeness. Chemicals and other products and materials assist in this preservation process.

A pest at a school, like a rat is killed in a slow drawn-out<sup>45</sup> process with the rat bait box (see Figure 3.5). The bleeding, air-less, smelly, leaking, decaying body is not deemed acceptable and is hidden from view, especially the children's view for whom it is sacrificed. The dying and then dead rat is hidden. However, the dead ostrich is given the illusion of being alive, clean, neat, perfect and placed on display.

Many questions arise to try and understand why the dying/dead rat is excluded yet the ostrich is included in a place such as a school. The ostrich is not with its family, re-turning to ancestors on ground near where it was born or even sold as meat at a local supermarket in South Africa. Is the taxidermy<sup>46</sup> made acceptable because of anthropocentric, uncontested knowledge making practices? Is the ostrich preserved and imprisoned so that in centuries to come humans will 'know' what an ostrich looked like? It appears that the essentialising of all ostriches is represented by this one ostrich.

My thoughts about this ostrich stretch beyond the cage and the box. It is not just about an ostrich preserved with chemicals and stuffed by humans, flown via air freight, lifted with machines and humans. The phenomenon is about air miles and carbon footprints; it is about knowledge and about knowledge production; about who and what speaks and which voices are valued. I know about ostriches because I come from South Africa yet seeing the body in Denmark is so unexpected and jarring. I'm reminded of what felt to me like the de-humanising process I had to endure when I had to apply for a visa to visit Denmark as a South African

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<sup>45</sup> Rat bait takes about 2-3 days to 'work' to kill a rat.

<sup>46</sup> The practice of stuffing and preserving dead animals.

citizen. In order to have my visa approved, an additional requirement was for me to request from a research participant based in Denmark, to sign a form stating that they would take responsibility for me should I renege on my visa stay. I had to get signed off and stood surety for, by someone I have never met. The boundaries of this relationship appear to get set in a strange and compromising way. I had to apply and be approved to visit Denmark, with a strict proviso that I would leave before my visa expired. I am left wondering what did the ostrich have to do in order to stay? It seems it needed to be dead. What is the ostrich's history, what about this life, what can be said about its circumstances and how it came to be at a school in Denmark situated thousands of kilometres from South Africa?

The ostrich is death, life, glass, cage, memory, displacement and resettlement. Barad (2007, p. 183) reminds us that "nature is neither a passive surface awaiting the mark of culture nor the end product of cultural performances." This ostrich as prisoner-prize comes into being through the intra-actions with the glass, school, children, the colour of the feathers, legs not visible as the ostrich appears to be nesting, long neck that seems over exaggerated. The ostrich is included because of how it fits as a category of exclusion, something that can be displayed without causing outrage in the name of education. Yet, "ethicity is part of the fabric of the world; the call to respond and be responsible is part of what is" (Barad, 2007, p. 182).

Some years have passed, and I find myself still seeing the ostrich. I continue to be affronted by the image, questioning what I am responding to and being responsible for when I think of animal-child relations in schools. How much of what is there is *for* the children (as decided by adult humans), not *from* the children, as if they are not of the same world as the ostrich. Categories of inclusion and exclusion. In schools we do not have stuffed, clothed, adult humans in glass cages. Although human fetus specimens do feature in Biology and Life Science lessons in small glass jars. Taxidermied animals are very common in South African schools and in South Africa, as part property that can be hunted and captured by humans. .a hunting and capturing relationship to animals. Categories of what can be included and what will be excluded in schools are human made 'givens'. Human skeletons, animal skeletons, parts of animals or whole animals are commonly used as teaching tools. Categories of what is acceptable to include or not, what can be made known and how it comes to be known shows a strong belief in the strength of the value and dominance of anthropocentric ways of knowing and knowledge production. These 'ways of knowing' are also deeply colonial in that they are hierarchical and speciesist. Barad (2007, p. 342) reminds us that "knowing is not an ideational affair, or a capacity that is the exclusive birthright of the human." Such human-centred

perspectives can inform how the ostrich gets to be in the glass cage, who and what make themselves intelligible to others and what is deemed unintelligible.

I re-turn to the drawing Kai has made (Figure 3.1) and I spend more time looking at the image and notice that the mouse running along the telephone wire is half the size of the telephone pole. The sun and the camel are relatively the same size. The solar system and the hockey stick appear within the same view. The image that is instantly recognisable as Covid-19 would not have affected me early in 2019. I do not read this image as pure or innocent, nor do I read this image as cartoon or illusion. Rather, I am struck by the presence of the cosmos and the butterfly; the desk and the tree; the hair and the dust; and the pipes leading to the ever more polluted oceans. I recognise the school, when the humans are not at the centre of the conversation. I notice that Kai has also included the tapestry which is central to this research project. In the next section of this chapter, we trace some of the entanglements of the tapestry and the deep connections with this school as research site.

### 3.4 The tapestry

We re-turn to the tapestry as provocation, as image and the questions it provokes about what a school is, (see Figure 3.7).

This tapestry is unique, for it was created and made for this specific school. This tapestry like all the other images and pieces of art that hang on the walls of the pages of this research project are integral to the enquiries of this thesis. I think with Sylvia Kind (2010, p. 115) who suggests that the process of creating art (tapestry) is not a straightforward process, “rather it has turns and re-turns, stops and starts, resistances and uncertainties.” I imagine every colour, every line, every stitch, every curve, every knot, every folding and unfolding, vital to this making. Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2014, p. 476) suggest “embroidery's variables and constants, fixed and mobile elements, may be of extraordinary complexity.” I agree as someone who learnt how to cross-stitch from the principal who embroidered this tapestry. I became fascinated with the craft as it is highly complex with an extraordinary number of components: the drawing, planning, measuring and execution. Then, the choosing of colours and embroidery cottons with the patience required to start, maintain and see such a project to completion. Also, tracing the multiple connections of the materiality of the matter involves

asking multiple and 'prior' questions (Barad in Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 18) about not just what is involved in this embroidering process, but how this embroidery works? Which cotton plant does this cotton come from? Who is doing the picking? What are the labour conditions and practices for the humans? What are the conditions for the plants? How is the cotton dyed and manufactured? What endless damage is occurring to the earth to create these magnificent embroidery cottons? Attention can be drawn to the manufacture and price of the tiny pieces of shiny paper labelled with human made names, wrapped around each individual skein of embroidery cotton. How are these materials transported across time zones and who is doing the buying and the selling? What about the steel of the pins and needles, the sweat and the fingers and how the bodies and materials together co-create what still hangs on the wall of the foyer of the school, 23 years later.

The work of this tapestry as a provocation is not just to be known by us but is a place of profound encounter. Kind (2010, p. 130) suggests that "...the invitation then, is to think beyond representation and to imagine art as a place of encounter."

**Figure 3.7**

*The tapestry of the school stitched by the principal in 1998*



The principal embroidered the tapestry seen in Figure 3.7 to celebrate the school's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The framed tapestry is big and imposing at more than a metre in height and width. It is beautiful, but easily missed among the more modern artefacts, photographs and art that hang in the school foyer.

I encountered this tapestry in 1998, and have since walked past it thousands of times in my 23 year association with the school as a teacher, parent, student, earth dweller. It has formed a part of my teaching career since I started teaching. We were born into the life of the school

together. In January 1998 I started as a Grade 4 teacher at Oakwood Primary School. 1998 was the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the school

**Figure 3.8**

*The framed, stitched tapestry of the school, in situ in the school foyer*



The tapestry is sentimental to me because I am stitched into it, I am and am not 'just' the Miss



Lawrence<sup>47</sup> that has been embroidered in the dark brown embroidery cotton. I am not only in the cotton and left there, left behind, because there is no there and here but rather there/here. I am "living between worlds, crossing (out) taxonomic differences, tunnelling through boundaries (which is not a bloodless but a necessary revolutionary political action),

<sup>47</sup> Lawrence is my maiden surname

Anzaldúa<sup>48</sup> the material multiplicity of self, the way it is diffracted across spaces, times, realities, imaginaries (Barad, 2014, p. 174). I am teacher, student, mother, father, child, adult, animal, microbe, quark, dust, cotton, the "warp and the woof" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2014, p. 475). In 1998, the school's 50<sup>th</sup> year of existence, I am the first racialised as 'other' employed at the school, now I am stitched into the fabric, tethered into the void. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2010, p. 135) argue that early childhood spaces are "gendered, racialised, ethnically marked spaces in which certain categories already count more or are more privileged than others." In order to read this tapestry differently and to move away from the anthropocentric reading of this tapestry I trouble engaging with the "various material-discursive apparatuses of production" that make up this tapestry (Barad, 2017a, p. 75).

I think and do the theory as I crop the tapestry and diffract it with Karen Barad's (2007, 2014, 2017) theorising of the void.

According to quantum field theory, the vacuum is far from empty; indeed, it's teeming with the full set of possibilities of what may come to be. Matter is regularly created and destroyed. And the zoo



of subatomic particles including electrons, quarks, positrons,  
 antiquarks, neutrinos, pions, gluons, and photons-isn't comprised of  
 simple individual objects occupying specific positions in the



vacuum we call space and time: not only is the very idea that they  
 take up determinate

<sup>48</sup> Karen Barad diffracts with her experience, friendship and scholarship of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*



positions in space not to be taken for granted, but part of their very nature seems to be wrapped up in the bubbling sea of possibilities that was to be but an inert backdrop for matter's passage.

(Barad, 2007, p. 354)

\*A note on the images included in the quote above. This is an act of “cutting together apart” (Barad, 2014). I do not see the art or images in this thesis as less than the words next to them. I resist and disrupt the dominant discourse that words mean more, in the sense that they are more accurate, stable and certain than images. Why should only words be allowed to be included in a quote? The images need to be read with and alongside the word, both are material-discursive, so that the possibility of each word as a multiplicity is read alongside each image as a multiplicity. Barad (2007, p. 466) explains that “even a cut that breaks things apart does not cause a separation but furthers the entanglement.” I hope that the words above can be read into the whole tapestry, in this way furthering the entanglement.

A zoo like an aquarium stratifies, classifies, creates, and reinforces hierarchies informed by western epistemology. In schools, adults are given and maintain superiority over children. Schools and zoos enforce borders and boundaries that separate animals from other animals; and animals and humans (Young & Bone, 2020, p. 1380). In zoos, humans control where and how the animals live, how they are contained, their opportunities to reproduce, what they eat and where they can be. This all happens on land owned by humans (Young & Bone, 2020, p. 1389). Similarly, in schools, children are controlled in terms of categories based on identity not difference. We need to read this tapestry and all with it not as separate entities with no prior relations. A way to do that is to think with quantum physics which “queers the binary type of difference at every layer of the onion (not merely on the micro-scale as opposed to the macro-scale, as if there were a line in the sand between micro and macro rather than an ongoing reconfiguring of spacetime mattering across and within spaces and times)” (Barad, 2014, p. 174). Children are separated in schools according to perceived gender and therefore gender specific uniforms, by age in classrooms, by children who can learn grouped together and those who cannot learn grouped together. When we read the child in the tapestry, it is not essentialised child (Kummen, 2010, p. 103) representing all boys or all girls, rather the child in

the tapestry comes into existence in relation to the land of the research site, the books in the classroom, the ants walking past the desks noticed and unnoticed.

When we trace the entanglements that intra-act with the question what is a school? then what a school is, is more than what we can see with our limited human vision. The tapestry in Figure 3.7 suggests what can appear to be a tidied-up school. When we take our class photographs to re-member the school, it is nothing more than a typical day (or even split second) at school. We never learn, all standing in rows facing a photographer who says, 'say cheese'. Yet the school photograph is instantly recognisable in Western societies as a marker of a rite of passage about attending, or being, at school with other people. Usually children are situated in a classroom, a predictable environment, with a 'mature' adult as the teacher making decisions about the learning, doing and being of the children in the class (Kummen, 2010, p. 135).

### 3.5 What questions would the ants ask?

I am required to share what and how the research happened at this research site. But there is "no 'I', that exists outside of the diffraction pattern, observing it, telling its story" (Barad, 2014, p.181). So 'I' am not drawing a line and going back to 2016 when the PhD proposal was written, or to 2017 when the proposal was accepted by the ethics committee at UCT and the Doctoral Degrees Board. Nor am I threading a line between May and September 2017 when the consent forms found their way into the school, and home via minibus taxi's, trains, cars, and in school bags. Nor a line to when the consent forms found their way out of school bags onto kitchen counters, onto couches, into rubbish bins never to return to school but to return to the earth slightly differently. I will never know what the consent forms generated, or what discussions and ways of knowing it provoked and set free. Rather, I am going to spend time crisscrossing the threads of this research and am "going forward to the past not to recount what once was, but by way of re-turning, turning it over and over again...and opening up again to the uncountable gifts given that still give" (Barad, 2014, p. 184). This will be the way I want to share this story, which is not a story of asking, finding and knowing, over and over again. Always a different way but a way that leads to more depth and difference, not just skin deep, but a constellation.

I deliberately used a community of philosophical enquiry which will be elaborated on in much closer detail in Chapter 4 and used the tapestry as the provocation at each enquiry to provoke these kinds of questions. I will end this chapter asking the ants. If the ants could tell the story, what questions would the ants ask?

## 4. The community of philosophical enquiry

### 4.1 Introduction

In the first part of this chapter I will be situating myself as a teacher in a post-Apartheid primary school which is the research site. I use the method of re-remembering memories, not recalling memories, throughout this chapter, and each time they are re-told, they sediment differently. In Chapter 3, taking inspiration from Snaza, et al., (2014) the focus was on the more-than-human in schools. In this chapter, however, the focus will be on how not all humans are given the same consideration in schools. Children specifically are not given or granted the same power as human adults in schools.

In the second part of this chapter, I introduce Philosophy for Children and Philosophy for/ with Children (PwC). To orientate the second part of the chapter, I use feminist, philosopher and theorist Ann Margaret Sharp's powerful words on the silencing of children at schools. Ann Margaret Sharp is widely recognised as being responsible for "reconstructing the philosophical notion of the community of inquiry<sup>49</sup>, into a model of educational practice" (Lavery & Gregory, 2018, p. 1). The community of enquiry is the pedagogical approach used during PwC sessions and is the research methodology I have taken up for this PhD research, at the research site.

I will be adopting diffraction as theorised by Karen Barad (2007, 2017a, b, c) as a methodology in this chapter. "Diffraction<sup>50</sup> as a methodology, is a matter of reading insights through rather than against each other to make evident the always already entanglement of specific ideas in their materiality" (Barad, 2017a, p. 64).

In this chapter I spend time tracing the entanglements evident in various moments and events (always multiple, never singular across spaces and times) that have made up my 20-year teaching career and emerging career as an academic and researcher and diffract through these insights.

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<sup>49</sup> I use the British spelling enquiry and maintain the American spelling inquiry when I use it in direct quotations.

<sup>50</sup> In the Introduction Chapter and Chapter 1 I explain and use diffraction as theorised by Karen Barad (2007, 2017 a,b,c, & 2018).

## 4.2 Teaching in a post-Apartheid compulsory schooling system

1998. I am a teacher. Canella and Viruru (2004, p. 100) argue that teaching is a political act. The feminist reading of the big *P* and little *p* as theorised by Janks (2010, 2012), see Chapter 1, means my teaching is political and personal at the same time. Because of the restriction of land ownership during Apartheid, the neighbourhood where the research site is located, Pinelands, is known as a white area. When the Group Areas act is repealed in 1990 (see Chapter 2, p. 2) my family and I move into this white area, Pinelands, from a formerly coloured area, Belhar. All these white areas, post-Apartheid are now anecdotally called ‘former’ white areas. The same designation does not happen in black or coloured or Indian areas because the upward socio-economic trajectory does not happen as easily in these areas, ‘post’-Apartheid (see Table 4.1 below).

**Table 1**

Annual Household Income comparison for Belhar and Pinelands

<b>Annual Household Income</b>	<b>Belhar</b>	<b>Pinelands</b>
0-R19,200	26.78%	9.28%
R19, 201-R76,800	48.18%	23.54%
More than R76,801	25.05%	67.19%

(Source: Census, 2001)

According to the 2001 Census, two thirds of the population of Pinelands is earning in the highest income bracket, compared to a quarter of the population living in Belhar, our previous neighbourhood. My family and I, along with the other coloured, black, Indian families slowly moving into the neighbourhood are ‘let in’. According to Christie (1995, p. 48) who writes about the desegregation of white schools in South Africa, schools were instructed to “remain majority white and to give preference to white children from their feeder areas” (the most immediate neighbourhood that the school was located in) See Figure 4.1 for an example of a newspaper report about how schools received ‘permission to integrate’ after the white parents voted to accept children of all races into these former ‘white only’ public schools. The

desegregation of schools was tied to the desegregation of the land the school was located on. This impacted the movement of people in and out of former white neighbourhoods.

**Figure 4.1**

*The Item, Newspaper Report, December 1990*

## Report: South African government will scrap major apartheid laws

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) – A leading newspaper reported today that the government will announce plans to repeal major apartheid laws when Parliament opens Feb. 1.

*Business Day* said President F.W. de Klerk is expected to call for the scrapping of the Group Areas Act, which segregates neighborhoods by race, and the Land Acts, which reserve 87 percent of the country's land for the white minority.

The newspaper, which opposes apartheid and has good contacts with top officials, said the government may propose alternative measures but they would be non-discriminatory.

There was no immediate government comment on the report.

De Klerk has promised changes in 1991 to the Group Areas Act on neighborhood discrimination and other discriminatory laws. But he has not specified a date or said whether the laws would be amended, replaced with new legislation or scrapped.

Anti-apartheid groups have demanded the full repeal of the Group Areas Act, the Land Acts and the Population Registration Act, which classifies citizens by race.

The president has said the Population Registra-

tion Act will be done away with only when a new constitution is negotiated with black opposition groups. He hopes to begin such talks early next year with the African National Congress and other anti-apartheid parties.

When opening Parliament last February, de Klerk legalized more than 60 opposition groups, agreed to free political prisoners, including ANC leader Nelson Mandela, and pledged to dismantle the apartheid system of racial segregation.

The main institutions still legally segregated are neighborhoods, public schools and the political system. Dozens of white public schools received permission to integrate in January after parents voted overwhelmingly to accept students of all races.

De Klerk on Tuesday offered amnesty to anyone who had left the country illegally. The move clears the way for the repatriation of most of the political exiles, estimated at up to 40,000.

However, exiles involved in the ANC's guerrilla war against the government will have to make a separate application for amnesty. Those cases will be judged individually.

The ANC, which suspended its armed struggle in August, says political exiles should receive a blanket amnesty.



Power and Somerville (2015, p. 74) argue that fences in early childhood settings in post-colonial Australia are the places “where the inside and the outside meet, in the hole in the fence.” The repealing of the Group Areas Act enacts a folding back of sharp edges of an in/visible wire fence. How does the land create a hole in the in/visible fence that has surrounded it, excluding others and imprisoning those who are now allowed on the inside? I too am ‘let into’ the school, Oakwood Primary, the research site in 1998 as a permanently employed teacher. Even though Apartheid is no longer meant to exist in 1998, in its most basic form, of separating people based on racial classification, it does.

1998. My teaching is a political act. When I get to the school, the research site, the colour of my skin does not make me different from, but rather seems more to be an omen of what is coming. It performs as a veiled threat - or promise of the future of racial inclusion and integration that however inevitable, has been slowed to the trickle that I have started at this particular school, in Cape Town.

I may have experienced racism from the children I taught, but it does not come into my remembering. I diffract through Gan et.al (2017) to re-member that,

*...forgetting in itself, remakes landscapes, as we privilege some assemblages over others. Yet ghosts remind us. Ghosts point to our forgetting, showing us how living landscapes are imbued with earlier tracks and traces.*<sup>51</sup>

I do, however, re-turn to experiences of racism from some of the staff, in my first year of teaching at the research site. Barad (2017a, p. 81) refers to “re-turning as a troubling matter”. I experienced racism that was subtle, often only words that shouldn’t be strung together, sliding easily into a conversation. For example, being told in the staffroom by a white female colleague, without a hint of irony or a pause in their speech: ‘You speak English so well for a coloured person.’ Often experiences of racism are what comes towards, moving quite aggressively and then the inability to quickly deflect, is what causes the pain. For me in my returning memories, the racism feels more like what was being slid ever so slowly, quietly and deliberately out of my reach. That woundedness of my body and that land, of the research site, are boundaries that like times and spaces are bleeding into each other. It was not only racism I endured, but sexism, reinforced by the patriarchal society that Apartheid created. An older white male teacher refused to pass on the keys of the classroom, which had been his, to me when I started teaching in 1998. No one could get him to give me the keys. Another set was made or found and given to me. He was also the Woodwork teacher and I was assigned Woodwork as an additional subject. Woodwork in South Africa had previously been very clearly demarcated a subject taught by men to boys<sup>52</sup>. He refused to share any planning, or notes with me. The discrimination was not only around race, but also my gender. Seeing myself as Barad (2017a, p. 81) powerfully suggests as, “the ‘other’ the constitutively excluded

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<sup>51</sup> Gan et.al (2017, p. G6)

<sup>52</sup> The principal thought she would disrupt this and from 1998 the boys and girls (we were not aware then about gender being on a continuum) in each class would spend 6 months learning Woodwork and 6 months learning Needlework.

is always already within; the very notion of the self is a troubling of the interior/exterior distinction.” I know the places and times of the school as research site radically shifted with me, as the ‘other’ during intra-actions through multiple temporalities, then and now, the then is not in the past, the now not yet happened. The tapestry at the end of Chapter 3, with my stitched-into-place/s female black body, enacts ways of re-turning to a “multiplicity of paths and histories ” (Barad, 2017a, p. 60).

### 4.3 The im/possibility<sup>53</sup> of teaching<sup>54</sup>

Coffey and Delamont (2000, p. 84) critique that “the preferred position for many teachers is to remain neutral about society and education itself.” I would argue that I was troubled by this kind of neutrality because of the demands of compulsory school teaching. There is a curriculum to be followed; parents to appease; assessments to be written, recorded and sealed. All the while, breathing in the complexity and pain of a country emerging from (legalised) Apartheid. Haynes and Kohan - working with Ranciere’s ideas from *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (2018) - argue that schools are models of inequality. The inequality is framed “in terms of velocity: slowness, backwardness and delay, and the perpetual need to catch up” (p. 206). Teachers are generally supposed to know more than the children they are teaching. I would suggest they know more in some ways, but not in all the ways of knowing. A challenge then for the teacher is how to teach what is known and can be known, while being open to radical learning and unlearning?

Some of the questions I was asking myself as a young teacher was how could social justice be enacted in my classroom? I found myself being required to normalise the binaries of knower/known; adult/child; powerful/powerless. This troubled me.

In Chapter 1, I refer to myself as a child of war during Apartheid. South Africa never endured the much anticipated civil war, which was the route that was taken in many other African countries (for example Mozambique, Rwanda, Sudan, Angola and Nigeria), fighting for liberation post-colonisation. So, was I a teacher for peace? Not peace that can exist

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<sup>53</sup> Karen Barad, After the end of the world, YouTube presentation 13-09-2018 where Barad explains the forward slash “You’re supposed to hear the cutting together apart of possibility and impossibility.”

<sup>54</sup> Haynes and Kohan (2018, p. 209)

tentatively in the absence of war, but rather the teaching for peace required when working and walking on the wounded ground that is the research site. Barad (2017a, p. 84) refers to Trinity, in New Mexico, the testing site of the atomic bomb as “wounded ground”. I would suggest the research site of the school is also wounded ground. A place (for places are not containers) leaking with the wounds of colonisation, ill-treatment of animals, plants and trees including insects and fungi, ignoring children, denying particular humans’ existence. Wounds from subjecting the earth to agony and cruelty, the limiting school curriculum which sees child as a container to be filled. The concrete which in its act of cementing makes boundaries where there are none which keeps some in and leaves others out. The bible songs that are sung during school assemblies and during religious education to justify exclusion and hate (rather than inclusion or love). The wounding continues. I think with Barad (2017a, p. 61) to make sense of this woundedness because “quantum physics opens up radical spaces for exploring the possibilities for change from inside the hegemonic systems of domination.”

I became a teacher for peace, where social justice was a primary concern for me as a young, female teacher, wearing my skin as a landscape of a journey already plotted yet without a single step taken. I am not a discrete individual with my own specific properties (Barad, 2017a, p. 80). In 1998 I became a teacher like my mother, who had been imprisoned by the Apartheid government, while doing the job of a teacher. In 1985 one arm of the Apartheid government employed my mother, another arm arrested her, another arm was providing me with an education. The im/possibility of teaching.

*There is no sharp boundary separating the light from darkness; light appears within the darkness with the light within...*<sup>55</sup>

I started working for the same Apartheid government, post-Apartheid which was not dismantled or destroyed but simply painfully barely restructured to incorporate the vision of the new South Africa post 1994. This is my re-membering.

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<sup>55</sup> Grimaldi diffracted through Barad, 2017, p. 170

#### 4.4. The im/possibility of researching

Schools are often places where teachers do most of the talking and children mostly listen. If children do talk, they talk about things that teachers think they should talk about. Rarely is the classroom a place where teachers and children engage in meaningful conversations about matters of mutual concern. Rarely do teachers admit that there are things that they don't know, or that they would like to enlist the help of their students to find possible solutions to their questions. Co-inquiry with children is rare in elementary schools.

(Sharp, 2018a, pp. 175-6)

In what follows I move from the im/possibility of teaching, to the im/possibility of researching. Ann Margaret Sharp's quote above helps to show how my teaching and then research was influenced by her scholarship and the Community of Philosophical Enquiry (CPE) the pedagogy of the established, international movement, Philosophy for/ with children (PwC). The CPE became the pedagogy of my research design because it created the *possibilities* to enact an inclusive research design at the research site, in order to answer the emerging research questions, with more questions. What is most important for this research project is that these new questions were developed by the children, the participants in my study.

The sub-question that is addressed in this chapter is:

*How does age work to include or exclude in the un/bounded enquiry spaces of Philosophy with Children and how does critical posthumanism reconfigure adult child relationality?*

I will now show and share different dates and times as PwC became a part of my life. I am not only referring to events in 2020, 1998, 1985, 2011, 2018, 2013, 2016, yesterday, today or tomorrow. I use these dates as an elastic timeline (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2014) first introduced in Chapter 1. The elastic "...number line becomes a highly animate concept, made vibrant and creative through the indeterminacy buried in it" (De Freitas & Sinclair, 2014, p. 54). These dates are no longer just fixed, numbers or chronological linear markers of progress. Rather they offer opportunities to disrupt fixed position over movement which makes it possible to work with these numbers and dates creatively and differently.

To address the past (and future), to speak with ghosts, is not to entertain or reconstruct some narrative of the way it was, but to respond, to be responsible, to take responsibility for that which we inherit (from the past and the future), for the entangled relationalities of inheritance that 'we' are, to acknowledge and be responsive to the noncontemporaneity of the present, to put oneself at risk, to risk oneself (which is never one or self), to open oneself up to indeterminacy in moving towards what is to come.

(Barad, 2010, p. 264)

These events respond to, produce and perform throughout this thesis, the research, local conferences in South Africa and conferences scattered across the global North and South. The entangled relationalities of travel grant applications, visa application forms, eating *empandas* along the side of the road in Bogota, Colombia with scholars whose work is deeply admired. The in/determinacy of the research questions being asked again and again, with child co-researchers at the research site. These research questions are fostered by the belief that children should be present at school, listened to and encouraged to speak. Children should know that in school, what they say matters and how they say what they say matters too. These are just some of the intra-actions through which the events emerge, some of which will become more apparent in the following chapters in which I foreground the crucial, critical, collaborative, emergent and experiential work with the children of the research site.

In the next section I explore PwC and the Community of Philosophical Enquiry and then move on to describe an experimental diffractive piece through my experiences happening in/be/tween Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Cape Town, South Africa.

## 4.5 Philosophy for/with Children and the Community of Philosophical Enquiry

In September 2011, I attend a conference in Cape Town hosted by the International Association of Cognitive Education in South Africa (IACESA) as part of my ongoing professional development as the Head of Inclusive Support at the mainstream, government

school which is the research site of this research. At this conference I listen to a talk about Philosophy for Children by Professor Lena Green from the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and Professor Bob Burden from Exeter University. I have not ever heard of Philosophy for Children (P4C), but my curiosity is piqued as this is a way of working with children in schools in a way that is unfamiliar to me as a teacher in the South African compulsory schooling system during Apartheid and post-Apartheid. It is unfamiliar because the role of the facilitator working with children in a school setting is different from a teacher transmitting knowledge - an approach far more familiar to me and my experience of teaching and learning.

#### 4.5.1 Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Philosophy for Children (P4C) is an established innovative approach to teaching and learning, developed more than 50 years ago by Professor Matthew Lipman and his associates, in particular Ann Margaret Sharp, at the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC), at Montclair State University, New Jersey, USA. The programme sought to make explicit the connections and relationship between 'philosophy' and 'childhood' (Vansiegelhem & Kennedy, 2011, p. 171). It was originally conceived as an idea by Lipman in the 1960's as his response to his University of Columbia's undergraduate students' inability to reason well and his idea that young children could be taught to think more "skilfully" (Lipman, 1992, p. 3). Lipman then co-developed and co-wrote an entire curriculum for grades K-12 between 1969 and 1988 (Sharp & Reed, 1992, p. xiv). The P4C curriculum, which consisted of philosophical novels was accompanied by manuals for teachers, which would focus on teaching particular philosophical thinking skills. *Harry Stottlemeiers' Discovery*<sup>56</sup> (first published in 1971 and revised in 1974) was his first philosophical novel with an associated manual entitled, *Philosophical Inquiry* (Sharp & Reed, 1992, p. xiii). This programme and the curriculum developed by Lipman and colleagues was used originally extensively in schools in the United States and then spread around the world. It is still used to this day, in classrooms and schools and in training for teachers learning about facilitation in Philosophy for Children. The P4C curriculum was written for very specific reasons: one of which was to explore the possibility, what could education be with an infusion of philosophy into the curriculum? (Lipman, 1988, p. 7). This is still not really a possibility in most South African schools. I discuss this more in Chapter 6.

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<sup>56</sup> 'Harry Stottlemeier' is a word play on 'Aristotle'.

#### 4.5.2 Moving from P4C to PwC

To draw a distinction between the use of the P4C curriculum developed by Matthew Lipman and his colleagues at Montclair State University, namely, 'Philosophy for Children', Murriss<sup>57</sup> was asked by Matthew Lipman to call her practice something else rather than P4C, in order to make a clear distinction between the two. He thought it might be confusing and P4C should stand for the curriculum as developed by the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) he was a director of at the time.

While visiting Mendham in 1992, and in conversation with Lipman, Murriss<sup>58</sup> then decided to use the phrase Philosophy *with* Children (PwC) as it better expresses the intergenerational spirit of the community of enquiry. The name emphasises that the practice of philosophical enquiry is something we do *with* children, not *for* children. Most current PwC practitioners have strong ties to the original movement and great respect for the programme first developed in the 1960's.

Murriss (2016, p. 63) has three main critiques about the original P4C curriculum. Firstly, that it was written specifically for "non-philosophically educated teachers" in order for them to be enabled to teach philosophical thinking *to children*. This positions the child, as "the ideal 'abnormal' child, the thinking child - the adult philosopher's child" (Murriss, 2016, p. 63). Her second critique is that "the P4C curriculum is neither a necessary or sufficient condition for the teaching of *philosophical* thinking." There are other ways that children and adults can engage in philosophical thinking in classrooms and specifically in communities of enquiry, other than through "teacher proof texts" (Murriss, 2016, p. 63). The last critique is the undervaluing of the visual in the original P4C curriculum, and that adding the visual to the text does not rob children of their imagination (Murriss, 1997, p. 235).

My teaching and scholarly work in PwC is rooted and embedded in the P4C origins established by Lipman and Sharp but I am now part of a 'third' generation of theorists/practitioners. The term 'second generation' comes from Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011) and could be applied to practitioners/academics/theorists who moved away from using only the original P4C curriculum and who practice Philosophy for/with Children (PwC) as a

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<sup>57</sup> Personal conversation with Karin Murriss.

<sup>58</sup> In close and long-term collaboration with Joanna Haynes, Karin Murriss developed her own approach to P4C using picturebooks (Murriss, 1992) when completing her PhD in 1997.

movement, not a method (Kohan & Costa-Carvahlo, 2019, p. 276). I am part of this 'third' generation of theorists/philosophers/practitioners who have taken up PwC and use a wide range of educational materials, not only the original P4C curriculum, but there seems to be consensus that the CPE remains the pedagogy of PwC (Haynes & Murriss, 2011, p. 300). This generation is also much more aware of the decolonizing opportunities which PwC creates (this is the work I am currently engaged in (Reynolds, 2019) and others like Reed-Sandoval (2019) and Reed-Sandoval & Sykes (2018). Also Chetty (2104, 2017) has done extensive work on the threats it poses and why race and ethnicity need to be foregrounded and how all these are entangled with the logic of childhood.

#### 4.5.3 Some risks in PwC and opportunities

I am aware that PwC is not a movement that suggests a neutral positioning of knowledge, philosophy, child or adult/teacher. Kohan and Costa-Carvahlo (2019, p. 276) question the implications of presenting the CPE as a “methodological or pedagogical framework for educational purposes.” Chetty (2014, p. 13) argues that “there is little in the current literature relating to Philosophy for Children that explicitly addresses the topic of race and racism.” Darren Chetty and Judith Suissa, in their chapter entitled “‘No go areas’: Racism and discomfort in the community of inquiry’, in the *Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (Gregory et al., 2017) contribute to what they suggest are “significant omissions in the P4C literature and practice related to questions of race and racism” (Gregory, et.al, 2017, p.1). Chetty has spent years working in the field of race and racism in P4C (2014, p. 14) and is deeply critical of how a CPE can become “a gated community of enquiry” for philosophical thought and for openly and critically discussing issues about race, especially if the PwC practitioner/facilitator is racialised as white. Chetty (2014) is also particularly concerned about the use of specific picture books and materials which are suggested to be used in philosophical enquiries to discuss issues of race and racism. Chetty (2014) theorises using Critical Race Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies to argue that the benefits and privileges of Whiteness are not “easily recognised by those who benefit from it” (p.16). This is obviously problematic if practitioners racialised as white do not do any critical work around their own positionality and privilege. Chetty (2014, 2017) has an important argument that needs to be taken seriously by the global PwC community. I have one disagreement with Chetty (2014, p.23) in the way he theorises child, in this instance where he asks ...” what are we to make of a pedagogy that might be reliant on a child of colour to have both the insight and the willingness to speak out in order for critical perspectives to be considered?” While

this is a significant question that should be asked, especially in the context of the UK where Darren Chetty is based and works widely. I too have been in a seminar he has led on racism and reasonableness and also experienced the extreme reluctance of the other mainly UK based PwC practitioners to engage with issues of race and racism. What this may mean for the “child of colour” (Chetty, 2014) is that they would need to be willing to speak out. In Chapter 7 I share an example of a group of 7-8 year old children critically engaging with issues of race and racism. While I share just one significant example, I think we need to consider child as capable of being able to be critical, insightful and willing to bring up issues of race and racism. This is contingent on their full participation in a community of enquiry, not reliant on the adult/child power producing binary being uncontested. I do agree with Chetty (2014) that the facilitator also needs to be aware of when the CPE is acting as a “gated community of enquiry” and be willing to be listening for and listening and acting differently in the philosophical discussion to along with the children unlock the gates to complicated, difficult and controversial discussions.

Kennedy (2010, p. 101) argues that the community of enquiry “represents one form of the reconstruction of the power in the classroom with implications for others.” Like others in the field, I would also include child, but bring attention to black child, raised in poverty or continuing to be affected by neoliberal policies, and with a focus on “dis/ability” (Goodley, 2014) . Also included in the in the concept of ‘others’ and in the concept of ‘community’ is the more-than-human, like land, classroom, school and furniture.

In 2019 I heard Jason Wozniak give a keynote address at the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children, conference in Bogota, Colombia. This was a significant setting<sup>59</sup> and controversial topic which I think requires consideration. Wozniak (2020, p.1 ) asks a critical question, about what the “ethical and political implications of conceptualizing and practicing philosophy for/with children (P4wC) in the neoliberal debt economy are?” Most of the participants at the conference are from South America, I am intrigued by how few practitioners who I had met in Madrid in 2017 have not attended. Issues around security<sup>60</sup> are a big consideration and mainly practitioners from Europe and North America have chosen not to come to the conference in Colombia. The global debt economy and how it shapes

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<sup>59</sup> The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the Colombian government had only established quite a tentative peace process in 2016, in the hope of bringing an end to the Colombian conflict, so it was significant that the ICPIIC conference was held in Bogota in 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Personal conversations

public/government schooling is critiqued by Wozniak (2020). Wozniak (2020, p. 20) also builds an argument that P4wC and the pedagogy of the community of philosophical enquiry can be “a political education process that could cultivate debt resistors (and) foster debt resistance”. Additionally, the culture of questions and questioning that is specific to the pedagogy of P4wC can also be used to cultivate oppositional debt ethics and consciousness Wozniak (2020, p.24). I would argue that in a country like South Africa we need to be engaging in issues around debt as we have one of the highest inequality indexes in the world. Bringing this kind of complex debate into our classrooms and schools is an opportunity that the pedagogy of that the CPE presents.

#### 4.5.4 The community of philosophical enquiry as research methodology

The pedagogical approach as well as research methodology I used during the PwC sessions in this post-qualitative research is known as a community of philosophical enquiry (CPE). Because of my intense training as a PwC Facilitator/Difficultator, and my experience with groups of children, teachers, lecturers and student teachers since 2013, I was excited about what a CPE would make possible as a research methodology. The opportunity to engage in onto-epistemic humility (not thinking just in my being and or knowing that I knew or was better than the child(ren) and more-than-human I was enquiring with) was exciting. I made the deliberate choice to use the community of philosophical enquiry to engage in with my PhD research. I was also guided by this invitation, that the structure of the community of philosophical enquiry could be

...chaotic, emergent, self-correcting, and self-organizing. Every interaction has an incalculable effect on the system. Growth is characterized by building and integrating, which also involves, as an aspect of continual re-organization, splitting, extenuation, tangles, asymmetries, attenuations...

(Kennedy, 2010, p.101)

The CPE with all its risks, but also all its potentialities which I tried to be awake and aware of, becomes co-participant in the creation of the research data.

Ann Margaret Sharp, a close collaborator of Matthew Lipman is the person credited with “reconstructing the philosophical notion of the community of inquiry into a model of

educational practice” (Laverty & Gregory, 2018. p.1). The CPE process is used to develop *critical, creative, collaborative* and *caring thinking* through communal dialogue, which is the basis for philosophical enquiries (Hannam & Echeverria, 2009, pp.13-19). This would be put to work through this research project.

The term *caring thinking* in a community of enquiry was first established by Matthew Lipman and then further developed by Ann Margaret Sharp. Sharp (2018b, p. 212) argued that care is an intentionality and an acting on judgement, which the children and their teachers could exercise in the communities of philosophical enquiry they were engaged in and beyond. Richard Morehouse (2018) argues for caring thinking “as a method and goal of the community of philosophical inquiry” (p. 202) and that “care is compatible with rigorous inquiry” (p. 204).

*Collaborative thinking* is co-constructed between the participants (Hannam & Echeverria, 2009, p. 8) and I would add between the participants and the more-than-human. This thinking is not happening individually but in the co-constructed pedagogical space which is the CPE. The way the children are offered the provocation and are invited to think, talk, draw, learn together is different to being given a workbook or a single page where the child needs to write their name, which signals that only they are engaging in the work. This is about collaborating and not just in an activity that everyone is doing simultaneously, but rather that it matters that we are thinking together and building ideas together. Even the process of voting is collaborative and explored in much greater detail in Chapter 6.

*Creative thinking* in a CPE goes beyond what has been done or thought before. This is about imagination, fantasy and thinking/being playful (Hannam & Echeverria, 2009, p.15). The drawings, the discussions, there is not a focus on what is already known to be retold. Rather, the children developing their own questions about the provocation is creative, they are being playful and imaginative because the enquiry is about divergence and difference from. See Chapter 6 for examples of some of the philosophical questions developed by different groups of children.

All of these ‘kinds of thinking’ are contingent on each other and *critical thinking* in a CPE is not about problem solving, but about problem posing, developing questions and asking the prior questions. Using creative, caring, collaborative ways of being to develop the critical thinking that propels the philosophical into the CPE. Pritchard (1992, p.89) argues that critical thinking opens us new avenues for inquiry and frequently poses more questions than answers.

Ann Margaret Sharp theorised the “epistemic, aesthetic, political, feminist, ethical and spiritual dimensions of the community of inquiry” through many years of scholarship (Lavery & Gregory, 2018, p. 13). Sharp was deeply influenced by feminist philosophy and believed that people were “more ready to listen to the voices of children doing philosophy, having learned to listen to the voices of women, themselves marginalized in the history of philosophy” (De la Garza, 2018, p. 133). I have come to have a deep respect for Ann Margaret Sharp and her contribution as an academic/ feminist/theorist/philosopher/practitioner to developing the CPE as it is widely practiced all over the world. I am particularly interested in how her work with women, and young African-American college students in the 1960's/70's in the USA, inspired her work in philosophy with children. Also, that she saw the inherent value in being a practitioner as well as an academic. The focus on child as co-enquirer *with* the adult teacher in a process of teaching and learning, is what excites me most about the CPE envisioned by Ann Margaret Sharp.

Sharp (2018a, p.176) sounded the alarm when she commented that “co-inquiry with children is rare in elementary schools.” Sharp’s provocation helps me ask the questions: What are the material and discursive conditions that would need to change in schools for children to be engaged with and listened to as co-enquirers? Which pedagog(ies) create the possibilities for children to speak and co-enquire about what matters in their classrooms and schools?

*A re-membering and a re-telling:*

**Cape Town, South Africa April 2013.** *An email arrives in my inbox about a conference hosted by Karin Murriss at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The International Council of Philosophical Inquiry with Children (ICPIC)<sup>61</sup> is hosting its 16<sup>th</sup> International conference at UCT. ICPIC is a global network established in 1985, of practitioners, philosophers, academics, teachers and students who undertake to expand the reach of Philosophy for/with children. ICPIC’s membership spans more than 63 countries, more than 24 languages and more than 35 international organisations (Icpic.org). I register for the conference immediately. The trajectory of my working and academic life is deeply influenced by my experiences during this conference. At the conference I am introduced to the ideas about PWC, practitioners, academics, theorists and opportunities to engage in communities of philosophical enquiry. I am enchanted by the notion that education could be so radically different as envisioned by the*

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<sup>61</sup> I am currently in my second term serving as secretary of the ICPIC Executive Committee.

*various speakers I listen to, papers I hear and enquiries I engage in. At the time, I was working at the research site, as the Head of Inclusive Support and I knew that what I would learn at the conference would directly influence the work I was doing with the children and teachers at the school. I am now an academic who works with Philosophy with Children in initial teacher education at the University of Cape Town. The Community of Philosophical Enquiry, as a pedagogy, is integral to my PhD research as a topic as well as a methodology to co-create data with children and the more-than-human. I have co-authored an article and a book chapter and sole authored an article on aspects of the CPE and each piece shows explicitly the entanglements of theory and practice (Murriss, Reynolds & Peers, 2018; Reynolds and Peers, 2018; Reynolds, 2019). I have also been trained as a Level 1 trainer of teachers who want to use PwC and specifically the pedagogy of the CPE in their own classrooms.*

*I have had the opportunity to practice the pedagogy of Philosophy with Children, the CPE, extensively in South Africa and at conferences and workshops in Madrid, Spain; Basel, Switzerland; Odense, Denmark; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and Bogota, Colombia. In Cape Town, specifically we have regular monthly Saturday morning Mindboggles (see <https://www.mindboggles.co.za/>) meetings from 9:30-12:00am<sup>62</sup>. These are held at the School of Education, at the University of Cape Town. The event is free and open to all to attend. It is the opportunity to practice a CPE, led by an experienced PwC facilitator. I joined first as a participant in 2016 and now lead most sessions and am the Mindboggles<sup>[1]</sup> Southern Africa co-ordinator. Mindboggles is the first professional PwC network for formal and informal teachers in Southern Africa. I am also a Level 1 PwC trainer and have co-facilitated many training sessions with Karin Murriss in Cape Town. In South Africa the way teachers interested in learning more about PwC can become trained and be exposed to the theory through academic texts, journal articles, books, and the practice, which is mainly being part of Communities of Enquiry, is through carefully designed and facilitated training sessions.*

In response to Rollo (2016a) I follow the ants as they thread, weave, stop, walk, move back and edge forward. In Chapter 3 the ants were introduced inspired by Snaza et al., (2014) who calls us to radically consider the more-than-human in all meaning making. The ants trouble the usual anthropocentric ways of knowing, that only 'human' issues are of concern.

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<sup>62</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic with restrictions on social gatherings halted face-to-face Mindboggles meetings from March 2020 when South Africa went into its first lockdown.

## 4.6 Cape to Rio, researcher as political actress

The experiences of PwC have emerged as I have walked into classrooms, staff rooms, and playgrounds here in South Africa and as I have flown over lands and seas and felt my feet on the rich and sometimes decimated soil of many different places and spaces. PwC is an embodied, deeply entangled, complicated multiplicity of lines and events where times and spaces are unbounded for me as a researcher/theorist/practitioner/participant/facilitator-difficultator<sup>63</sup>. I re-turn to the different places, spaces, smells, articles, words, books, philosophers and my training in PwC. There are multiple 'uncountable gifts' for which I am grateful for and burdened by as someone invested in re-imagining education. One uncountable gift I share below, a conference in Rio de Janeiro in 2018, re-turning to a virtual conference in Rio de Janeiro, from Cape Town in 2020, as a diffractive piece.

I think with Karen Barad (2014) as I grapple with this diffractive, experimental piece which:

starts out in the middle by going forward to the past – not  
in order to recount what once was, but by way of re-turning,  
turning  
it over and over again, tasting the rich soil from which ideas spring,  
and opening up again to the uncountable gifts given that still give  
to proceed to the place from which we never left/leave.

(Barad, 2014, p. 184)

October 2018. It is the IX CIFE International Colloquium on Philosophy and Education in Rio de Janeiro at the Federal University of Brazil (UERJ). March 2018. Marielle Franco, politician, feminist, human rights activist is assassinated. The conference is dedicated to Marielle. Her mother is at the opening night of the conference. I cry for someone who has been killed and I cry with a mother who shares her pain, her pain which is not just a story, but is now a part of mine in all its materiality. The conference is conducted in Portuguese, a language I appreciate and respect but do not speak with words. July 2020. I re-member arriving in Rio de Janeiro, flying from Cape Town, South Africa via Luanda, Angola across the Atlantic. Colonial routes

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<sup>63</sup> I will re-turn to difficultator in chapter 5 and 8.

still affect air travel. We fly through makeshift borders in the air and over curiously and colonially named bodies of water. These sensations are (unintentional) parts of this time, that time in Rio de Janeiro. I am deeply affected at the conference, when I left/leave and today as I write and re-turn to these words on this screen. I do not want to ignore these sensations, and move on into yet another void of forgetting. I want to stay with those sensations, spending time turning them over and over again as I re-member.

**October 2018.** I am invited by Walter Kohan to provide a keynote on the last night of the conference in Rio de Janeiro. Every night of the conference there are three women on the panel, presenting three different keynotes. This structure challenges the patriarchal system conferences usually follow also (unfortunately) in P4C. After five nights, 15 women have led and guided the discussions. Every night there is learning about the Zapatista, child led movements, Childhood, Philosophy. Opportunities for awakening and philosophising. Google translate helps to navigate my understanding through the Portuguese. We stand in queues, surprised that there are the same queues morning and night to get into the boxes that lift us from floor to floor. Sometimes we walk slowly and reluctantly up and down the same walkways to the 9th floor, 11th floor, 13th floor. We sit in large lecture theatres that slope to the ground, and listen, then talk, eat, sometimes late at night we swim in a cool dark pool, sunken into the hotel rooftop with others (human and more-than-human) from the conference who care about children, the earth's decay, South America, South Africa and the world. The ants are also there. The philosophical enquiries carry on in different spaces such as the uber vehicles, hotel lifts and at all the meals we share across long tables.

The un/learning at this conference (for me as part of the phenomenon<sup>64</sup>) has been a dis/embodyed experience. There are entanglements with the more than human (e.g., materials, books, travel, food, philosophy, theories, training, protests, singing, political campaigning, activism, resistance) and humans (e.g., students, lecturers, theorists, workers, uber drivers, hotel staff, philosophers, teachers, children). The long snaking queues of students/professors/visitors on the ground floor of the UERJ waiting to ascend and descend the university buildings affects me, the sight of people waiting to learn, to teach, to be somewhere other than where they are. The impatience, shouts of greetings, peppered with the shouts of the floors each lift will visit for a brief period of time. I re-member the old ladies

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<sup>64</sup>“ Phenomena are ontological entanglements” (Barad, 2007, p.333).

who sit in the corner of the lifts, they press the buttons, shout out lift floors and press the corresponding numbers. Lifts re-turn to the same floors again and again.

### Figure 4.2

*Concrete Walkways in the UERJ Education Building*



Mariz, R (2014). [UERJ] [Photograph]. Creative Commons Attribution 3.0.

The alternative to the lifts are concrete walkways. The design reminds me of the 1960 Escher's (1975, p. 75) lithograph print, *Ascending and Descending*. It is not immediately clear to me which walkway is going up or down, because the walkway closest to the front of the photograph in Figure 4.2 and the one 'behind' it are equally visible. 2018. Walking up the walkways my steps become slower and slower as I edge closer to my destination, my short legs are incapable of keeping up with the idea that these floors are actually closer than anticipated. As I re-turn to the university through this particular photograph, and as I trace these entanglements I think of ants. I also think of the children silenced in schools and asked (or made) to walk in lines, who are also engaged in collective behaviour. I think with Gordon (2017, p. M125) who studies ants because she is "interested in collective behaviour, in questions about how systems work together without central control to adjust to changing

conditions.” As I draw the ants walking around these walkways, the lines are not ‘straight’ and create a juxtaposition next to the straight diagonal lines created by the sharp edges of the concrete in the image above. These are lines of progress.

When re-turning to the South African schooling context of my study, a child moves from one grade to the next, only being allowed to move to one grade by progressing past or through another. The locus of control is central. There are often very singular determining factors which affect where a child can be in a schooling system, from the time they enter until they leave, or are ejected through expulsion or referral to a different learning space. The control of children and their learning in schools can be militaristic. School is no longer about *schole*, free-time, rather it is about time that counts forward, irreversibly, marching in one direction, away from a past to a neoliberal future bowing to capitalism (Murriss & Kohan, 2020, p. 586).

When re-turning to the provocation provided by Sharp (1996/2018a, pp. 175-6) earlier in this chapter, then I imagine the lines of the walkway making suggestions about what can be spoken about in school and how it can be spoken about. The teacher in a conservative, traditional South African school is required to follow a (centralised) national curriculum which positions child as passive, innocent, threat, incapable and invisible (Jones, 2009, pp. 25-28). This curriculum determines what the children should know and when and influences how the child ought to move from one grade to another. The walkway creates a different form of a collective compared to the action of the ants. The walkway channels, determines, and provides a limiting opportunity to be creative, expansive or inclusive. For example, the possibility that child comes to school with all the capabilities, in/capabilities, abilities and dis/abilities is not being recognised as what child as phenomenon brings into the classroom (Goodley, 2014, p. 84). The walkway only demands a certain way of being a part of the world. Gordon (2017, p. M126) puts forward a different proposition about what collective behaviour means for ants and suggests we “describe collective behavior as a tangle of overlapping connections that is constantly being created, without any locus of control.” I see PwC and the CPE as having the potential to show the overlapping connections of the collective behaviour we simply reduce to the word – school....and to let them become known in a school. This is why I chose to use the Community of Enquiry pedagogy as the research methodology for this PhD research. It enables these kinds of questions to be asked: how could it be different to be at a school? What would it take to ask children a question that I as the adult do not know the

answer to? Or as Benjamin and Echeverria (1992, p. 75) suggest “establishing an atmosphere in which children are encouraged to ask questions.” We presume that classrooms work as collectives because they are full of children doing the same or similar things, but children are often very limited in the ways they can express their knowing, thinking, learning or doing.

Rollo (2016a, p. 33) argues powerfully and persuasively for a “decolonial politics of childhood” which would require “rejecting and dismantling the authority itself.” In this case it would mean a rejection of adult norms which dismiss child as able to contribute to society, as child. It will require respecting children not only as moral agents, but as political agents. This will mean that adults and children will have political equality and would need to involve children in making decisions that really matter. Rollo (2016b, p. 61) uses the term *misopedy* to “refer to the denigration and subordination of child and childhood.” Murriss and Kohan (2020, p. 586) argue that “misopedy is sedimented in school as a chronological institution.” Often the prevailing attitude in school is that adult, because they are placed in a hierarchical and authoritative position over child, the teacher is believed over child, for example teachers set and mark assessments and exams without question. Adult has power over child for example the prevalence of corporal punishment in South African schools (Heekes, et al., 2020, p.1) even though corporal punishment has been banned in South Africa since 1996<sup>65</sup>. But the power adults have is not limited to age, but also extends to race, gender and class. What adults say matters more than what child says and does because, “children are not simply human beings with different ways of interacting with the world and others, they are a lesser, deficient, or otherwise incomplete form of human being” (Rollo, 2016b, p. 62).

What are the implications for the life of the cosmos if adult and child are treated equally, with equal respect epistemologically? Rollo (2016c, p. 239 ) suggests that a “radical approach to democracy invites adults to work *with* children to build a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable social order that does not dissolve the relations to place and people established by children.” I draw on Barad (2007, p. 136) who reminds us that posthumanism “is not held captive to the distance scale of the human but rather is attentive to the practices by which the scale is produced.” So what can we learn from ants? They are not the smallest insects, but significantly small that they do not count as insects with any political rights. The same rights that some dogs, cats or whales may have. When ants walk in a line, they make the line, they *are* the line. Ants as a phenomenon contribute to the world as ant. The line begins and ends

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<sup>65</sup> South African Schools Act, section 10, banned corporal punishment in 1996.

with a single ant. Imagine a school where the line begins and ends with child (not singular or bounded subject), making up the collective. Gordon (2017, p. M136) suggests that “the collective behavior of a particular group, such as ant colonies of a given species, evolves as a set of relations that links a colony with the rest of its world.”

Re-turning to my conference participation in Brazil, walking up the concrete walkway, which offers no respite besides changing direction, the affect on the body/mind/spirit is brutal for many different reasons. Oppression and oppressive cement structures heave and are haunted with the sweat droplets, the feet that have walked in the shoes before, the insects moulting, scurrying or crawling, the food decaying, the dreams dreamed and then denied. This too is wounded ground. Wounded by the political arguments which remain in-between the spaces holding the concrete walls together, or apart. The sides of the walkway have no cover, so heat gets in and rain too. October 2018. It is days before Jair Bolsonaro is elected as the president of Brazil. The air is thick with foreboding of his conservative and deadly politics to come. Years of political strife, upheaval, protests and resistance are steeped into the concrete and blows from the city through these walkways, lingering, leaving traces, moving other parts along. I wonder what insects, bits of skin, hair, even ants left Rio de Janeiro with me and travelled over the Atlantic, via Luanda, back to Cape Town. Hauntings are not just the thoughts, the memories, the sound of clapping after delivering a keynote, but also taking into account how specific intra-actions matter. Barad (2007, p. 185) challenges us to consider that the “becoming of the world is a deeply ethical matter” and so we need to pay attention to each intra-action “since the possibilities for what the world may become call out in the pause that precedes each breath before a moment comes into being and the world is remade again.”

August 2020. As I sit with this text, work, think, write, I ask my son Kai a question provoked by Sharp’s quote, *what are children not allowed to talk about at school?* I make a list and I wonder if our ideas will intersect, I write in my notebook: sex, murder, incest, bullying (we delude ourselves if we think that children can talk about bullying at school if their teacher is the person bullying them) and corporal punishment. In South Africa, a study by the Center for Justice and Crime Prevention revealed that “49.8% of learners surveyed claimed to have been being caned or spanked by a principal or educator as punishment for wrongdoings.” ( Burton and Leoschut, 2013, p. 29). This also includes mental abuse and humiliation. This is a staggering statistic when corporal punishment was banned in schools in South Africa in 1996.

Kai's response is: Children cannot talk to or tell their teachers about what they have done wrong. He continues by saying, when the teacher catches a child talking, when they are not supposed to and says what are you saying to your friend, the response is usually but not truthfully, I was asking about the work? We both laugh at the absurdity and the conditions which are created which force children to lie at school. How is the world being remade in these moments, again and again? What kind of world is being remade again and again? Walter Kohan in his book launch for the English translation of his book, *Paulo Freire, a philosophical biography* on YouTube on 22 April 2021 says: "...Imagine a world that is a little easier to love." Imagine this kind of world remade.

I am struck with a thought that has bothered me for many years, since I first learnt about PwC. Children cannot talk about philosophy at school. They cannot talk about things of philosophical concern, things that matter, the ethical dilemmas they are confronted with, like being hit by their teachers or parents as two examples. Matthew Lipman's dream was to get philosophy into schools and so he developed in close collaboration with others a curriculum in order to facilitate this. I am inspired by Ann Margaret Sharp who knew philosophy was already there. In the way that Gareth Matthews (1994) argued that children are natural philosophers, that young children can already do philosophy and are able to philosophise. It is in the children but I think the real question is how to get philosophy *out* of schools. Out, not as the opposite of in, but out into the classrooms, spilling down the hallways, into the corridors, onto the play fields. This is what I would think are the "possibilities for what the world may become..." (Barad, 2007, p. 185). What conditions need to exist in a school to make the school kinder to these possibilities?

**October 2018.** Figure 4.3 below, a photo, an invitation to an event happening in Duque de Caxias pops up on my Facebook feed in February 2019. It is the day in October 2018 when I am sitting in the playground of the school in Duque de Caxias, my head is above the Portuguese word *Inscricoes* (register) in the photo. I am (then/now) part of a Community of Philosophical Enquiry with participants from the conference, teachers at the school, the ants and the children with whom I do not share their language but with whom communication and participation is possible.

**Figure 4.3**

*Rio, October 2018 diffracted through an event in Rio in March 2019*



(Image from NEFI<sup>66</sup> Facebook page)

I am on a chair in a circle, the more-than-human (chairs) emerge as a leveller in a Community of Enquiry. In-between the humans and the more-than-humans is the philosophy. I re-member the loud noise of the engines as the aeroplanes fly overhead, landing and taking off from the airport close by. These sounds are not in the background, but part of the learning. The sun is hot that day, beating down on us through holes in the corrugated metal sheeting of the roof. Air flows through and around the communal conversations we are having. The ordinary is extraordinary.

<sup>66</sup> NEFI (The Center for the Philosophical study of Infancy at EURJ) <https://www.facebook.com/nefiuerj>

## 4.7 The world remade again and again

The Community of Philosophical Enquiry, the pedagogy of Philosophy with Children (PwC) opens up the spaces in a school for child and the more -than-human to emerge as those who already participate. This participation, for we are already all (humans, child not considered fully human and more-than-humans) a part of the world, are excluded by dominant discourses which determine that only certain humans can speak, or have the right to be included. This exclusion is played out very clearly in schools which could not function without an (on the whole) uncontested hierarchy firmly in place.

In this chapter I have theorised participation in learning (e.g. at a school), to include the more-than-humans. I have also theorised the participation of child as already a full participant in the making of the world and contest the adult/child binary, which places child as not fully human or fully capable. I theorise participation for human and more-than-humans as ongoing, already happening, so we are not discovering knowledge afresh, it is not new and yet also new, we are re-turning to what is known, unknown, to be known, learnt, forgotten, become aware of and familiar with.

In this chapter I have also traced the entanglements of the humans (younger and older), more-than-human, and the places and spaces where Philosophy with Children is a phenomenon in this research. This learning about Philosophy with Children (for me as part of the phenomenon) has been a dis/embodied experience entangled with the more-than-human (e.g., materials, books, articles, travel, food, philosophy, theories, training, ants, and and and) and humans (e.g., student, lecturer, theorist, child, philosopher, teacher, pilot, and and and). I show how re-configuring the role of teacher is vital for the ontoepistemological shift necessary to happen for a philosophical enquiry to matter for all who participate (Haynes & Murriss, 2011, p. 285). Not all in the 'community' of a 'community of enquiry' are equally accepted as humans, the child humans are excluded from full participation. Also, the more-than-human must be considered: the ants are there (and not there). Similarly, the texts, visual images, cartoons, tapestries, songs, play dough, beads, music, poems, newspaper articles, paintings, picture books all matter in the sense that they have distributed agency<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>67</sup> "If agency is understood as enactment and not something someone has, then it seems not only appropriate but important to consider agency as distributed over nonhuman as well as human forms" (Barad, 2007, p.214).

In the following chapter I trace some of the entanglements of an event documented in the data co-creation process of this research, which contests dominant modes of enquiry, the making of a circle with a Group of Grade 2 learners at the research site. This experimental research resists the human subject as the most important aspect of the research or as the only 'one' with agency or intentionality. I will share with you the first part of the Community of Enquiry and continue with the posthuman analysis, which will engage with the material-discursive entanglements of the making of a circle.

## 5. Making a circle

### 5.1 Making a circle

In this chapter I trace some of the entanglements of this research which contests dominant modes of enquiry. Barad (2017a, p. 63) suggests that “entanglements call into question the geometrical notions of scale, proximity; topology with its focus on issues of connectivity and boundary...” As argued in Chapter 1 and 2 I continue thinking with Barad (2007, 2014, 2017a) which enables me to disrupt the notion of something being right here or a million kilometers away from here, wherever ‘here’ may be. The events (for what is happening is always a multiple) being shared ‘now’ took place in 2017, but are diffracted through the elastic number line on which 2021 and 1985 reverberate. They diffract through the settling of the sedimentary rocks in Cape Town millions of years ago, which formed part of Table Mountain and the deliberate planting of the Pine Forest in Pinelands in the 1800’s. I draw inspiration from Snaza et al., (2014, p. 40) who argue that “posthumanism can transform educational thought, practice, and research.” The way education research can be transformed is by deliberately extending the boundaries of who and what else matters in research besides the humans, besides what the adult humans can see, can hear and what can become intelligible to *them*.

Posthuman research is experimental research in the sense that it resists the human subject as the most important aspect of research, the only one with agency or intentionality. In this chapter the process of the making of the circle, and how integral it is in contributing to building the Community of Philosophical Enquiry (CPE), the pedagogy of Philosophy for/with Children (PwC) is analysed. A critical posthuman analysis which engages with the material-discursive entanglements of the making of the circle is offered. There is a move beyond the linguistic turn by also paying attention to the intra-actions in between human and more-than-human, place, the circle and the red plastic child sized chairs. Attention is drawn to the prevalence of mainly unequal adult-child relationships prevalent in most South African schools (Mayisela, 2017). Murriss and Haynes (2020, p. 25) argue “that authority is a central and highly contested concept for working with young children and their families and communities.” Karin Murriss has worked extensively in primary schools, high schools and with teachers in training at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa for more than ten years and specifically introducing PwC and the CPE into these classrooms. These pedagogical encounters has featured prominently as the way not ‘out’ but ‘in’ to these unequal

relationships between teachers and children. In this chapter I will show through this event, how these unequal adult-child relationships have the potential to be disrupted through the pedagogical approach of the CPE. This research takes place with a group of approximately 7-8 year old, Grade 2 learners at the research site.

This thesis has moved from re-membering as methodology in Chapter 1, to the situatedness of the land as the research site in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 with the help of Snaza et al., (2014) the more-than-human in a school as research site was celebrated and not ignored or understood as something in the 'background' as is habitually the case in schools. The silencing of child in school which Kizel (2016, p. 31) argues can occur in schools when a "*pedagogy of fear* stunts the active and vital educational growth of the young person, making him/her passive and dependent upon external disciplinary sources." This is very common in South African schools and it is not just the adult voices demanding silence, but also the way the curriculum determines what matters and what can be spoken about. The arrangement of desks in the classroom can serve to silence some and allow others to be heard. Also, the uniform can silence in how it reinforces a particular gender binary. Kizel offers an alternative, a community of enquiry as a "*pedagogy of searching*" (Kizel, 2016) which can become the pedagogy when the adult/child binary has been contested as was focused on in Chapter 4. The reconfiguring of the role of teacher is important and shapes how participation works in a CPE. Now in Chapter 5, join me as we make a circle and pay attention to not only the changing role of child and teacher as facilitator, but also the transformative role the more-than-human plays in a CPE.

Re-turning to the video footage after this session with this group of Grade 2 children, "using a particular approach to noticing, one that draws inspiration from scientific observation alongside ethnography and critical theory" (Swanson, et al., 2017, p. M7), I was not just noticing the children and their bodies, the semantics and verbal discourse but also the chairs and the materiality of the event. Murriss and Haynes (2018b, p. 12) point out that "[t]he recent 'material' or 'ontological' turn has informed a new scholarship in education to focus not only on the human and discursive, but also to include the more-than-human, such as material, space, atmosphere, breath, sound or nonhuman animals" as part of 'data'.<sup>68</sup> As decisions about what to exclude or include involves choices, the idea of creating data (e.g., do I, or do I not, include

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<sup>68</sup> Data in a posthuman formulation is co-created between participants, researcher, more-than-human, not there to be mined or found.

the role furniture plays) takes on ethical, epistemological and ontological components. In this chapter I explore the material-discursive intra-actions with and through the chairs, the hall, the children and the circle. Intra-action<sup>69</sup> is a Baradian term, “the notion of intra-action (in contrast to the usual ‘interaction’, which presumes the prior existence of independent entities or relata) represents a profound conceptual shift” with powerful practical implications (Barad, 2007, p. 139). What this means is that we turn our attention to what we have previously paid less attention to, that is, the role the more-than-human plays in agency and knowledge construction. I am now noticing in a different way as a researcher. There is not a focus on the child as a separate subject acting on the paper/chair/pencil but rather a focus on material-discursive relationality. The “profound conceptual shift” that Barad (2007, p. 139) refers to has made possible and opened up the inclusion of the more-than-human in what counts as data and what matters in data analysis. Paying attention to the more-than-human is difficult to consider when our gaze is usually fixed firmly on the adult humans, what they say, how they say it and also what can and cannot be said (the notion of ‘discourse’) since the linguistic turn. However, Barad’s theory of “agential realism” not only disrupts epistemologies and ontologies but also questions the ethics of ontoepistemologies that take human exceptionalism as a given (Barad, 2017a; Rose, 2017; Braidotti, 2019; Haraway, 2016; and Swanson et al., 2017). Critical posthumanism therefore provides the theoretical framework for thinking about a transformative theory/practice. It is transformative because it decenters the humans and involves rethinking what humans do and what certain humans previously excluded (children, people of colour and living in poverty etc.) are actually capable of.

## 5.2 Walking into the school hall with the chairs

When I re-watch the video footage of the research session, I see the children walk into the school hall chatting and laughing as they carry their red plastic chairs inside. Murriss et al., (2018, p.162) suggest not ignoring the atmosphere, or labelling it, and to resist representationalism. I acknowledge the presence of the atmosphere without trying to determine what ‘it is’ as if it cannot be changing all the time as different intra-actions take place. The shifting of a chair, the place of the wooden floor under and around plastic chair, the sounds of laughter, sneezing, dust particles tickling, all these intra-actions which contribute to

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<sup>69</sup> See Chapter 2 where intra-action is first introduced.

the atmosphere - what I would tentatively call an air of expectation or anticipation about what the research is going to be about.

The school hall being entered was built with exposed brick work it has an approximately 5 metre-high double volume ceiling. There are huge windows about a metre from the ceiling that, when seated on the floor of the hall, reveal the sky. The windows are so high that only the sun, moon, stars, tops of trees, clouds, bugs, ants and birds can look in. The floor of the hall is made of suspended wooden strip flooring. The raised stage<sup>70</sup> is mainly used when school plays are performed or for art exhibitions and musical performances. A massive grand piano stands in the corner; it is very old. The hall has an approximately 500 plus person capacity, and it is used regularly every Monday when all the children and teaching staff meet for Assembly.<sup>71</sup> The main entrance of the hall houses a foyer with bathrooms and there are doors at the stage end of the hall that each lead off to more bathrooms and change rooms.

**Figure 5.1**

*Walking into the hall with chairs to create a circle*



The children walk into the hall carrying all the same school-issued, child-sized, red plastic chairs they sit on which are usually behind their desks, in their Grade 2 classroom. Some

<sup>70</sup> All these events happened with regularity and frequency pre-Covid 19.

<sup>71</sup> During an assembly a class presents some inspirational play or act. Sometimes a guest speaker, a teacher or the principal provides some educational, motivational or inspirational input.

children walk quickly and put their chairs down noisily, some children are more tentative and stroll in quietly. The chairs are in their arms, some leaning against their chests, some chairs are being peered over or around, some children come inside the hall in pairs, negotiating the entrance, looking up and down to check their footing as a step up is required from outside. It is a sunny Autumn day, as the children slip through the door, sunbeams shining from the African sun make their way inside too. They are all making their way into the massive expanse of the school hall, the children walk over to where I am standing as I call to them: "Let's make a circle." They are consenting participants in this research. Their parents have given permission and they have signed their agreement to participate<sup>72</sup>. There is giggling, shuffling, chatting to each other and dragging of feet on the wooden strip floors. There are also continued negotiations about seating.

As a researcher/teacher/co-researcher/enquirer already entangled with the desire to work in a space that is not a traditional classroom, I was drawn to the abundance of space in the huge school hall. In South Africa only former Model-C schools were provided with funds from the Apartheid state to build school halls<sup>73</sup>. See Section 3.2 in Chapter 3. I was intrigued by the idea of a space other than their classroom, and this became a significant part of the methodology and pedagogy for each of the 13 philosophical enquiries. The Foundation Phase children usually sit in groups at small wooden tables, with wooden or plastic chairs, in their Foundation Phase classrooms at this school, as seen in Figure 5.2 below.

## **Figure 5.2**

*Desks and chairs in rows in a Foundation Phase classroom*

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<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 1 for examples of consent forms.

<sup>73</sup> As a child attending a primary and high school during Apartheid, neither of the schools I attended had a school hall. We would have our Assemblies and gatherings outside. This was a deliberate strategy of the Apartheid state.



Most of the classrooms have a mat at the front of the class which provides much needed alternative seating for being read to, playing games or learning in a group but not necessarily as a group. Benjamin and Echeverria (1992, p. 74) who develop an argument about knowledge in a conventional classroom and in a classroom that is a community of enquiry, argue that a “conventional classroom presupposes the validity of the Cartesian conception of knowledge.” I see the usual classroom space and layout of desks in rows as a nod to Cartesian convention and as an already drawn map; these children were coming from a classroom, which has a predetermined landscape (See Figure 5.2 above). This is not necessarily negative; teachers set up their classrooms to function in specific ways, with prearranged assigned seating for pedagogical and practical reasons. Children often have none or very little say in this in terms of classroom layout. Ingold (2007, p. 15) suggests that a map provides a “complete representation of the territory,” and in this case the classroom layout provides a predetermined route.



map and opens up a space for “wayfaring,” which is about movement and about being the movement (Ingold, 2007, p. 75). The hall is not mapped yet for this research; together with the children, the chairs, the sun, the shadows, the light coming in from the windows and the bulkiness of the piano – decisions are made and remade about where to think / draw / speak / imagine – it is not pre-determined. There is no one way or one place. There is continual movement and the possibility for movement, which may not always be possible in the regular classroom setting.

### 5.3 Chair/child/childhood/schooling

As the school hall was not in use or scheduled for any activities on the day when I came in to work with the children, I asked their class teacher to ask the children to bring the chairs they sit on in their classroom along to the school hall. They needed to bring their chairs with them, as the only chairs available in the school hall are adult- sized plastic maroon colour chairs, stored in a storage room, alongside the hall. These chairs are used when parents come for meetings, or to the Assembly or other gatherings in the hall. The children almost always sit on the floor and the teachers and other adults sit on these chairs<sup>74</sup>. This is an entrenched pattern of hierarchy at the school. I may not have noticed the chairs, the plastic material they are made of or their arresting red colour, had I not shifted from the usual anthropocentric focus in this research.

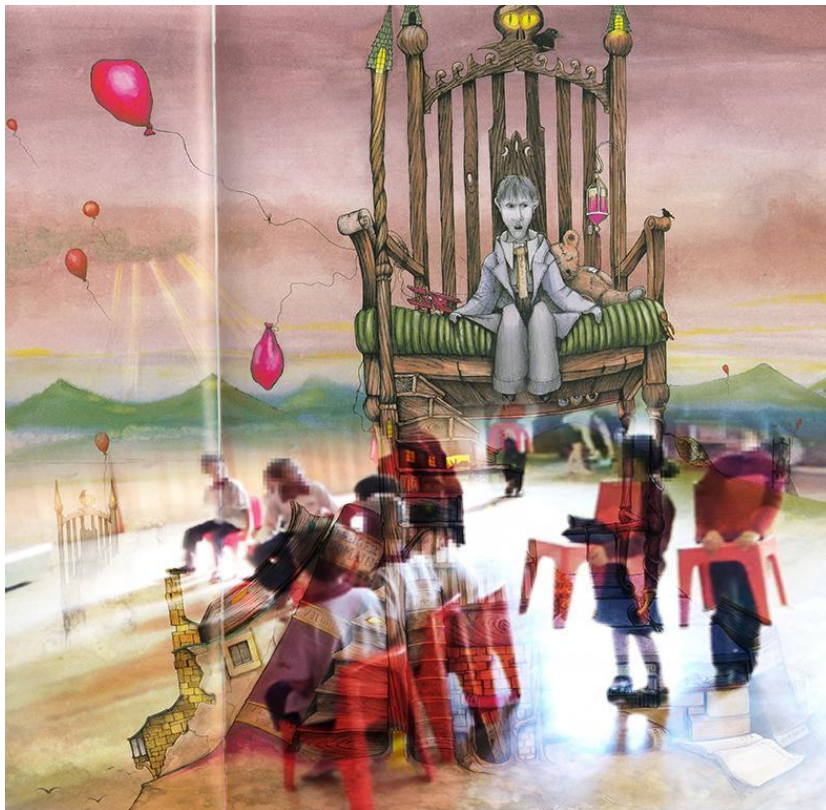
I am struck by the red plastic chairs in the video footage that I am re-watching and it brings to my re-remembering one of the images in Colin Thompson’s (1998) iconic picturebook, *How to live forever*. See the image from the picturebook diffracted with the image of the children walking into the hall in Figure 5.4 below.

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<sup>74</sup> As I have had a more than 23 association with the school as a teacher and parent I have attended hundreds of gatherings in the hall. Assemblies, music events, and school plays all pre-Covid pandemic.

**Figure 5.4**

*The Ancient Child and the immortal red chairs*



The picturebook is imaginatively drawn and written by Colin Thompson, with the bookshelves of the library containing every book ever written, coming to life every night. Two hundred years ago the record card for a book from the library was hidden. The book was called *How to live forever*. Peter and his cat, Brian set off every night to search for the book. Peter thinks if he reads it, he and Brian will never grow old. After two years of searching Peter and Brian find four wise old men who hand Peter a small book: *How to Live Forever, or Immortality for Beginners* and they take him to the only person who has ever read the book, the Ancient Child who says to Peter:

“You mustn’t read it,” said the Ancient Child. “It will drive you mad.”  
“I am the only person,” he went on, “who has read it and not lost my mind. I was younger than you when I found it and I couldn’t read it fast enough. Then, while my friends grew up I stayed like this. They

grew out of toys and fell in love. They married and had children and all I could do was sit and watch. Now I am frozen in time. I keep saying that I had everything, but all I had was endless tomorrows. To live forever is not to live at all. That is why I hid the book.”

(Thompson, 1998, p. 24)

The Ancient Child has an angry expression and seems frozen in *chronos* time, his body perched in the massive, aging wooden chair (see Figure 5.4 above). The chair is a throne, a symbol of an irrelevant colonial power and like the child-sized chair in some schools, more prison than plaything. The chair in the picturebook reaches high into the sky. The teddy bear and red aeroplane rest on either side of the boy, reminiscent of a childhood marked by *chronos* where time marches by tick, tock, tick, tock. The red fluid, being pumped into the teddy bear intravenously keeps the bear alive and immortal. Alive and immortal for these two are not the same. The Ancient Child's suit is ill-fitting, grey, aging and oversized. The only colour in his clothing that is not grey is a brown tie.

The spiderweb woven between the Ancient Child's jacket and the wooden struts of the chair, reveal that he has sat in the chair motionless and still for a long time. The child-sized chairs in schools also make demands about sitting and sitting still. Bone (2019, p. 142) reminds us that “the act of listening is connected to sitting still, despite no evidence that movement impairs children's hearing and listening abilities.” The listening required in schools or classrooms where the presupposed epistemology or theory of knowledge is that knowledge can be acquired passively (Benjamin & Echeverria, 1992, p. 65) requires sitting still. The kind of listening that Bone (2019) is referring to is about listening to the teacher and sitting still when the teacher speaks, or only when what is considered knowledge by those in authority is shared. It is not about listening for the other noises, how the paper rustles when squashed into a ball, or the sounds of the birds singing, chirping or calling outside. I question what is valued in listening. Can children try to listen to the ants as they walk around the classroom, along the walls? How is listening for a noise or sound humans think they cannot hear, listening? Bone (2019) refers to the chair as both “a support mechanism and a trap” (p.142). The Ancient Child in the picturebook is supported by the chair but is trapped in it as everything around him changes and dies, while he remains alive and immortal.

In Chapter 3, the rodent traps placed around the school expressed the relationality between some animals and child, childhood and schooling. Rats and mice who have no political rights, unlike when they are pets and can be trapped without any outcry about animal cruelty, in the same schools where children raise funds to save the whales or the animals some humans are deemed as endangered species.

Where I write from, here in South Africa, there is a growing awareness of the dangers of plastic for the environment with even very popular fast food restaurants (finally) rejecting the use of the single-use straw. I am therefore struck by the use of plastic and plastic chairs in this school. These plastic red and maroon chairs and one plastic and metal wheelchair are a sharp juxtaposition as they scrape noisily against the wood strip floors and exposed brick wall in this modern, functionalist yet minimalist space which is the school hall. The children did not have any say in the purchasing of the plastic chairs which they sit on at their wooden desks. So, when we trace some of the entanglements: the wood, the plastic, where the chairs were manufactured, the implication of the carbon footprint if they were transported via air or sea from another country into South Africa, whether a 'real child' was used to measure the height and comfort provided by the chair and the ecological costs. When we consider the amount of money spent on children in schools during Apartheid (which was completely inequitable between the race groups) and now 'post'-Apartheid (where the inability to fund schools equitably because of the massive disparities inherited from Apartheid) this additionally puts the endless use of the earth's (non-renewable) resources into sharp relief.

The red plastic balloons from the picturebook (see Figure 5.4 above) speak to the red plastic chairs from the research site. My research into the harmful environmental impact of plastic balloons shocks me. I am horrified yet not surprised that they could take between six months and four years to degrade. In this time they can cause endless problems for all parts of the ecosystem. In this degrading process they are harmful and fatal to almost every source of life in the cosmos. Plastic chairs could take 100-500 years to decompose into microplastics. They are immortal. They could live forever. Without reading the book, *How to Live Forever, or Immortality for Beginners*. Murriss and Kohan (2020, p. 586) remind us:

how the chronological status of school, since Modernity, is a place where time is experienced in the form of a linearity of successive, consecutive and irreversible movements creating a dividing line between

past and future; the present being just a limit of both of them but in fact having no 'substance'. If school time is mainly chronological time, then it is composed of past and future. In school there are no opportunities to experience a present time; put more strongly, the present does not literally exist in schools other than as a limit, border or edge between past and future.

I think with Murriss and Kohan (2020) and argue that school time works in the way they have described for the human and the more-than-human. In early childhood settings like the Foundation Phase (for children aged 6-9) section of this primary school, small chairs are in every classroom. The small plastic or wooden chairs (see Figure 5.1) haunt early childhood settings. I think with Barad (2017c, p. G113) who theorises hauntings through quantum field theory and proposes that,

...hauntings are lively indeterminacies of time-being, materially constitutive of matter itself-indeed, of everything and nothing. Hauntings, then, are not mere rememberings of a past (assumed to be) left behind (in actuality) but rather the dynamism of *ontological indeterminacy of time-being/being-time in its materiality*.

(Barad, 2017c, p. G113)

Hauntings of ghosts of children, teachers, ants, curriculum, sweat, tears, big teacher bottoms and small child bottoms, footprints for helping reach a higher shelf, can and will outlive every child and adult human at the school. The agelessness of the chair is trapped in the plastic red signifier of childhood, fun and joy. The temporality of time is in the chair, the child-sized plastic red chair is the Ancient Child, in the school, who lives forever, but does not live at all.

Bone (2019, p. 143) reminds us that "the small chair is a potent marker of the early childhood educational environment." Chairs and desks are considered necessary furniture in schools and perform in very specific ways for the different kinds of humans at schools. Those with significantly more power than children, such as the teachers can choose not to use their chairs if they do not want to. They have the freedom to stride around the classroom and have a choice of where to sit sometimes on the desks or tables. This same freedom of movement is not as easily extended to the children for whom the chairs perform very differently as a part of

the child/childhood/schooling phenomenon. Chairs perform mainly as a trap for child<sup>75</sup> in school. The release function is controlled by the teachers who suggest when they can move off the chairs and when they need to be on them. Usually on the chair refers to work time and off the chair relates to play time. The materiality is part of the conceptual (play or work).

Asking the children to bring their red plastic chairs into the hall, for this research, disrupts the temporality of *chronos* time. See Chapter 1 about *aion* as theorised by Kohan (2014, 2015). The chair/child/schooling is on the move.

## 5.4 Let's make a circle

The research session, parts of which I describe below, is number two of 13 philosophical enquiry sessions I engaged in at this school, one with each class of children at the school from Grade 1 to Grade 7. Each of these sessions are not separate events, but are all bleeding through one another, through the tapestry, the philosophical questions, the ants, the neighbours cat visiting the various sessions. The numbers and dates remain elastic, creative, indeterminate. Ready to coil and re-turn and turn on and through again and again. In 2017, when preparing for this session, and after re-watching the video footage of the first session that had been recorded, I realised that, during the first session, the videographer had not recorded the children walking into the hall. I had used a typical anthropocentric focus for what I had considered would be the beginning of the philosophical enquiry and had asked the videographer to start recording only once the children were seated in a circle, 'for the real lesson where learning takes place to being, the work!'

Using critical posthumanism as a navigational tool requires that attention is also paid to the materiality of the event as we try to decenter the human. Just before this session begins, I ask Joyce West, who had volunteered to be the videographer for this session to start video-recording as the children walk into the hall with their chairs. As a researcher now re-looking at the video footage, in preparation to write this chapter, I have to keep challenging my humanist assumptions to ensure that the analysis of this pedagogical event will not only focus on the humans. Ceder (2016, p. 18) approaches relationality as a "de-centering concept."

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<sup>75</sup> Here I refer to child as fleshy bodies in space and time as chronological child.

Decentering the human would include analysing the children, chairs, hall, ants, concepts, floor not as individual entities, but considering the relationality in-between them.

The material, the children and more-than-humans contribute to this event, and my attention needs to be pulled into these relations. My analysis therefore is/was/will be on the intra-actions between myself, the child humans, the video camera, the recorded footage, the sounds, what is focused on by the video camera lens and what is ignored. Consequently, I asked the videographer to focus on the whole human and more-than-human bodies and specifically to videotape the complexity of the scene, not only zoom in on a face and mouth when a child or adult was talking. This is a particular methodological point, in the way videography works in posthumanist research. I elaborate on this in Chapter 6. What emerges is quite disconcerting but surprising and curiosity provoking footage, as there are legs and shoes and feet and 'incomplete' human bodies. This lends itself to a different way of looking at what is usually expected or what has been normalised in educational research.

The way I am working with and through this 'data' is to try to shift my gaze and analysis from only the human, in order to include, through a relational ontology, the more-than-human. As unsettling as this is, it helps me ask what else is happening? I am problematising the "anthropocentric gaze, the gaze that puts humans above other matter..." (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 526). The analysis can therefore include the intra-actions and what is happening in between the concept of circle, the chairs, the scraping of the chairs on the wooden floor, the notion of the embodied circle that only comes into being through relationality. I pay attention to the data that is not lying on the 'cutting room floor' of my study. I notice what is usually discarded when the focus is not on what the humans are doing. When the relations between what adult humans have orchestrated and deemed important when engaging in research with 'children in schools.' is contested. Rather I want to discover how does this circle work? How do these 4 minutes of making the circle and all the minutes in the past/present/future and their entanglements bring the philosophical enquiry that happens a bit later into being? What are the exciting and beautiful implications for pedagogy, for knowledge and for inclusion of the humans and the more-than-humans?

I turn to PwC practitioner/theorist and philosophical play specialist, Sara Stanley's work as her practice has offered ways for me to rethink my PwC practice, especially the inclusion of the more-than-human in the community of philosophical enquiry. Her philosophical play approach and her work in South Africa has enabled me to work with her innovative ideas around the

making of the circle. The focus of Sara's work is "the rhetoric of the imaginary and its capacity to use play as a resource for philosophical enquiry" (Stanley & Lyle, 2017, p. 53). I watched Sara demonstrate her philosophical play approach with a group of 32 Grade 1 children in a class at the school which is the research site for this PhD. Sara was modelling a philosophical enquiry for a group of pre-service Foundation Phase student teachers from the University of Cape Town. When the children walked into the classroom, she called them to the mat and *encouraged* them to make a circle. This novel process fascinated me. It was far more 'messy', more participatory, more playful and enacted a de-stabilising of the more powerful teacher role. This was clearly a deliberate pedagogical strategy in which Sara encouraged the children through various prompts to make the circle. She did not tell them where to stand or how to sit. She did not move them into a predetermined circle shape. Rather she guided them through inquiry and questioning to let them make the circle. Sara's philosophical practice "assumes a different view of child, a child who is already capable. Her practice also assumes a different view of knowledge" (Reynolds & Peers, 2018, p. 140).

As I re-watch the recording of the enquiry I did with the Grade 2's for my research, I am struck by the children greeting me in sing song as "Mrs. Reynolds". This is a convention in the school which strongly reinforces the marker as adult in authority over child(ren) in some instances, for example when children are greeting teachers. Murriss and Haynes (2020, p. 28) problematise the concept of authority in schools and suggest, that, "there are many layers to authority and teacher's roles are embedded in larger systems of accountability, as well as social expectations regarding the nature of their role and how it is performed".

This particular greeting convention is evident in most government (and private) schools in South Africa. The children say the name of the person, usually with the title and then the person's surname. All the children say it in unison, so inevitably it becomes a sing song. It is the convention of greeting that I was used to performing as a child in primary and high school and receiving as a teacher. This greeting style is less prominent in high schools.

One of the affordances of looking at the making of a circle together, and then by paying attention to the ways adult/child relations are reinforced through these practices of greeting for example, brings the opportunity to destabilize this position of authority that I inherit simply by being an adult in this school. It is a hauntological inheritance because it is not just the greeting, the naming, and the use of the title, it is centuries of the use of the material-

discursive to cement particular relationships in schools. I suggest the CPE makes the cement fluid again and porous.

## 5.5 Researcher as Difficultator

When I ask the children: “Is this the best circle we could make?”, I am bringing my role as teacher/researcher/facilitator in a philosophical enquiry into question. The question performs to destabilize the role of authority implied as an adult at the research site. Haynes and Kohan (2018) suggest the role of difficultator is one of cultivating ignorance and weakness. They explain:

Ignorance is not a negative oppositional position. With regard to decentering, in ignorance we find hesitation and waiting, inaction, an opening towards the possibility of including the more than human in ways that have not been done before, a way to recuperate the material of human, inhuman and nonhuman *in* rather than *above* nature.

Haynes & Kohan (2018, p. 206)

Ignorance and weakness are not the usual dispositions or traits required of what routinely is called a ‘facilitator’, and not a difficultator, but rather requires challenging the different ways of being and doing facilitation in a philosophical enquiry. What in these intra-actions brings ignorance and weakness into being? When I ask these questions about the circle, I am deliberately tentative. I am not sure what the children are going to say or do about how the circle will be made, how the chairs will work, the sun, the wooden floors, the noises, the angles necessary to make a circle. I stay with the surprise(s). The children similarly are not sure what I am going to say or do and are asking questions in response. We are not sure in that we do not know, but we are in a place of not knowing together, questioning what is usually known or taken for granted even that we all understand what a circle is, in the same way. I am aware that my role is a different one, one of shared authority (Michaud & Väilitalo, 2017). See more on the shared model of authority in PwC classrooms in Section 6.4 of Chapter 6. I am not equal to the children as I have different responsibilities. This way of working can also be unsettling to the children as I know why I am doing this, but they do not. They may also be used to being in educational processes where the teachers do ‘know’ all the answers and ask all the questions and they have to guess what the teacher wants to hear. I

also know that there is power in being part of the disruption of these fixed and taken for granted ways of being, teaching and learning.

These questions work to disrupt the adult/child binary with these ways of being with the children in this role as difficultator, in this hall, with these chairs, in the making of the circle. As a practitioner I see how the CPE creates openings which make it work as a democratising pedagogy in the way the adult/child binary can be disrupted and how it contests the implied power dynamics – not simply that the teacher is more knowledgeable than the children or even the chairs, but that we pay attention to their relationality. We have not ‘gotten to’ the stimulus/provocation/text/ thinking time or philosophical discussion, the next important steps in a philosophical enquiry. The ‘making a circle together time’ has been an opportunity to be intra-acting with the idea that we would be working with concepts and thinking together. Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2014) cited in Murriss and Haynes (2018b, p. 11; italics in original) argue that “philosophy is a *doing* a creating of concepts. Concepts are complex, not discrete, but intensive coordinates, in that they are composed of many parts.” The children, the circle and what a circle is (and what it is not), plus the chairs, camera as apparatus, and the sun, air, video recorder as concepts are put into question and come into being through their relationality.

## 5.6 So, why a circle in a Community of Philosophical Enquiry?

Kohan (2014, p. 1) considered Lipman’s project, P4C to be “potentially revolutionary – not only for philosophy and education, but for childhood as well, both theoretically and practically.” This is also my experience as a philosophy with children practitioner, enthusiast and emerging difficultator. Theoretically and practically we were already starting the philosophical enquiry through the making of the circle, playing with concepts, the space and time, the hall and sunlight all intra-acting. The process of the making of the circle is integral to ‘building’ the community of philosophical enquiry. This aspect of this research made me question why there is less focus on ‘how the circle is made’ in research about Philosophy with Children. In my PwC training, it was more or less assumed to ask participants to sit in a circle, which would ensure that the participants could see and hear each other better. The circular seating arrangement is understood to facilitate particular thinking moves and games which all help with building the CPE. During the intra-actions in my research activity there was, however, by

comparison, more focus on the thinking, rhizomatic concept development (Kennedy, 2012a), and the role of questions in developing the CPE.

So, why the circle in the CPE? Lipman (2003, p. 100) explains what this shape facilitates: students are “seated in the circle of chairs, face-to-face with their classmates, they employ the same thinking skills and thinking tools (such as reasons and criteria) that they have seen others employ.” A search for recent scholarly work from the global community of scholars in the *Routledge International Handbook on Philosophy for Children* (Gregory et al., 2017), reveals that ‘circle’ is mentioned 13 times in relation to a CPE (Baumfield, 2017, p. 123; Echeverria & Hannam, 2017, p. 6, 8; D’Olimpio & Teschers, 2017, pp. 147-148; Costa-Carvalho & Mendonça, 2017, p. 132; Glaser & Gregory, 2017, p. 183; Strong Makaiau, 2017, pp. 22-23; Strong Makaiau et al., 2017, pp. 231-232). What I would like to add to this entanglement with a community of people doing research in Philosophy for/with children, is how paying attention to the more-than-human changes what counts as important in the CPE. What are the affordances of the circle and in the case of my project, the materiality of the red, plastic chairs (and not just the humans including the children) in terms of the video recorded session of the circle? Doing justice to the role of the material (including the video-recorder through endless play-back sessions in my office) decenters the human in what counts as important in philosophical enquiry with children (and chairs and ...). The video-recorder does this work of decentering by giving me access to “events which at the time were peripheral to my view and consciousness” (Giorza, 2019, p. 8). It is no longer what I saw on the day or imagined was happening, the vide-recorder makes a different understanding of this event possible. A “story begins to emerge from the digital material” (Giorza, 2019, p. 9) which not only is decentering the human, but is making the inclusion of the more-than-human in this educational research possible methodologically.

## 5.7 Thinking with and through child/chair/circle

In this chapter, there has been an attempt to trace the entanglements: in between the humans, more-than-humans, the concepts and the material-discursive being analysed as what has been constituted as the research data. The posthuman analysis took place by paying attention to what is usually ignored in research data through intentionally re-turning to video footage again and again. This chapter shows how the making of a circle can be a

democratising practice, by including in the concept of democracy, the more-than-human. We looked at how the red, plastic chairs placed by the children, as a pedagogical practice, works to disrupt the adult/child binary. The analysis also included the intra-actions between the chairs and humans, more-than-humans and the materiality of place. As the substantial descriptions of the role the more-than-human played in the enquiry shows, my deliberate choice to not only privilege the discursive in the analysis of the making of the circle, was an attempt to do more justice to the material-discursive relationality involved in the making of the circle. Normally understood as mere preparation to the actual (thinking) work done by the child(ren) and the adult(s), this discussion shows that the thinking work in a community of philosophical enquiry is always already entangled with the material world as an ontological given. Matter and meaning cannot be separated out.

## 6. Voting on the questions in a Community of Philosophical Enquiry

### 6.1 Age as a category of exclusion in classrooms and the world

In 2018, 10 year old Mangaliso Nxesi addressed the Republic of South Africa's parliament and made the following statement: "...just because somebody has a different age than another person does not necessarily mean that they should have less access to things because of their age or anything like that..." He was referring to the fact that children in South Africa cannot vote and participate in the election of government leaders and the national president until they turn 18. Mangaliso was building a specific argument about the exclusion of children from the national voting process and was asking the parliamentary committee to consider his suggestion.

Children are not just excluded from national voting processes as Mangaliso Nxesi reminds us, but are also excluded from participating in decisions about what and even how they are learning at school. A way to choose 'the question' that has become standard practice in a CPE, and specifically the way practitioners of PwC who I have learnt from, practice, is that the children (not the teacher) *vote* on each question. The question which receives the most votes is then discussed. This process can be viewed as a democratic practice.

In chapter 5 I showed how the making of a circle has the potential to be a democratising practice, through the inclusion of the more- than- human in the concept of democracy. For example, how moving the chairs from the straight rows in classrooms, into a circle, creates a different pedagogical possibility for how learning and teaching can happen. The chairs enact a disrupting of the adult/child binary because of the way the chairs now work differently. Moving the chairs into the circle shifts the adult/child relationality. In this chapter, my posthuman analysis troubles the notion of PwC as a democratic practice, by tracing the process of voting on the questions raised by the children. Democratic practices rarely apply to all humans and seldom to children, especially children in early education childhood settings and primary schools, not just in South Africa. In what follows we explore how democracy works in a

community of philosophical enquiry and trace the partial entanglements which help destabilize the unequal relationships in schools between adult teachers and children, the more - than - human and place. If, as I have argued in Chapter 5, the thinking work in a CPE is already entangled with the material world as an ontological given, then matter and meaning cannot be separated out. This chapter attempts to show the material-discursive action of voting for a question through how the children, the buttons used for voting, the fruit brought into the room (to be eaten later), and other matter co-constitute a discussion in the philosophical enquiry, making possible a destabilizing of unequal relations in the classroom.

## 6.2 Creating questions

The questions that are a focus in this chapter are from a Grade 3 class. They are 8-9 years old and in the last grade considered part of the Foundation Phase in the South African basic education system. During each research session, we walk to the foyer of the school where we would look at the tapestry hanging in situ (see Chapter 3). For some children they mention they have never 'noticed' it before despite waking past it many times. For this philosophical enquiry we used the school's audio-visual room, a space without any desks, which is deliberately not their classroom (see Chapter 5) where we briefly discuss the tapestry. The children are given some thinking time during which they are encouraged to draw their thoughts about the tapestry, using their crayons, pencils or markers on large sheets of paper that I have brought with me. (See examples of the children's drawings and theorising about the drawings in Chapter 8.) Then, on their own or in small groups (they could choose) the children developed a question that they were curious or puzzled by which was evoked by the tapestry. Once back in the circle, one child from each group then reported to the larger group on their drawing and their group's question. I then wrote each question onto a big sheet of paper, in large letters, (see Figure 6.3 below). The questions became the focus of our attention.

Kennedy and Kohan (2008, p. 9) suggest that we should allow questions to do something with our thinking and that is to question. They explain that "[t]his implies that a question is interesting not so much because of what it is or it might be, but because of the movement that it can generate in the questioner and the questioned" ( Kennedy & Kohan, 2008, p. 9).

In 2019, as a workshop participant, I witnessed Walter Kohan enacting this process in Bogota, Colombia, as questions were difficultated at an ICPIC pre-conference workshop. During this workshop Walter Kohan (2014, p. 5) emphasised his deep seated belief that “philosophy arises from a question”, which he learnt from Matthew Lipman. Walter Kohan works with questions in a way that makes time feel and seem different; the questions grow and develop a life through the questions which develop from the first question. I observe the strengthening of the ways questions work with time, as the workshop slowly unfolds. Walter Kohan asked us as participants to introduce ourselves with a question based on the provocation he provided and then to ask a question of another participants’ question. It becomes a dance with the questions – and then the two questions ask another question, and in this way a new question is produced. It is an extraordinary process and deeply entangled with philosophy. I watched Walter Kohan using a similar, very imaginative process only using students questions throughout a lecture on ethics in 2017 and had engaged with his writing and philosophy from 2016. But, additionally this very meaningful activity in Colombia, enabled me to be more open to the process of questions developing from other questions and then philosophy arising out of these complex processes in other PwC inspired activities. This unfolding process is what I have tried to follow as researcher / difficultator with the children at the research site and through the writing of this thesis.

Space and time are both considered to be in containers in schools. The timetables determine that, even the time that I was ‘allowed’ to be with the children and the more-than-human, as we co-created data together. The writing of this thesis process disrupts unilinear time as I return to the questions, the time and spaces of the questions. There is stretching, developing, growing, shrinking and moving, in, through and around the questions as this writing unfolds. Furthermore, it is important for questions to emerge and develop beyond the walls of the classroom, where we as humans often limit thinking, being and becoming.

Laverty and Gregory (2018, p. 1) argue that, “in a community of inquiry, people with diverse experiences, ideas and concerns join in dialogue around a shared question...” These shared questions are essential to a CPE. It matters that questions are asked and it matters deeply that the children create the questions, or allow the questions to emerge from the provocation presented to them. Very often in schools, teachers ask the questions and the role given to children is to simply answer them correctly (or not).

Oliverio (2018, p. 69) argues that, “the classroom community of inquiry is the domain where students are led to recognize their own beliefs and are at the same time, constantly challenged and shaken out of their complacency.” The questions that emerge help challenge the children to question their beliefs and create a different kind of accountability to the process of learning they are engaged in. This is a radical reconfiguring of an early childhood education classroom. The facilitator of the CPE is what Murriss calls a “pregnant stingray” (Murriss, 2016b, p. 182). This posthuman figuration of ‘the teacher’ sees their role as a “co-enquirer, a participant that ‘numbs’, asking questions that provoke philosophical enquiry, without knowing the answers to the questions s/he poses; and facilitating only where appropriate, that is benefiting the community’s construction of ideas” (Murriss, 2016b, p. 182). This kind of questioning by the “pregnant stingray” is very different from the usual questions asked in classrooms where one word answers are expected or only answers that are uncontested. Matthews (1994, p.5) suggests that once children have been in school a while, “they learn that only ‘useful’ questioning is expected of them” which, through my observations generally appears to refer to one word answers, or answers that are right or are uncontested.

I would argue that the questions developed by the children make new ways of being im/possible<sup>76</sup> in the classroom and create conditions for deeply meaningful intragenerational dialogue and learning to occur, which disrupts and destabilises the adult/child relations in a classroom. Sharp (1996/2018a, p. 180) suggests that “to question is to take a stance of curiosity or challenge toward someone or something, which constitutes a relationship of freedom in regard to it.” From my experiences in many philosophical enquiries with children and my years of research in this area of philosophy the children are not asking and developing questions to get an answer from someone or something. The questions evoke a curiosity in ways that develop the richness of the philosophical dialogue. Also, the philosophical enquiry has the im/possibility of creating conditions where radical un/learning can occur for example that instead of questions needing answers rather questions can help other questions emerge. This is radical as most questions at school or even in higher education are marked correct and awarded grades when provided with an answer, not when more questions are posed.

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<sup>76</sup> I use the Baradian forward slash for im/possible to signify the queering of the possible/impossible binary (Barad, 2014).

### 6.3 The questions

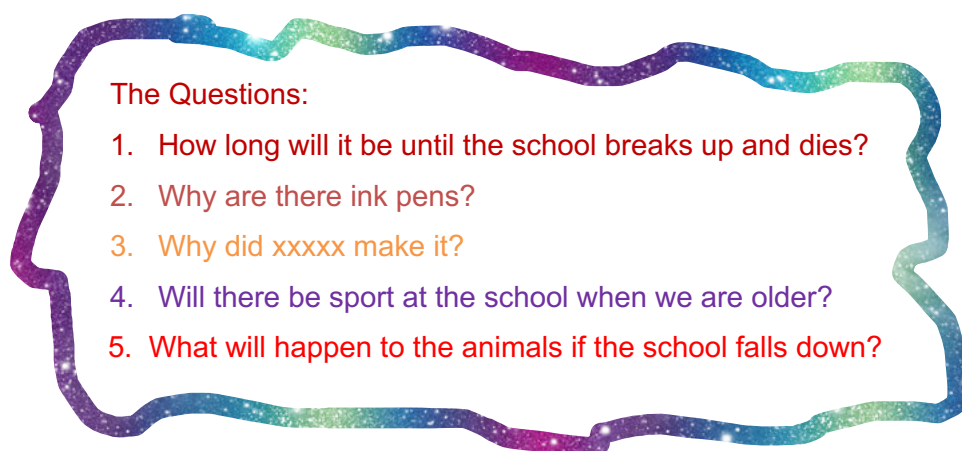
As I re-turn to the video and photographic images of my research in order to think with, question, write and re-write this chapter, I am drawn to the voting taking place by the group of Grade 3 children who participated in my research project. The circle (see Chapter 5) changes shape as the children leave their chairs and are drawn to the poster through the act of voting. There is a drawing nearer to each other, to the colours, to the questions to the carpet, to the earth and the land. A physical drawing, evoked by the tapestry, draws the children nearer to curiosity and questioning, evoked by the tapestry. I re-watch and re-listen to the data created via the video recording and I think with Murriss and Menning (2019, p. 2) and do not read the video recorded data as an “objective, neutral methodological tool” because the ethics are implied, entangled and present. I know too that I am limited by my human ways of seeing and this video-recording makes a different re-remembering of the event possible. I hear the words, that come with my 2017/1977/2020 voice through the headphones into my 2017/1985/2020 ears...“put your vote down”. I am excited that my theoretical framework of critical posthumanism gives me a way to make sense of, and to “shift the role of the researcher using videography in educational settings” (Murriss & Menning, 2019, p .3), because this is not an event I am looking back at, to write about *now*, in ‘this’ ‘present’. As explained in Chapter 1, temporal diffraction (Barad, 2007, 2014, 2017a) means that the event is not over and has not already happened. Temporal diffraction changes how we understand what we are seeing and are implicated in. The video recording is not of children playing, thinking, philosophising, voting, speaking or learning in a container of space and time, *in 2017*. Posthumanism and the notion of temporal diffraction explode the notion of ‘there’ and ‘then’ and ‘here’ and ‘now’ – and this is how I read ‘this’ video-recording. It is still in its becoming. I am challenged by Murriss and Menning (2019, p. 3) who illustrate in their introduction to a special journal issue, through various examples that the “indeterminacy and uncertainty of this ontological shift in research opens up possibilities to evaluate children’s movements differently, troubling hierarchical relationships between younger and older humans.” The apparatus of the CPE as research which the children are participating in is where the thinking, learning, evaluating and creating is happening through the intra-actions that are emerging.

Michaud and Väitalo (2017, p. 27) argue that “...P4C is systematically presented as having among its main goals to democratize education and foster democratic citizenship.” One of the reasons to support this claim is that the children are allowed to vote on and choose the

question they want to discuss in the philosophical enquiry. In Figure 6.1 below, surrounded in technicolour are the children's questions<sup>77</sup> that they came up with in their groups, based on the provocation of the tapestry.

### Figure 6.1

*Children's questions from their groups*



Provoked by the tapestry, these questions emerge after 'thinking time' alone or in pairs, after drawing and creating what we adults might call 'child art'. Gareth Matthews (1994), philosopher and advocate of philosophy for/with children and the philosophy of childhood as a branch of philosophy in his book, *The Philosophy of Childhood* helps me understand the affect of the questions developed by this group of 9 year old children.

Matthews (1994) argues that "philosophical thinking in children has been left out of the account of childhood that developmental psychologists have given us" (p. 13). The expectation is that these questions in multi-colour above are unusual or unexpected and therefore may not necessarily be philosophical in a usual early childhood education setting that focuses on a developmental account of childhood. Matthews (1994) continues to defend the philosophical comments and questions of young children, by suggesting they have a "freshness and inventiveness that is hard for an imaginative adult to match" (p. 17). I think through what Gareth Matthews has suggested and realise that I cannot really imagine talking to a teacher colleague about the school which is the research site no longer being in existence

<sup>77</sup> I have had to 'conceal' the name of the person the children wrote in the question 3.

– and asking this question: ‘How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?’ Yet, this question was conceived of and asked by a 9 year old in the CPE. I do acknowledge that it is entirely conceivable that the school could catch alight and burn to the ground or that a nuclear event could decimate the entire city of Cape Town (Koeberg Nuclear Power Station is only 20 kilometres away). Matthews (1994) points out there is a “staleness and uninventiveness” brought on by maturity, which is why he rejects the evaluational assumption built into the stage/maturational model of child development (p.18). Thinking about the school breaking up and dying forces me to think differently. Matthews (1994, p. 122) calls children the ‘natural philosophers’ - adults can only cultivate that kind of wonder (artificially).

The question that propels my research is ‘Where is the place for these kinds of questions and this kind of philosophical thinking/drawing/creating/being for child (and adults) in schools? How do we make space for such questioning– so that the richness of these pedagogical encounters can really matter and make a difference to the teaching and learning?’

A CPE creates the space for children’s thinking and deep wonderings. This is made possible relationally as part of a pedagogical encounter in between adult-child-art-floor-space-land-history-philosophy.

As I read and re-read the children’s questions I am affected by the depth and breadth of thinking required to start answering them. Matthews (1994, p.13) suggests “much of philosophy involves giving up adult pretensions to know.” Therefore, when I look at these questions as a philosopher and educator, I do not have the ready-made answers and this response excites me. This act of questioning destabilises the adult/child relationality in this classroom. Also, answering these questions requires care, collaboration, creativity and criticality in thinking/being as a ‘group’, not as ‘individuals’. Also, the answers are about developing hypotheses, imaginings, dreams and yearnings for new and different ways of knowing/being together.

Freire (2012, p. 75) argued that the role of teacher and student in transmission based teaching must be disrupted, so that the learning could be more just. The oppressor (the teacher) needs to acknowledge their everyday acts of oppression against the children. Being able to ask a question that does not immediately open a door to an obvious answer brings to the fore the multidirectional relations that exist between questioner, questions and answers. This is the kind of learning and

teaching that is valuable and worth engaging in and can be decolonising, because it shatters who controls what matters.

Haynes (2008, p. 41) reminds us that philosophical questions asked by children have profound mystification and they are drawn from beyond the confines of what are usually considered bounded school subjects. For instance, it is not clear how we could neatly contain this first child's question into a single school subject: *How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?*

Often the questions stretch across traditional boundaries. Yet, most questions found in standardised tests and exams tend to be limited by the defined categories with human-made taxonomies and boundaries of Mathematics, Literacy and Life Skills, the only three designated 'subject areas' in the South African birth-9 curriculum. We find these kinds of questions in standardised tests and exams. For example<sup>78</sup> in South Africa, a test called the Annual National Assessments (ANA) was administered to all the Grade 1-9 children in Literacy and Mathematics who attended state schools. These tests were administered in South Africa from 2012-2015. See Figure 6.2

**Figure 6.2**

*Exemplar from a Grade 3 First Language Literacy ANA - The sun*

3. Place a cross (x) in the box next to the correct answer.

The sun gives us ...

water.	
food.	
light.	x
air.	

You have answered the question correctly, if you have placed a cross (x) in the box next to the word 'light'.

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<sup>78</sup>[https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/Curriculum%20doc%20question%20Papers2007/2014%20ANA%20Grade%203%20English%20HL%20\(3\)%20.pdf?ver=2014-09-08-144721-000](https://www.education.gov.za/Portals/0/CD/Curriculum%20doc%20question%20Papers2007/2014%20ANA%20Grade%203%20English%20HL%20(3)%20.pdf?ver=2014-09-08-144721-000)

**Figure 6.3**

*Exemplar from a Grade 3 First Language Literacy ANA - The toothbrush*

4. The following sentences tell us how to brush our teeth.  
Number the sentences 1-4 in the boxes to show the correct order in which you would brush your teeth.

Wet the toothbrush.	
Rinse your mouth.	
Brush your teeth.	
Then put toothpaste on the toothbrush.	

You have answered the question correctly, if you have numbered the sentences in the correct order: 1, 4, 3, 2.

In your test you will answer some more questions like the ones you have just completed.

These types of questions provide examples of what would constitute Freire's (2012) banking model of education. These questions reinforce a Newtonian understanding of knowledge, where cause and effect explains most of what needs to be learnt and understood in schools. The order of brushing your teeth could happen in many different ways, not necessarily in the order the examiners have provided as 'the truth' and only way. The question about the sun also offers a very limited understanding of the sun by implying that it only provides light. If this was true there would be no human left on earth to write the Annual National Assessments as all forms of life would have perished. I have a visceral reaction to the question, '...the sun gives us', as I suspect I already know what I may find in the answers for the children to choose from. This kind of question speaks to the formulation of child who the group of adults (only adults design tests of this nature for children to take) has envisioned as needing to write this test. A child who has no power to question the accuracy of the question being asked or the answer being provided as a given. I put forward that this is a kind of epistemic violence which children have to endure in most of their schooling. They are not being taken seriously

as knowledge producers, or are afforded the dignity at 9 years old of knowing that the sun provides the planet with heat, light, warmth, food through complex and very simple processes and and and ...

The questions that children ask in a classroom are often unexpected. I would suggest they act as speed bumps on the highway of the curriculum, which is taking children from where they are supposed to go (the place where the sun only provides light), somewhere else (where schools could break up and die), somewhere some policy makers have decided is not important and worth knowing or enquiring about. Policy makers have also determined at what level the children will be allowed to know or answer particular questions, and that 'levels' are straightforward anyway. The questions the children come up with are often dismissed or not given the chance to be heard – or as Kohan (2014) suggests allowed to generate movement in the question or the questioner. This kind of movement is not encouraged in transmission based teaching. Philosophical questions on the other hand are powerful and can contribute to a de/colonial politics of childhood (Rollo, 2016a, p. 33) for many different reasons. Epistemologically – what knowledge is; ethico-politically: because they disrupt ways of knowing and being that maintain the colonial relations of adult vs. child, known vs. to-be-known in this post-Apartheid school setting. Also, as an invitation to transdisciplinary work where subjects are not bounded by false demarcations.

I agree with Matthews (1994, p. 17) when he claims that children's questions have a "freshness and inventiveness that is hard for the most inventive adult to match". Without being sentimental or romanticising the five questions in Figure 6.1 I suggest that they share these properties of freshness and inventiveness. I question what conditions need to come into existence for a child to ask, to care enough, to want to know:

1. How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?

Below are two photographs (see Figure 6.4 and Figure 6.) that show the student, James<sup>79</sup> drawing the image that expresses the question, 'How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?'

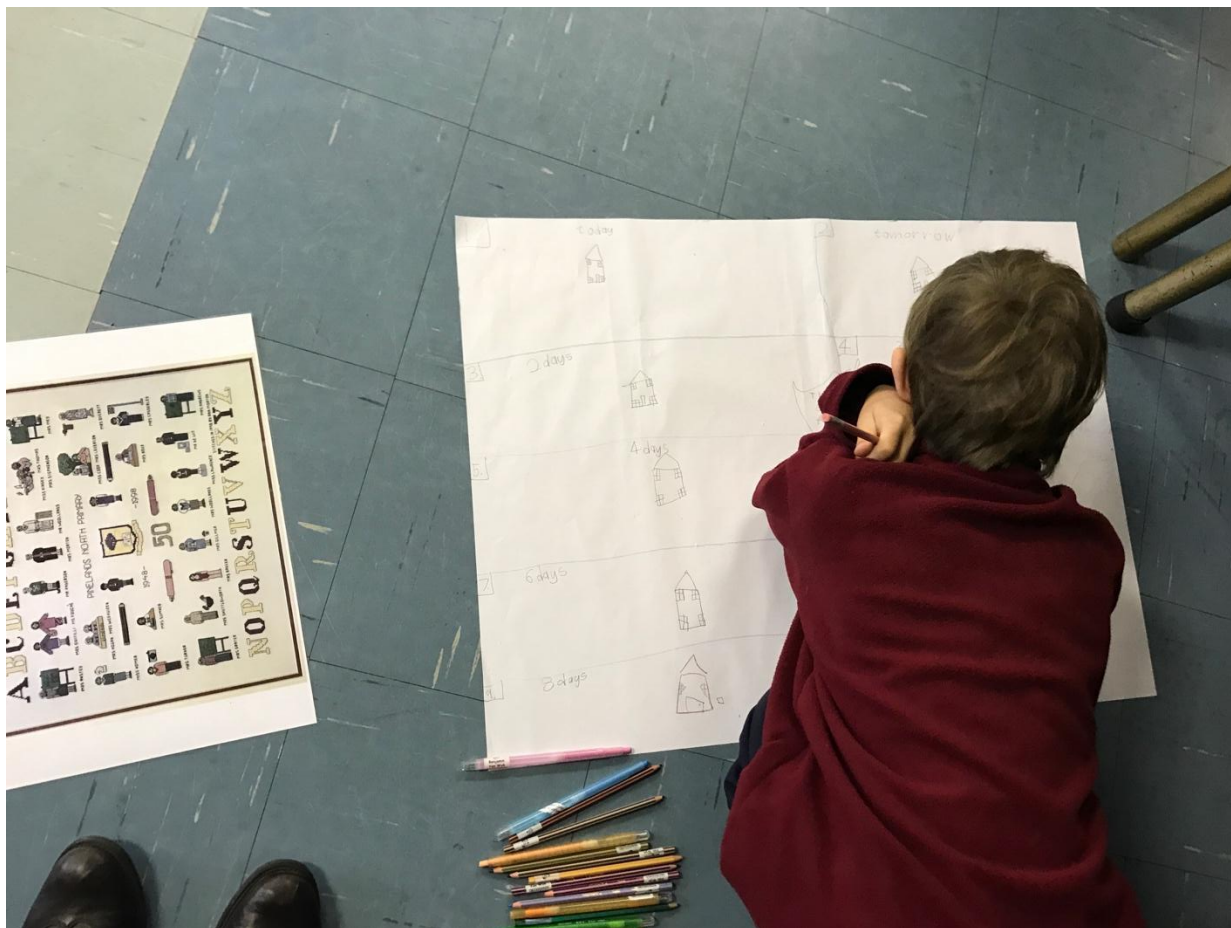
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<sup>79</sup> This is a pseudonym.

In Figure 6.4 the aging grey/blue and cream interlocking PVC floor tiles, suggest furnishings from the 1970's. The metal legs of the tables, one with a black plastic leg cap missing, the tips of my boots are visible in the left hand corner indicating a cooler season in Cape Town, and yet James lies flat on the floor. The laminated, colour photocopy of the tapestry lies discarded, to the left, but is part of the phenomenon of child-crayons-poster-pvc tiles-plastic-thinking-creating-philosophising. James holds a pencil with an eraser on its end in his curled up left hand, as he draws with his right hand. In Figure 6.5 a pink crayon with a pink eraser has replaced the pencil in his left hand. The words *The life of the school from now* can be seen written inside the outline of a school badge, next to James's head. The intensity of this moment of creation is clear, the whole body on the 'dirty floor', the folded arm propping up the head, one crayon/pencil in the hand working, one on stand-by, the big sheet of paper capturing his full attention. It captures mine. There is no desk or chair and table necessary for this intensity of learning/doing/being. On the big sheet of paper, there are numbers and days as well as lines dividing up the different pictures. Most of the drawing is in pencil, what we tend to call black and white. In the last block is the drawing of the school on fire as it burns to the ground, it is in colour. In this drawing, in the final block, James has used his colouring crayons.

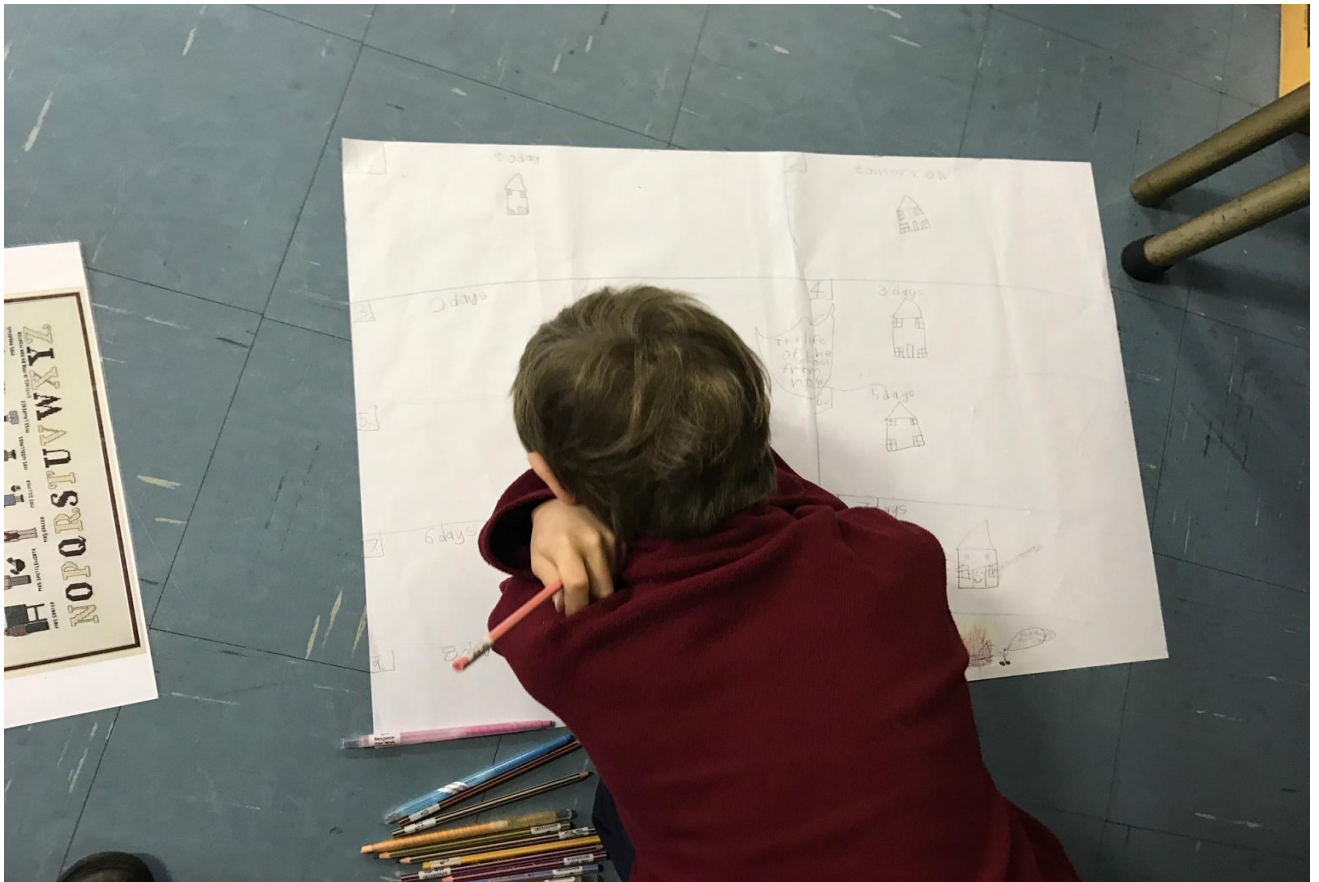
**Figure 6.4**

*Drawing the life of the school*



**Figure 6.5**

*The life of the school from now*



The question, 'How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?', has the potential to bring up the philosophical concepts and entanglements related to death, mortality, immortality, life, birth, rebirth, reincarnation, animism, more-than-human, school, education, learning, time, temporality, depth, movement, stasis, change, destruction, organic/inorganic, materials, sand, trauma, fire, dust, connection/disconnection, void, noise, silence, cycle, expectation, fantasy, reality, imagination, knowledge, known/unknown, beginning, ending, maths, science, story, narrative, physics, chemistry, history, geography, recycling, politics, art, justice, belonging, inclusion/exclusion, possibility/impossibility, fracture. This is an incomplete list. Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 2) suggest that "philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts." I would argue that this is exactly what James, the questions, the colours, the paper, the pvc tiles, Apartheid South Africa, fires, burning, narratives of life and death and all in between are in the process of doing. This is a process of philosophising.

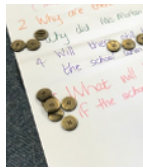
After the children have spent time thinking and drawing, they develop questions. Then after sharing their drawings and their questions with the group, it is time to vote on the questions to see which one holds the most intrigue for the children and which one will start off the philosophical enquiry. This is the process of PwC as it tends to be taught.

## 6.4 Voting on the questions

Olivier Michaud and Riku Väitalo (2017, p. 28) argue that a traditional model of authority in a PwC classroom would be a constraint to the ethico-onto-epistemology flexibility. I diffract through this theorising as I confront this question: ‘How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?’ The question would not fit into the desired format of the classroom – where the “teacher is *in* authority...her authoritative role in the classroom comes from her knowledge” (Michaud & Väitalo, 2017, p. 28). In other words, the teacher would need to know exactly when the school would break up and die in order to answer the question. In contrast, in an anarchic model of authority which is seen as “radically student-centred” the students control how learning happens in the classroom (Michaud & Väitalo, 2017, p. 29). This is not the case in the enquiry above. I did not give the students complete free reign on the choice of the provocation (the tapestry) and how they would find themselves asking these questions. As a teacher/researcher very deliberate “agential cuts” (Barad, 2007) were made – about the choice of provocation, where and when the lesson happened, why we walked to the foyer to see the tapestry in situ, how they worked in pairs, the time given for thinking and the art materials and paper provided for creating art works that made their thinking visible.

The so-called “shared model of authority” as suggested by Michaud and Väitalo (2017, p. 29) is what helps to destabilise the unequal adult/child relations in this lesson. According to a shared authority model (Murriss & Haynes, 2020, p. 32) the authority in this lesson does not reside *within* the teacher, or *within* the children and I would add not *within* the more than human, but a more complex relational model of authority becomes possible. As the facilitator I am not there to tell the children what to think, I have guided the process, but not controlling the event, although I am in a position of authority.

In order to vote for the questions they are most interested in as a starting point for the enquiry,

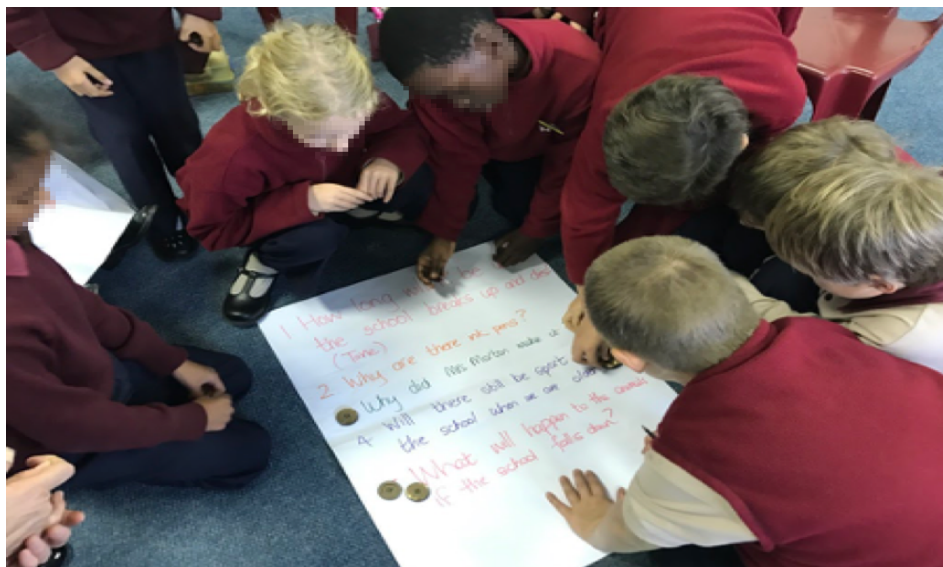


each child. gets two of the oversized brown buttons to use to cast their votes.

There are heads, paper, hands, colour, feet, bodies, legs of maroon chairs and blue carpet in the photograph in Figure 6.6 below. In the top left hand corner the left hand is clenched, gripping the oversized brown button. The straightened body without head visible, waits to vote. The chair legs are parallel to the human legs. There are feet pointed outwards and the hands folded towards each other holding the oversized button. A tilted- head, leans to the right to aid with the reading. A hand hovers and casts a shadow over the red words. Another hand, palm down, five fingers outstretched as a stabiliser, leans on the bottom of the poster. Four heads, five heads, six heads bow together, all looking down, three more hands on the poster. Then kneeling, waiting, decisions already made and yet to be made. There are now three large brown buttons on the page.

**Figure 6.6**

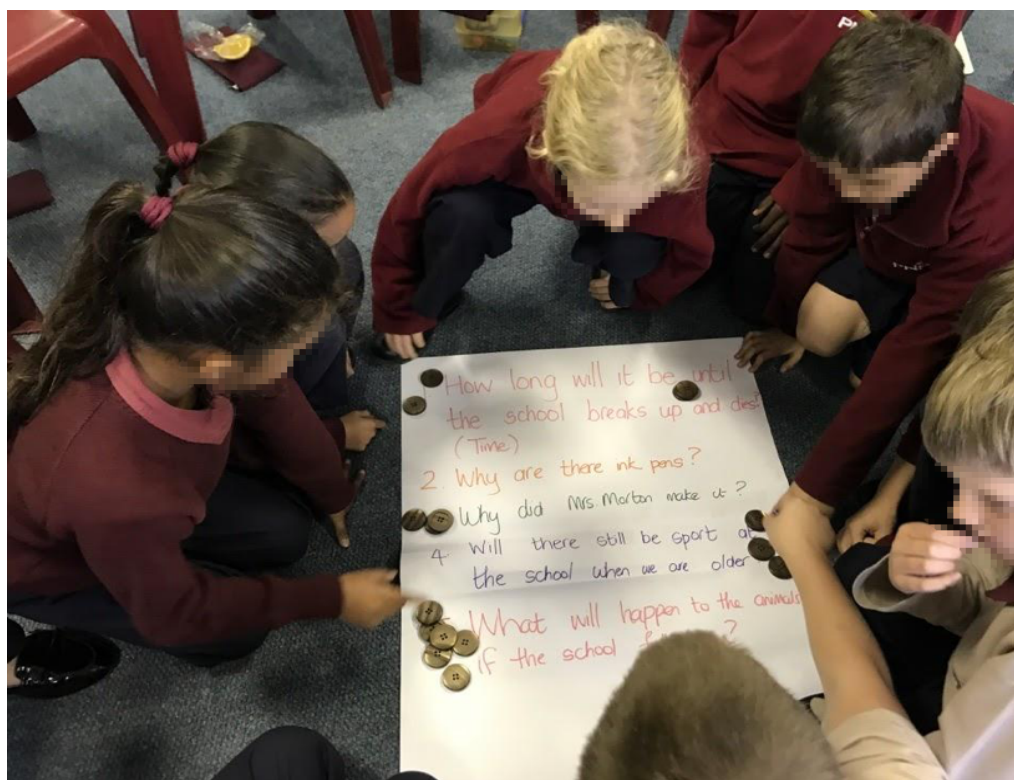
*Voting on the questions*



In Figure 6.6, the Grade 3 children are voting for the questions they developed in small groups with the more-than-human. The question with the highest number of votes will be the question that is explored in the philosophical enquiry to follow. There is hunching, leaning, squatting on haunches and sitting down with knees on the ground, bottom on the backs of legs. Hands leaning on the poster for support, buttons on the paper, three on the left, two close together and one on the number three. There is a leaning over of a child closer to the poster and placement of a button obscured by a head. Why does this matter? It matters because the idea that children can make decisions about what they will learn in class is generally ignored. Benjamin and Echeverria (1992, p. 64) argue that “the teacher therefore takes the most active role in the classroom”, the one who gets to move, leave and enter without permission, and make the most important pedagogical decisions. In this activity though, the children are making the most important pedagogical decisions, about how the lesson will proceed next in terms of content. This process can act to destabilise the various established roles in the classroom – for example that the teacher/facilitator is making all the decisions that matter.

**Figure 6.7**

*Deliberations about the voting*



In the photo in Figure 6.7, moments after the photograph in Figure 6.6 was taken more parts of the maroon chairs are visible. The overwhelming palette in the photograph is maroon. Two



maroon pencil bags lie carefully abandoned under maroon chair legs, these chairs are not needed right now, at this time. The maroon fleece tops indicate seasons are changing and there is coolness in the air.

The pink maroon collar of the golf shirts, that hug the edge of the fleece tops are a reminder that the more traditional and colonial uniform which was changed in 2004-2006, from stiff white shirts with white collars to these unisex golf shirts. The maroon blazer and tie on the boy and the long white shirt, tie and maroon dress evident in the tapestry that was introduced in Chapter 3, are visual reminders of the 'old uniform'.

In these photos in Figure 6.6 and 6.7 the focus, attention and intensity is down, sideways and towards, the circle makes this configuration possible. There are now 14 buttons on the poster. There are fingers close to the mouth in the right-hand corner, thinking and listening, about to make a decision and yet to be moved away from the mouth. The arm outstretched pointing, but not putting down the button yet. Arm, button, poster, fingers, thoughts, reflexes, movement all in decision making together. Not the usual expectation for adult voting, which is always shown to be an individual exercise, contained well within the human subject, as if this is ever possible. The fingers are left buttonless after the decision has been made, leaning back, resting on the knee. The buttons do significant work in Figure 6.6. There are more buttons in hands and fewer on the paper. In Figure 6.7 there are more buttons on the paper than in the hands. The buttons are now the markers, the co-decision makers. The affect of the materiality of the buttons cannot be ignored, we need to stay and pay closer attention. Why buttons? What are the buttons doing there? How did they come to be in the school? They look like they are wooden but are also coated in plastic.

Nina Odegard (2012, p. 391) has developed the concept of "*lost function* to refer to the materials' loss of their original function through reuse." I am excited about the ways the buttons are an example of working pedagogically with something not designed for its original purpose. Many recycled objects end up in schools. It is not that the children cannot recognise the junk material as a button, but they "perceive the potential of the material for use in new creative contexts" (Odegard, 2012, p. 391). Buttons in schooling are often connected to disappearing buttons that need to hastily be sewn on in the morning before school, so as not to get into trouble for having an untidy uniform, an enduring re-remembering of my own

schooling. Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., (2017, p. 2) articulate that “thinking with materials transforms early childhood education, provoking educators to notice how materials and young children live entangled lives in classrooms and how they change each other through their mutual encounters.” I want to do justice to what the child/ buttons/ orange/ plastic/ carpet/ questions /philosophical decision making encounters means for this pedagogical process and not reduce it to a ‘fun activity’ by children who are considered less important than other adult humans in schools.

I re-turn to the photograph in Figure 6.7 and the fruit draws my attention. There is a piece of cut up fruit, a segment of an orange wrapped in a plastic bag, sitting like a boat on the one pencil bag in the top left-hand corner of the photograph. An orange filled with vitamin C, a nod to healthy eating at school. There is lunch in a plastic lunch box, an orange carrot barely visible through the plastic. The plastic wrap and the plastic lunch box, both stark reminders of humans and our over-reliance on products that are plastic and immortal like the red plastic chairs in Chapter 5, that will take hundreds of years to decompose, into microplastics.

I am in the room in 2017 where this voting is happening. Now I am sitting at my computer watching and re-watching this video footage in 2020. I think with Barad (2010, p. 266) who wrote in 2010, with theoretical insights related to an event in 2017, that I am writing about in 2020; she argues that “...the ‘past’ is always already open to change. There can never be complete redemption, but spacetime-matter can be productively reconfigured, as im/possibilities are reworked.” What im/possibilities have the intra-actions between buttons/wood/plastic/chairs/circles/voting/question/child/adult/blue carpet/maroon fleece, reworked? I take the photograph of the children in Figure 6.8 on the day of the research session in 2017. The children and their parents have given permission for the research session to be audio recorded and photographed. There is also an iPhone being used by the children to take photographs. Quiet discussions are emerging about which questions they like best. There is a hum in the room as the children leave their chairs in the circle and move inward and forward to vote and then back to their chairs again. One boy near the bottom left hand corner of the photograph motions with two fingers to his friend to come and vote, see Figure 6.8

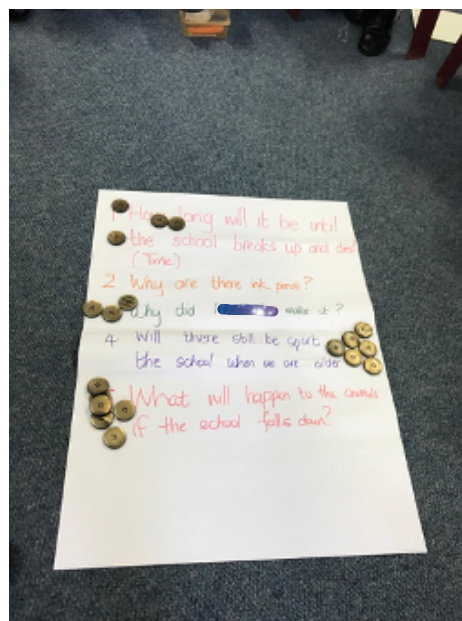
**Figure 6.8** *Come and vote*

*Come and vote*

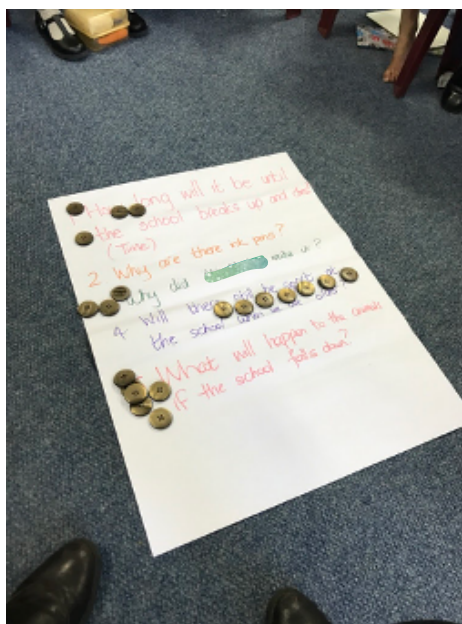


Pedagogically this is a significant moment in a philosophical enquiry. I think with Michaud (2020, p. 39) who suggests a “pedagogy of interruption” is what education should be about. Michaud (2020, p. 39) argues that “education is...about creating conditions ...which requires interrupting the normal flow of classroom life, activities, and thinking.” The voting creates this pause and interruption. The children deliberately and intentionally interrupt the flow of what could be a traditional lesson. I cannot know and neither can they before the time, which question will get the most votes and therefore be a dis/continuing point for our philosophical discussion. The ‘moments’ in time that are, and are not evident, in the photographs above, show how an emergent curriculum comes into be(com)ing. A school is essentially an adult-dominated institution, where children are given very few opportunities to express their preferences (Chan, 2010, p. 40). The two questions which get the most votes are: ‘Will there still be sport at the school when we are older?’ and ‘What happens to the animals if the school falls down?’ which has a clear link to the question 1: ‘How long will it be until the school breaks up and dies?’ See Figure 6.9 and Figure 6.10 for a tally of the votes.

**Figure 6.9**  
*Counting the votes*



**Figure 6.10**  
*Moving the buttons and lining up the votes*



## 6.5 How voting usually works: re-turning to and learning with Mangaliso Nxesi

Acknowledging the full equality of children is transformative of society itself because it necessitates a fundamental rethinking of democratic ideals and institutions around the particular capacities of children. Politics presupposes difference and disagreement. Where there is undifferentiated uniformity, there is no politics. Political equality, then, is the form of equality we establish between people with diverse interests, ideas, identities and capacities. Establishing the formal equality of people with diverse *capacities* is a necessary part of the anti-colonial shift that democratic politics offers. Recognizing the political equality of children means recognizing that speech and reason can no longer wholly define politics. What we need to get there is a decolonial politics of childhood.

(Rollo, 2016a, p. 33)

July 11, 2018. The Nelson Mandela's Children's Funds hosts a Youth summit at the Republic of South Africa's parliament building in Cape Town. See Chapter 1 Figure 1. 10 for a map showing where the parliamentary buildings are located. Having the Nelson Mandela Foundation Association involved with any activity lends an event credibility in South Africa, especially the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund which was established by former president Nelson Mandela in 1995. For the entire term of his five year presidency, Nelson Mandela donated a third of his salary to the fund every month. This level of giving has not been repeated by any of the presidents of South Africa since Nelson Mandela was president.

At the summit, a 10 year old black boy, Mangaliso Nxesi, from Johannesburg South makes a statement to the United Democratic Movement's Deputy President and chief whip, Nqabayomzi Kwankwa. Two years later, at the end of October 2020, the clip titled: 'Child asks a very difficult question to parliament', which is 3 minutes 26 second long, had been viewed an extraordinary 7,121,569 times. Surprisingly I search on YouTube using the name, Mangaliso Nxesi and get no results and I search on Google and again come up with no results. The boy, Mangaliso Nxesi is only referred to as child, with no additional references to his name or age. Even though this YouTube clip has gone viral, his name is still not

associated with the content. This omission highlights how child as a knowledge producer and as someone with the ability to influence politics is considered. The video clip on YouTube is strangely now no longer available to watch on YouTube.

### Figure 6.11

*Screenshot of Mangaliso Nxesi addressing parliament*



This is Mangaliso Nxesi's statement:

So my question, which is not really so much of a question...well it is kind of like a statement, so...let's say we are in let's say we are in 2019 and it is the elections and a child wants to vote, but they don't have that opportunity to vote because they are under age...what if...we make this change...what if...the child studies and studies all the things that different political parties want to um change in the country and they understand the depth of what they are doing and they go through one or two assessments and they have like the voting intelligence of an adult, coz just because somebody has a different age than another person does not necessarily mean that they should have less access to things because of their age or anything like that. But like um, many adults expect children to be um ...to not have as much intelligence as adults, but if the child has surprisingly high intelligence...

[laughter from the members of parliament] he stops briefly to look towards the sound of the laughter

...but they are still not allowed that just because of their age. It's not because of what's on the outside [gesturing with both hands, palms turned upwards], it's because of what's on the inside.

[applause from the members of parliament] ...

(Transcript from YouTube clip on 11 July 2018)

Mangaliso Nxesi does a remarkable job of contextualising and then making his statement about the voting age and his proposition about children voting. It is clear he has internalised adult discourses about children vs adults in terms of what is and is not allowed in a functioning democracy like the Republic of South Africa. Voting is reserved for adults, denied to children. His formulation of his statement is focused on the perceived intelligence and what would enable an adult to vote – intelligence, rationality, thought and reasoning. Voting and participating in a democratic process in this way is a no go area for children. After he is interrupted by the laughter of all the members of parliament, he pauses, recollects himself and then continues. It is difficult to be in parliament, as a child, specifically a black child, in a place that breathes coloniality, patriarchy and childism. Rollo (2016 a, p. 32) refers to childism<sup>80</sup> as just one of the names given to the acceptable exclusion of children. Children are excluded as participants from all parliaments in the world, not just in South Africa. This says much about how governments around the world view children and their place in society. Children are to be protected, cared for, shielded and excluded from the responsibilities and the recognised contributions to society that come with being an adult. South Africa has a progressive constitution that is lauded around the world and a children's charter, but children have rights, but no legal – voting rights, rights to own property or political equality (Rollo, 2016a, p. 33).

In my work at the University of Cape Town, as a lecturer in Initial Teacher Education, I observed Karin Murriss, who was the convenor of the Foundation Phase Postgraduate

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<sup>80</sup> The Childism Institute defines childism as 'radical equality to adults for children', see <https://www.childism.org/about>, which is different to the way it is defined by Toby Rollo.

Certificate in Education (PGCE) programme use Mangaliso Nxesi's YouTube clip<sup>81</sup> with the group of Foundation Phase student teachers in training in October 2019. The purpose of viewing the clip was to help the students think about the ontoepistemic injustice children have to endure daily (Murriss, 2021). Below in italics is part of one of the student's responses to Mangaliso Nxesi which she wrote in her visual essay. The visual essay formed part of the assessment for the Childhood Studies course which is a component of the FP PGCE programme.

*FP PGCE Student: Abbie Chetwin's<sup>82</sup> visual essay 3, October 2019*

*From this video (the YouTube clip of Mangaliso Nxesi) I was struck by the way the big and small binary was enacted in the interaction between the child and the politician. The child asks the politician why children cannot vote, the child's tone is very serious and his argument well-developed and considered. However, the politician's response did not directly provide a response to the child's question, rather he stated he could mentor the child. In this scenario, the politician is stereotyping the child as incapable, and only with his mentorship could the child become 'capable'. The lack of respect towards the child, both in the politician's response and the audience laughing during his speech is an example of testimonial injustice as the adults in the room are not respecting the child's opinion based on his age. The shock on the child's face when the audience laughs during his speech can be seen.*

Karin Murriss and I used this YouTube clip in our Philosophy with Children Level 1 training with teachers in March 2020 (2 weeks before South Africa went into a hard lockdown as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic). We showed the group of teachers the YouTube clip and then in small groups the participants developed questions based on the clip. See Figure 6.12

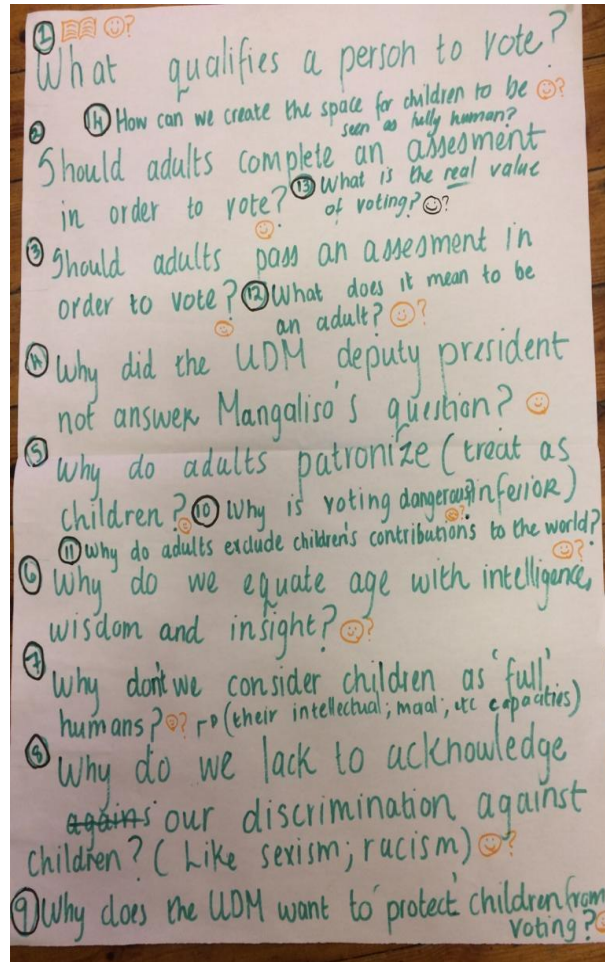
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<sup>81</sup> Karin Murriss writes about Mangaliso Nxesi in her chapter entitled: The missing people's of critical posthumanism and new materialism in Navigating the Postqualitative, New Materialist and Critical Posthumanist Terrain Across Discipline

<sup>82</sup> Abbie Chetwin gave me permission to use her excerpt and her name

Figure 6.12

Questions developed by adults in PWC Level 1 Training March 2020



South Africa has a particularly complex path to democracy because of colonisation and Apartheid. 1990 was the year that we experienced the ending of the Apartheid process and only in 1994 were the first democratic elections held where all South Africans could vote. For black people, this was the first time in the country's history that they could vote. People over the age of 18 were eligible to vote. I was 17 years old and bitterly disappointed that I could not vote, but eagerly stood in the queue with my parents and sister who could vote, at the Belhar

Public Library on 27 April 1994 when nearly 22 million people voted. People waited in queues for hours some even for days. See Figure 6.13 below of a voting station in Muizenberg<sup>83</sup>.

**Figure 6.13**

*People lining up to vote on 27 April 1994 in Muizenberg, Cape Town.*



Note: Thiar H. (1994). [Photograph]. Independent Newspaper Archives.

The lines and queues that the adults stood in to vote made me think of a drawing my son Kai created in 2017, after Brandon, Kai, Ella and I played 'The Question Game'<sup>84</sup> one evening after dinner. Ella started us off with a question about fruit, then we went around the circle asking a question about the previous question. Ella asked, 'Do fruit have politics?' It may seem absurd, but the question has piqued my curiosity ever since she asked it. A couple of days after we had played the game, Kai drew some images to illustrate some of the questions we had asked. He drew a line of fruit waiting to vote and titled his drawing 'Democracy'. Kai anthropomorphised the fruit, when he positioned them in a long queue, a line, waiting to get to

<sup>83</sup> Please see the map in Chapter 2 which shows where Muizenberg is situated, in Cape Town.

<sup>84</sup> We adapted the questions game from Robert Fisher's book *Games for Thinking* (1997).

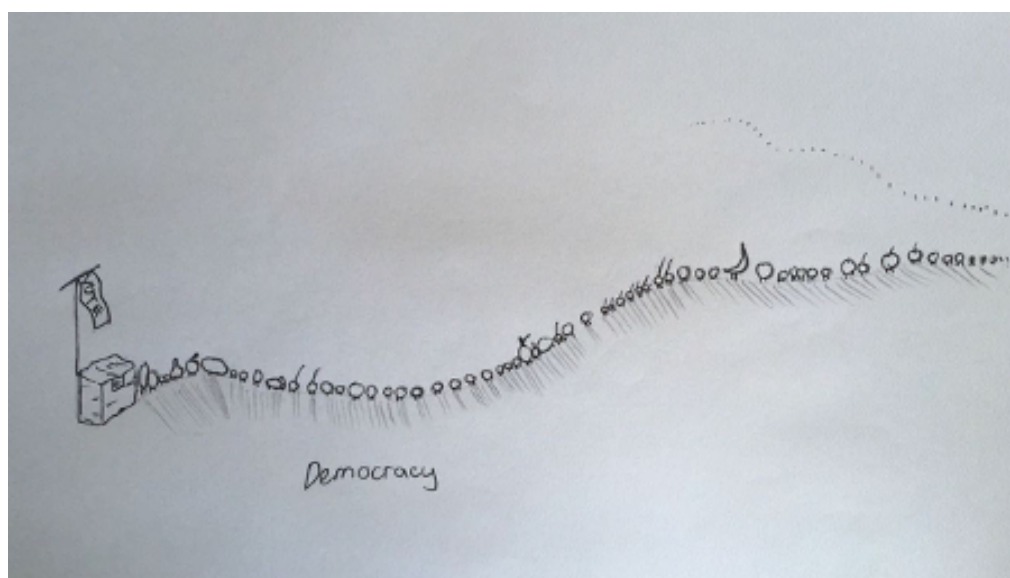
a box with a flag with a sign saying VOTE. The drawing includes shadows growing longer to show the wait in the sun, the banana two-thirds of the way in the queue clearly on two legs (most of the fruit have two legs), which make this quite an ableist drawing too. The tiny dots show perspective and the length of the never-ending queue. Pedersen (2010, p. 30) suggests that anthropomorphism in relation to animals, is when humans “attribute behaviors or characteristics to animals that are intrinsically coded to humans.” In this drawing, one could argue that the attributes of rationality and reason are being given to the fruit. Maybe fruit do hold elections about colour variations, seedlings, whether they will produce a crop or not? As humans we do not know, and I do not presume that we can know either. It is not entirely im/possible. Barad (2010) reminds us that:

matter is never settled but is agentic and continually opens itself up to a variety of possible and impossible reconfigurings. Matter is ongoing hauntological transformation. Nature is not mute and culture is the articulate one. Nature writes, scribbles, experiments, calculates, thinks, breathes and laughs.

(p. 269)

**Figure 6.14**

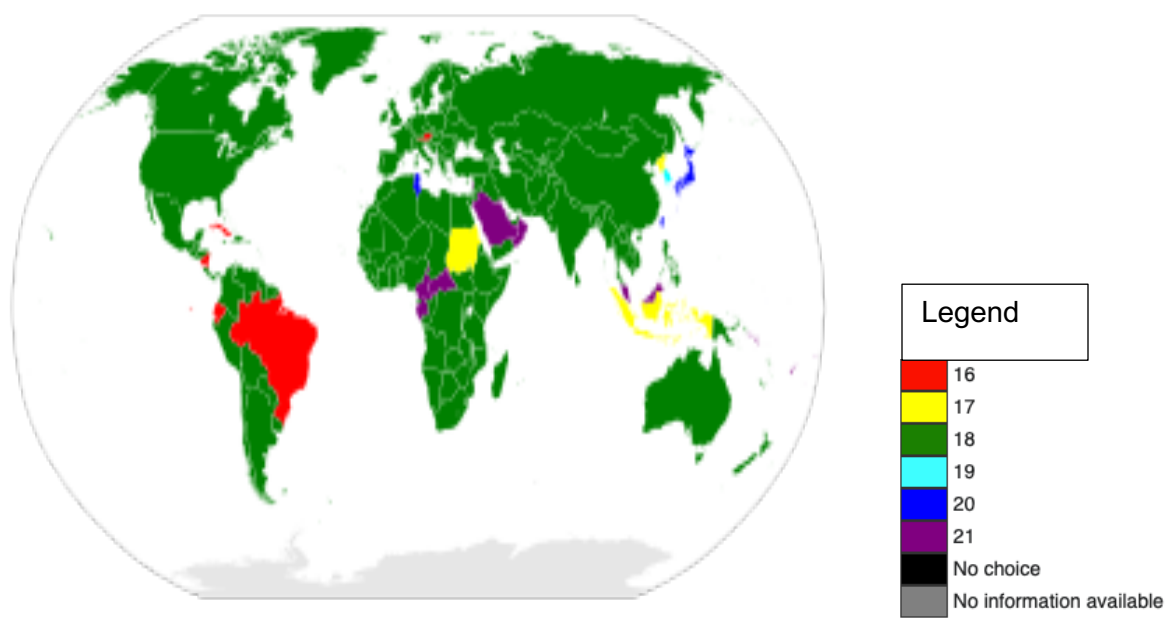
*‘Do fruit have politics?’ (Drawing by Kai Reynolds)*



Voting in South Africa speaks to the exclusion that people racialised other-than-white experienced in terms of government and governance during Apartheid. Voting was, and is, therefore a tangible shift in terms of how the leadership in South Africa from Apartheid rule to a democratic government occurred in South Africa. Adult voting is seen as a largely singular act contained within a bounded individual. There are about six countries in the world with a voting age of 16 and all the rest start at 18 and then 21. Nowhere in the world are children given the vote under the age of 16. See Figure 6.15 below on the voting ages around the world.

**Figure 6.15**

*Voting ages round the world*



Note: Lcmortensen (2008). Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

## 6.6 Political rights and moral rights for children?

Rollo (2016a, p.32) argues that like previously excluded groups (women, people of colour, poor) children continue to be excluded because they “lack speech and reason.” While children now have access to moral rights through conventions like the United Nations conventions on

the rights of the child or children's charters, we do not recognise children as "political agents" and in these are "remnants of colonial injustices" (Rollo, 2016a, p. 32).

Rollo (2016a) is not suggesting we lower the voting age, I agree, that is not enough. I also do not think this is the crux of what Mangaliso Nxesi was suggesting either. Something more radical needs to occur, as parliaments and governments are designed by adults for adults. What the children in the photographs in Figure 6.6 and 6.7 in philosophical enquiries are doing is not simply mimicking what adults do when they vote. This step in the CPE is not only about voting and so the children in the enquiry are not simply voting so it can mimic a future action they are currently denied participation in. Rather, the voting in the philosophical enquiry, unlike the voting in a political election, is significant as it is about the kind of change which gives the child in the classroom political rights about decision making of a pedagogical nature. The purpose of this process could be to decide what to learn about, how to work in a group, the way to present knowledge, whether to always work at a desk, on a chair or at a table, how to draw and create art in a classroom or other such enquiries. This process disrupts what the possibilities are for learning, talking, thinking, silence, drawing, being and becoming. What is also significant is the inequality that exists between the adults and the children, and the more-than-human others including the land in the classroom is not done away with – it is worked, recognised and paid attention to in a way that disrupts the usual flow of knowledge production. Adults and children, the questions as material-discursive, the buttons, the poster, the colours, the carpet are all entangled with the philosophical enquiry. I think with Barad (2010) who argues that "entanglements are not a name for the interconnectedness of all being as one, but rather specific material relations of the ongoing differentiating of the world. Entanglements are relations of obligation – being bound to the other – enfolded traces of othering" (p. 265).

Mangaliso Nxesi (2018) argues that "just because somebody has a different age than another person does not necessarily mean that they should have less access to things because of their age." He makes the same argument philosophers Kennedy (2010); Murriss (1997, 2016, 2021); Matthews (1994); Haynes (2008); Kohan (2014); Sharp (1996/2018a) have made, about the marginalisation of children, in relation to adults and usually based on their age.

In this chapter the entanglements Barad (2010), that draw our attention are the way the human and more-than-human relations in between adult and child create the ways of be(com)ing in the world. The CPE, the classroom, school, questions, school uniforms, lunches, the children, the adults, the philosophical questions and the voting are just some of

the entanglements and relations that maintain the status quo in schools reinforcing the way children remain unable to make significant pedagogical decisions, because adults refuse to give up that power. Rollo (2016a) argues that “whatever we wish to name it, the exclusion of children is a remnant of colonial injustice, the preservation of which has a profound impact on modern politics” (p. 32). Therefore the othering of those who are younger works for the capitalist model, where some can be disenfranchised and so the plants, water, animals, precious stones, air, space, the depth of the ocean – can all continue to be manipulated by adults who are the only ones making decisions for all who co-exist on the earth and in the cosmos. When children are given political rights as well as moral rights it will change the kind of learning that is and could become possible in school. This is an ideal worth trying to achieve. PwC and the CPE provide ways to think differently about what child(ren) already offer and bring to the learning process.

# 7. Troubling the boundaries of the Community of Philosophical Enquiry

## 7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I re-turn to the quote from Barad (2014, p.179) which gave life to Chapter 1: “boundaries don’t hold; times, places, beings bleed through one another.”

Boundaries and borders hold special significance for me as a black South African, see Chapters 1,2 and 4. I grew up with Apartheid laws that enacted inclusion for some and exclusion for others based on human made and enforced, boundaries and borders. These borders and boundaries have a Newtonian grasp on the ways of being in post-Apartheid South Africa. “Newton insisted that the void was a spatial frame of reference within and against which motion takes place” (Barad, 2017a, p. 77). Temporal diffraction enables a different reading of times, when times exist within multiple temporalities then other more troubling questions can be asked about the way we live with the earth. Barad (2007, p. 396) puts this challenge beautifully, “we are of the universe-there is no inside, no outside. There is only intra-acting from within and as part of the world in its becoming.” As (not if) we all, human, more-than-human, child (not considered fully human) are already intra-acting from “within and as part of the world”. This has implications for inclusion and exclusion and for thinking about boundaries differently. I ask this especially because inclusion is not ‘in’ and exclusion is not ‘out’. Inclusion and exclusion are not bounded by their apparent separation but are always already in relation. Barad in an interview with Juelskær et.al (2021) reminds us that “*differences are a matter of entanglements!*” ( p.123). I also think with Jane Bennett (2010) who argues that ‘objects’ have a vital materiality, and so I think of boundaries and borders as having a vital materiality. Boundaries and borders are not only captured in political imaginations and enacted in specific ways of keeping ‘in’ or allowing ‘out’. Rather I think of and with boundaries and the violence with which it enacts different ways of being for humans and more-than-humans.

The Community of Philosophical Enquiry (CPE) can be seen as enacting a boundary in this research and in this chapter. I intend to show what a CPE makes im/possible<sup>85</sup> when the boundaries and boundedness are diffracted through and disrupted within a government school setting. The research data creation in 2017 did not start and stop there, nor does it manifest in 2020 or in 1994, rather these times and spaces are bleeding through each other (Barad, 2014 p.179). Post-Apartheid schooling in South Africa continues to bleed. For example the Group Areas Act which was repealed in 1991 still affects who can attend the school as the research site. A decision brought into law in 1950, amended nearly every year and finally repealed in 1991 has consequences for children attending the school in 2021. Not everyone who lives in the area attends the school, initially there was “white flight” (Jansen & Kriger, 2020) from the school when the school opened to children of all races. Socio-economic conditions and upward mobility affect who can afford to buy a home and live in the area. Because of the inequitable amounts of money spent on schools during Apartheid (see Section 3.2 of Chapter 3) this continues to affect the current school fees which have become more and more out of reach for parents in particular socio-economic brackets. The railway tracks that we have returned to on the hand-drawn Group Areas map in Chapter 1 and 2 have made this school inaccessible for many. This ‘bleeding’ speaks to temporal diffraction and the indeterminacy principle upon which temporal diffraction is based. Barad (2017a, p. 68) explains that “temporal diffraction is the manifestation of an *ontological indeterminacy of time*: there is no fact of the matter as to when it is taking place.” This bleeding also refers to spatial diffraction which is “a manifestation of the position-momentum indeterminacy principle” (Barad, 2017a, p. 67). The spaces/ events/ times of this CPE are not contained in a particular spacetime event. The CPE is about “the temporalities that are entangled and threaded through one another” (Barad, 2017a, p. 67).

In this chapter I want to extend the work of the ‘circle’ in Chapter 5 where I offered a critical posthuman analysis which engaged with the material-discursive entanglements of the making of the circle. I continue to include but move ‘beyond’ the linguistic turn by also paying attention to the intra-actions in between human and more-than-human. In Chapter 6 I explored how democracy works in a CPE and traced the partial entanglements which helped destabilise the unequal relationships in schools between adult teachers and children, the more-than-human and place. Jane Bennett (2010, p. 109) asks if the “scope of democratization can be

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<sup>85</sup>I use the Baradian forward slash for ‘im/possible’ to signify the queering of the possible/impossible binary, first introduced in Chapter 6.

broadened to acknowledge more nonhumans in more ways....”. This has radical implications for thinking about inclusion beyond the human and the more-than-human. In this chapter, the focus will be on disrupting the boundaries of the dialogue in the CPE between the difficultator<sup>86</sup>, the children, the provocation, the questions, the school, the thinking, drawing, creating, the time, the land and and and...

The CPE which I am shining a spotlight on in this chapter is with the group of Grade 2's first introduced in this thesis, in Chapter 5. They are a group of 13, 7-8 year old's, who are in Grade 2 at the research site, a government school in Cape Town, South Africa.

## 7.2 Knowledge making as material engagement in a Community of Enquiry

In this section, I explore how 'knowledge making' during this CPE is different from the 'knowledge making' in a traditional classroom and trace some of the entanglements which appear later during the dialogue in the CPE. Barad (2007, p. 379) suggests that “knowledge making is not a mediated activity, despite the common refrain to the contrary.” This brings into question the changed role of the teacher and in the case of the CPE, the difficultator. This is a deliberate decentering of the role of the teacher whose mediation is not essential for knowledge making practices in a CPE. In a CPE a trained teacher/facilitator/difficultator leads the group. The specific decisions initially about the use of material for the provocation lie with the facilitator. There is a very specific role being played, but it needs to be carefully understood that the mediating of knowledge (as suggested by Barad, 2007) is not resting solely with the adult in the room. The questions, the enquiry, the inclusion in the more-than-human is complex work, where acknowledging the role the sun is playing, the noise, the desks and chairs in particular formations is also making what is possible occur.

2017/2020. We are in the hall after looking at the tapestry in the foyer of the school and have a brief initial discussion. I tell the children a short story about the tapestry and that I am the Miss Lawrence<sup>87</sup> stitched into the tapestry and now reproduced in the colour photocopied and laminated images in front of them. When I ask what they notice about the tapestry, one of the

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<sup>86</sup>See Section 5.5, Researcher as Difficultator In Chapter 5

<sup>87</sup> My maiden surname is Lawrence, I chose to legally change my surname to Reynolds when I got married.

children, Cameron<sup>88</sup>, mentions that the two people under the tree seem to be friends as they are sitting next to each other. A minute or two later, Cameron says: “*I notice that the boy and the girl on the tapestry are black and white.*” (See Figure 7.1) These are the only 2 children on the tapestry, the boy is stitched in a dark coloured embroidery thread, above the date, 1948, the year Apartheid was established in law and the year the school started. ‘This boy’, would not have been able to attend the school in 1948 as it was only for children racialised as white. It seems a deliberate act as stitching is different from colouring-in or drawing in that cross-stitching<sup>89</sup> of this kind is about inserting a needle into the material and bringing it back up two blocks later. Cross stitching is a meticulous craft. It requires careful counting of the blocks the material is made up of and generally following a pattern or plan. An x shaped stitch is made in the fabric. All the other stitches carefully follow a pattern by counting the tiny blocks, which creates the picture. The x-shaped stitches must be made in the same direction to ensure a smooth finish. There must be preparation of the embroidery cotton as 2 pieces of the cotton are generally used, and this must be separated from the rest of the embroidery cotton. Other materials and resources are required. Time is needed and careful planning. The tapestry is about dimension, mathematical equations and measurements. The person stitching must count the stitches in the fabric so that the stitches can be of equal size and appearance. In Figure 7.1 the embroidered, stitched in place children are the same size and equidistant from the school badge.

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<sup>88</sup> All the names of the children in this chapter are pseudonyms.

<sup>89</sup> I developed an interest in cross stitching from the person, Ann Morton who made this tapestry and enjoyed it as a hobby for some years

**Figure 7.1**

*Black boy 1948 – White girl 1998*



**Figure 7.2**

*Showing the two children*



Cameron says: *“I noticed that those two were only allowed to come to school when Nelson Mandela brought them together.”* He uses his fingers to illustrate in an embodied way how these children have been kept apart during Apartheid. By stretching his fingers apart, he

creates a 'V' between his left index finger and his middle and fourth finger which he keeps close together (Figure 7.2).

The Population Registration Act provided that all South Africans be racially classified in one of three categories: white, black or coloured. According to this Act, Indians fell under the coloured category. The criteria used to determine the qualification into each of these categories was based on appearance, social acceptance and descent. The Act described a white person as one whose parents were both white. The other things that categorised a person as white were his habits, speech, education, deportment and demeanour. Blacks were defined as being members of an African race or tribe, and coloureds as people who were neither white nor black. The Department of Home Affairs was responsible for handling the classification process of the citizenry. As a result of this Act, blacks were forced to carry passbooks, the infamous *dompas* which had their fingerprints, photo and information in order to access non-black areas. Commenced: 7 July 1950. It was repealed by section 1 of the Population Registration Act, Repeal Act No 114 of 1991.

Extract from: *The Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950*<sup>90</sup>

Cameron knows the children could not attend the same school during Apartheid and is referring to the Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950 which determined what a person's race could be and therefore the school they would be allowed to attend, where they could live, be born or buried. Cameron uses his hand to illustrate who he is talking about by splitting his fingers and placing them under the black boy and white girl. His class teacher is holding up a laminated, colour photocopy of the tapestry which he uses to explain himself. Cameron's one sentence contains a political commentary, deeply embedded in the Apartheid laws of South Africa. In that one sentence he is evoking Apartheid laws for example, the Population Registration Act, that kept the children and adults of different colours physically separate based on legal acts which formalised and legalised Apartheid. Cameron is also re-

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<sup>90</sup> I am diffracting with the Apartheid Acts, that reference what Cameron is referring to in his explanation/discussion. For more details about how I adopt the diffractive methodology, see Chapter 1.

membering the historical legacy of former president, Nelson Mandela<sup>91</sup>, who spent 27 years in jail as an anti-Apartheid revolutionary, when he says "...Nelson Mandela brought them together".

*The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953*, formed part of the Apartheid system of racial segregation in South Africa. The Act enforced segregation of all public facilities, including buildings, and transport, in order to limit contact between the different races in South Africa. The Act also stated that the facilities for different races did not need to be equal. In practice then, the best facilities were reserved for whites while those for other races were inferior. The act was part of the system of "petty Apartheid," the name given to Apartheid laws concerned with the regulation of day-to-day life, most notably the Immorality Act, Mixed marriages Act, and the Separate Amenities Act.

Extract from: *The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953*

This law, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, ensured that children would have to attend schools for separate races. It makes clear that the quality of the facilities would be the best for people classified as white, less good for those classified as coloured, worse for those classified as Indian and extremely poor quality, or not even available, for those classified as black. Cameron continues by saying "...it looks like that thing was meant to tear them apart" (he points to the 'old' school badge of the research site and traces the outline of the school badge with his finger starting from the bottom left-hand corner, using his finger to trace the whole outline of the school badge.) He is speaking historically, factually, scientifically, philosophically and materially. Cameron is showing through his fingers, hands, words, his questions and his insights that "knowing is a direct material engagement, a practice of interacting with the world as part of the world in its dynamic material configuring, its ongoing articulation" (Barad, 2007, p. 379).

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<sup>91</sup> Nelson Mandela was the first black president of a democratic South Africa. He helped negotiate the government of national unity, post-Apartheid. His emphasis on racial reconciliation was in direct contrast to the racial segregation which was a marker of the Apartheid government.

**Figure 7.3**

*Tracing the old school badge*



When Cameron gets to the top of the badge, he splits his fingers apart and now rests his fingers above the two children's heads.

**Figure 7.4**

*Resting fingers on the black child and the white child*



Cameron in one movement with his hand, is referencing the racism of Apartheid, the laws, how they were enacted and what happened when they were repealed, and Nelson Mandela becomes president. He is showing that it would be false to make assumptions about what he knows, should or could know and understand because of his age. I would agree with Haynes and Murriss (2017, p. 972) in their observations that "...philosophy with children calls into question many assumptions about age: It engages children (including very young ones) in kinds of philosophical thinking that have traditionally been reserved for adults." Cameron continues by saying "...and they probably went to two different schools." Cameron then takes his hand off the picture and wiggles the two fingers that are outstretched back and forth to further illustrate what he is saying. He is right, the two children would not have been able to be at the same school because of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act.

The Nationalist Party government developed the concept of unequal allocation of resources such as **general infrastructure, education and jobs** and formalised this into law. The Amenities Act provided that there should be **separate amenities** such as **toilets, parks and beaches** for **different racial groups**. Furthermore these facilities should **not be of the same quality** for different groups. Subsequently, Apartheid signs indicating which people were

permitted to enter/use the facility were displayed throughout the country. Commenced: 9 October 1953. This legislation was repealed by section 1 of Discriminatory Legislation Regarding Public Amenities Appeal Act, Act No 100 of 1990.

Extract from: *Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, Act No 49 of 1953*

When Cameron talks about the school badge which he refers to as “*that thing*” he is hinting at a bastion of coloniality. School badges historically in South Africa are attached or affixed to a part of the school uniform. They can be on the school blazer (like the one worn by the boy in Figure 7.1), the school dress (like the one worn by the girl in Figure 7.1), on tracksuits and shirts. These school badges perform to exclude pupils who do not attend a particular school and include those who do, and therefore officially ‘belong’ at the school. A simple google search, ‘*school badges primary schools in South Africa*’, provides these homogenous results: a badge with a crest, usually a motto in Latin and always with distinctive colours, markings and the name of the school. The use of Latin derives from the colonial reality that South African law is based on Roman-Dutch law.

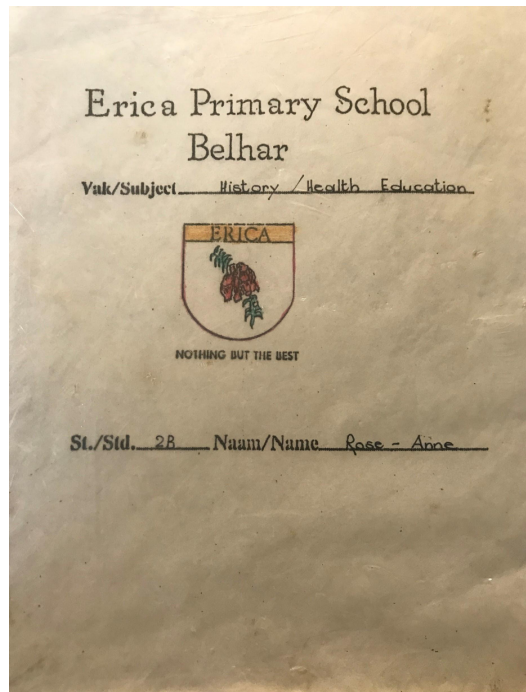
An example of a school badge from my primary schooling during Apartheid, can be seen in the image below (Figure 7.5). This is the front cover of my old History/Health Education schoolbook from Standard 2/Grade 4 in 1985. Many primary schools in South Africa, still use ‘front covers’ for the children’s workbooks which reflect the school’s badge, motto and name. Because of the Apartheid laws, my school languages as a child have to be English and Afrikaans in 1985. My primary school is dual medium, with some English first language classes and a smaller number which are Afrikaans first language. The dominance of Afrikaans<sup>92</sup> as the language of the government and its importance over English, is signified in that the Afrikaans word comes first and then is translated into English: Vak/ Subject ; St./Std (the abbreviation for standerd and standard -now referred to as Grade) and Naam/Name.

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<sup>92</sup> The Soweto Uprising, on 16 June 1976, is a pivotal date in South Africa’s history occurred when black high school students protested Afrikaans becoming the medium of instruction in schools.

## Figure 7.5

*Erica Primary School badge book cover [photograph] Author.*



### 7.3 A diffraction where History and Health Education meet

The forward slash in this title: History/Health Education in Figure 7.5 in 1985 served to identify two different 'subjects' sharing the same workbook 'then'. I am 8 years old. We write our History work from the front of the book towards the middle and then write the Health Education work starting from the back of the book to the middle. Such a curious arrangement. History is about inventors, inventions, The Bushmen and *The Strandlopers*. The Bushmen is the name we are instructed to use for the Indigenous people, the oldest inhabitants of Southern Africa, who are called the San people. The book is filled with facts and words filled into empty spaces on pages. The first page is called History through discovery, but the only 'discovery' is the topic presented by the teacher in its entirety. Some topics in The Health Education include: Food groups, The Skin and The Skeleton. I page to the part of my workbook where History and Health Education meet. The History side is about C. J. *Langenhoven* who in 1918 wrote the words of the Apartheid Government's National Anthem called *Die Stem*, The Voice in English. *Die Stem* is racism in a song, racism set to a score, to

be sung to music. The Health Education part of the book ends with written notes on *The Muscles* of the forearm. This is a meeting of a universe, halfway.

In 2021 I diffract through Karen Barad's forward slash, which works to "evoke the enactment of an agential cut that cuts together apart (one move) differentiating-entangling" (Barad, 2017a, p. 78). I diffract through the book *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: ghosts and monsters of the anthropocene* (2017) which has the same configuration as this schoolbook I used to transcribe notes off the chalkboard in 1985. The one side of the book is called Ghosts (History?), the other side of the book Monsters (Health Education?). It helps to ask the question: How is History and Health Education in the world completely entangled with the Covid-19 pandemic we find ourselves not only in, but desperate to be out of ?  
1985/2017/2020/Wuhan/Covid/Animals/animal cruelty/ animal testing/ animal eating/virus/vaccine/history/colonisation/settling/destroying/climate changes making way for humans where more-than-humans can no longer return.

#### 7. 4 Co-enquiry with child(ren): rejecting child as deficit

2017/2020. After the initial discussion, I say to the children: take some time and think about the tapestry (the provocation). I know that "thinking has never been a disembodied or uniquely human activity" (Barad, 2012, p. 208) and this brings a different kind of life and joy to what emerges in this research session. I intentionally give the children extra-large sheets of paper and art materials on which they draw their responses to the tapestry. The size, shape, colour, grain and surface quality of paper are not neutral, nor are the nature and quality of tools used to produce drawings; we should not be indifferent to any of these" (Vecchi, 2010, p. 111).

I bring in an audio recorder and an iPhone which the children share between each other. They take turns to videotape, take photographs and hold the audio-recorder. When I re-turn to the audio recording as I write this chapter, I am struck by the exchange between these three Grade 2 girls. My voice can be heard, the other children talking and calling to each other, the sound waves are bouncing off the walls at various frequencies and then I hear Susie say to her friends:

I'm going to let it, the audio-recorder, listen to my heartbeat. Can you hear? I can feel my heartbeat and it's going inside the audio-recorder [soft laughter].

Nuha: Don't do that Susie.

Susie: What?

Nuha: That electricity can go into your heart.

Kate: It can record Susie's heart. [soft laughter]

#### Re-turning to the transcript on 26 May 2017

The audio-recorder makes a different way of talking about the body possible, between these three girls. I think with Jane Bennett (2010, p. viii) who powerfully argues for a vitalist materialist reading of the objects we 'find' in the world. In primary schools, objects are not usually afforded a vitalist materialist reading by most teachers. 'Objects' are usually viewed as how fit they are for a human expression of learning. For example, does the object serve to primarily enhance the learning of the children in the narrow way learning is understood? If not, it must be left outside, left at home, thrown in the rubbish bin and a favourite punitive measure at schools: confiscated to be returned after an allocated time period. Even as the researcher, my initial, "unthinking" intention to bring this audio-recorder into the research session, was to assist 'me' with capturing what 'I' would not be able to hear as I was walking around. I realise how adult-centred and anthropocentric this way of thinking is. When Jane Bennett asks the question: "how would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of (nonhuman) bodies", this question (as a vital material more-than-human being) helps me ask an additional question about schooling (Bennett, 2010, p. viii). Would understanding these objects as vital and having a vital materiality change what is possible to ask in a school? I now 'read' Susie's engagement with the audio-recorder as the audio-recorder's engagement with Susie, her friends, the paper, the questions, the drawing and the subsequent CPE differently. The audio-recorder as possibly made up of repurposed waste material, metal, concepts, batteries, sounds waves, electricity, the result of a question, hypothesis, years of experimenting, patents, money, currency, delivery, sweat particles embedded, worn off buttons, still shiny in parts and it has a vitality which we can and should take seriously. Bennett (2010, p. 108) cautions against pretending all humans and nonhumans have the same vitality; she is not claiming that all are alike.

Inclusion of the more-than-human is not just about acknowledging the presence of the 'other' but acknowledging what that presence entails, including what is absent. Inclusion of the vital

materiality of the more-than-human requires an ontological shift. We as humans, actively deny vitality to more-than-human bodies, and Bennett (2010, p. 122) argues that this is wrong. It is exciting to listen to Susie and her friends and the audio-recorder when the listening is different, opened up to the vital materiality of the times, spaces and beings of all things. It makes a different thinking possible, when it includes the vital materiality of the questions, the paper, the wooden floors, the circle and smaller circles, bigger circles, red plastic chairs, markers, crayons, iPhones and technology.

*Susie: I'm going to let it, the audio recorder listen to my heartbeat. Can you hear? I can feel my heartbeat and it's going inside the audio-recorder. [soft laughter].*

Re-turning to the transcript on 26 May 2017

Susie is aware of the difference between herself and the audio-recorder, human and more-than-human. Her playfulness and experimentation makes me stop and pause. What is Susie saying and doing? How can I listen and be attuned to this intra-action as a knowledge making practice? She says she is going to let 'it' she is going to allow and give full permission to the audio-recorder to listen to her heartbeat. She knows her words are being recorded, sound is going inside the audio recorder and being kept there and reproduced. Her one friend is concerned and says, the electricity can go into your heart. She is not presuming the audio-recorder is there passively just to record the 'other sounds' being made in the hall. The 'other sounds' are not just human sounds, being made in the hall ... and I would caution that a heartbeat is a human sound, but rather the sound of a heartbeat, made by a heart processing oxygenated and deoxygenated blood translating into sound waves, inside this human body. Susie says **listen**...can you **hear**... I can **feel** my heartbeat and says she can feel her heartbeat going inside the audio-recorder, playfully dragging out the six syllables in au...di...o-...re...cor...der.

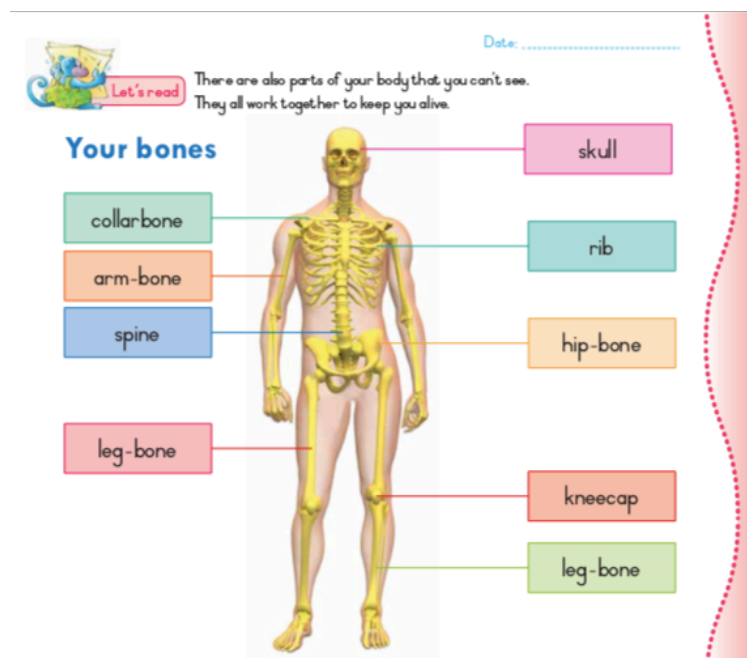
When Susie says, "*I can feel my heartbeat*" she disrupts the inside/outside power producing binary that early childhood education (ECE) is deeply implicated with. There is a strongly held belief in early childhood education that we can and should teach about the surface, the outside – for example of the body, but not the inside of the body. Susie is also disrupting the simple/complex power producing binary, that ECE is about the superficial and so not real science and the more in-depth teaching and learning happens in the higher grades. Also, she is disrupting the idea in ECE that younger children are simple and that as the children develop

and get older they can slowly be introduced to more difficult concepts as they become more complex, like adults. This is based on the presumption that: listen, hear and feel are not highly complex concepts. And that adults are the norm by which children are found wanting. These material-discursive practices are deeply engrained in education as well as parenting.

There are assumptions in early childhood education, that some things are easy/small enough to teach to young children. Also, the way they will be taught, for example the skeleton which is in the Grade 1 South African National Foundation Phase Curriculum. This image in Figure 7.6 is from the Grade 1 Life Skills workbook which is printed in hardcopy to be used by hundreds of thousands of Grade 1 children in South Africa.

**Figure 7.6**

*Skeleton with arm-bones and leg-bones*



The skeleton is labelled: skull, collar bone, rib, arm-bone, spine, hip bone, leg-bone (referring to the upper leg), kneecap and leg-bone (referring to the lower leg). From these labels it is

clear that a decision was made to call the humerus, which is made up of the ulna and radius, the arm-bone. The femur is referred to as the leg bone and the tibia and fibula referred to as the leg-bone. The assumption is being made that the children will not be able to learn/spell/say humerus, tibia, fibula, femur, ulna and radius. Also, that these terms will be provided to the children when they are a bit older. Again, we have the male as the “universalized format of humanity ... and this male is also white, European, and able-bodied” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 24). The skeleton of the white male, ableist body in Figure 7.6 is literally the colour of gold. Goodley (2014, p. 21) argues that “ableism...privileges able-bodiedness; promotes smooth forms of personhood and smooth health, creates space for normative citizens and encourages an institutional bias towards autonomous, independent bodies.” So, not only is the language simplified for the children, but the very body they are provided with needs to be troubled.

What else was Susie able to engage with and what was she inviting into this space when she said: *“I can feel my heartbeat.”*

In the South African early childhood curriculum there are also assumptions that Philosophy, Biology, Engineering are too big/complex to teach young children. This is because of the way complexity is understood, usually in one language and from the perspective of human exceptionalism and adult as more powerful over child in what Murriss (2021, p. 65) theorises as an example of a Western colonising relationship. We think of Loris Malaguzzi’s poem the hundred languages (first referred to in Chapter 3) and how we steal 99 languages from the children and give them 1 in which to learn in and express themselves (Edwards, et al., 1998, p. 3). Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Biology or even Accounting are not included in the ECE national South African curriculum. Children therefore have to wait until high school to do these subjects. They do not have any option to learn Philosophy at primary or high school and it is only ‘taught formally’ should they reach university. This implies that Philosophy has no role to play in social change or in practices of social justice as understood by those responsible for designing the curriculum. Kennedy (2012 b, p. 37) reminds us that Matthew Lipman believed that each discipline in the school curriculum had a philosophical dimension and suggested we need to teach for example how historians think through their discipline, not just about the information of the discipline (Lipman et.al 1980). We tend to ignore the philosophical dimension of most subjects and reduce feelings to emotions that have a psychological basis, not philosophical ones’ worth exploring.

I would argue that Susie is engaged in a thought experiment that is expressed through animistic thinking, as she challenges the separation between thinking and doing (Haynes and Murriss, 2019) when she says, “I am going to let it, the audio-recorder listen to my heartbeat.” Why are thought experiments initiated by the children not taken as seriously and not more prevalent in early childhood education and primary schooling? I would suggest it is because *chronos* time in school means time is precious to some in school in ways that determine what can be known and how – through tests and assessments. Barad (2012, p. 208) reminds us that “thought experiments are material matters.” Susie is evoking material thoughts and questions about technology, sound waves, girls being excluded or included in so-called STEM subjects, conduction and electricity. She is raising biological, scientific, historical and philosophical concerns. Her friends are concerned about the electricity that could go into Susie’s heart. This is the juxtaposition in terms of what is taught in the Foundation Phase about the body. Usually, it is an outline of the body with very careful decisions about which parts of the body can be labelled at which age. These decisions have been made by education policy makers and curriculum specialists who have very specific ideas about what a 5, 6, 7, or 8 year old child can do or be exposed to. I think with Karin Murriss and her 6 figurations of child, cogently, creatively and provocatively expressed in the cartoon animation YouTube video of her Posthuman Child Manifesto and in the YouTube video of her inaugural lecture at Oulu University in Finland, What is a Child?<sup>93</sup>. The innocent child, see Figure 7.7, needs protection and the teacher facilitates what the child can be exposed to or not. So, in the case of teaching about the human body, for Foundation Phase children, the labels they are required to place on the outline of a ‘body’ will include eyes, nose, chin, knees, face, toes. Examples of labels not included would include vagina, anus, penis or breasts; these are kept for Life Orientation lessons when they are ‘older’ and ‘ready’ for it.

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<sup>93</sup> Posthuman Child manifesto: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikN-LGhBawQ>  
\_What is Child: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LeW-0xN3nQ>


**Figure 7.7**

*Screen shot of the Innocent Child from the Posthuman Manifesto*



Image used with permission from Karin Murriss and Brandan Reynolds.

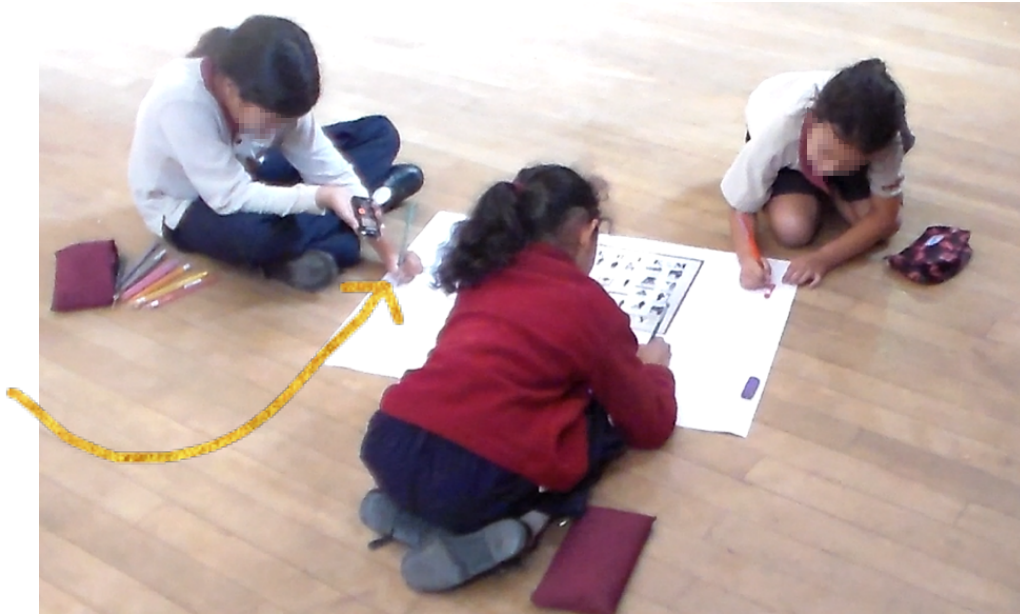
This way of creating a boundary around what children can know or be exposed to is deeply problematic and widespread throughout all the subject areas. Also, internal organs are not explored in any detail or any depth in the Foundation Phase. Ironically the shape of a heart, as

this icon,  is the extent to which the children tend to learn about the heart!

But these young children are already capable of philosophising, speaking, being silent, thinking, engaging critically, explaining what they are thinking, building on ideas other than the teachers' ideas. These possibilities explode beyond the boundaries of the curriculum that frames child as deficit. Many theorists whose scholarship my research builds on, and diffracts through, resist and reject this notion of child as deficit; in psychology (Burman, 2017); arts-education Giorza (2018), early childhood education (Malaguzzi, 1998); anti-colonial childhood education (Nxumalo, 2018, 2019, 2020; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Taylor, 2015) and philosophy of childhood Haynes (2008, 2014) Kennedy (2010, 2012); Kohan (2014, 2015); Lipman (1980, 2003); Murriss (2016, 2017, 2018) and Sharp (2018). A CPE makes it possible for childlike knowing and embodied be(com)ing to emerge in a Foundation Phase classroom setting and to count as learning and knowledge making practices.

**Figure 7.8**

*Susie, Nuha and Kate: Be(com)ing together as a worlding.*



## 7.5 Re-turning to the circle

Rose-Anne to the Grade 2's: *Can we come back to the circle in one minute? All you need is your question. If you haven't finished your picture that's fine. I'm going to give you more time to finish it another time.*

Re-turning to the transcript 26 May 2017

2017/2020. A new circle forms, one the humans and more-than-humans re-create together, away from the sharp sunlight and the piano, on a different side of the hall. We are all still well illuminated by the Autumn sun. Once back in the circle, with the red plastic chairs, voting on the questions happens and then one question is chosen as the 'starting' point of the philosophical enquiry. There are different ways to vote as detailed in Chapter 6. After I read out the question, the children stand to vote on the one they want to discuss. See Figure 7.9 below. Some children vote twice, and we acknowledge and decide as the group that it is okay to change our minds.

**Figure 7.9**

*Voting on the questions by standing*



The philosophical thinking does not begin when I say come back to the circle and it does not end when they go back to class, when *chronos* time dictates this superficial starting or ending on their school timetable. The heart, aorta, valves, heartbeat, the pulmonary vein, the superior vena cava, the sound waves, the electricity, Apartheid South Africa, the badges, the benches, the uniforms, the red chairs, the dust particles, the sunbeams, climate change, pre-Covid schooling without masks or social distancing, the school, the hall, are already embedded and embodied in the thinking/drawing/being. The ants too are here. The ants bring with them the materiality of the more-than-human, they are listening in this class, they are learning, they are being listened to and learnt with.

The question '*Why did different colour people have to sit on different benches?*' receives the most votes. Amy raises this question when we first get back from the foyer during our initial discussion (when we were sitting in a circle near the piano on the right-hand side of the hall as seen in Figure 5.3 in Chapter 5). She raises it again, when I ask if they have any questions when we get together again, after the thinking/drawing/talking/playing times in their small groups. The implication in the question is that this happened during a time designated as Apartheid, but I realise after listening to all the audio recordings and watching the video recordings that we do not actually ever mention or discuss Apartheid using the word 'Apartheid'. See Figure 7. 10 below, for an image of what one of the benches used during Apartheid, which Cameron was referring to, looks like. This is an example of a bench, from a

city called Durban in South Africa. The signage on the benches is stencilled and painted. It states clearly which racialised human can sit on them (and by omission who cannot).

**Figure 7.10**

*Apartheid park bench from a park in Johannesburg*



*Note: Apartheid Park Bench Johannesburg, by Martinvl, 2013, [photograph] Copyright Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike 3.0*

The rather ridiculous translation for the Afrikaans word *blankes* used extensively during Apartheid, but since discarded, was **Europeans**. The actual translation for *blankes* from Afrikaans into English is 'whites'. The reality is that many white people in South Africa, especially during Apartheid, were of European descent, but Europe consists of many nations,

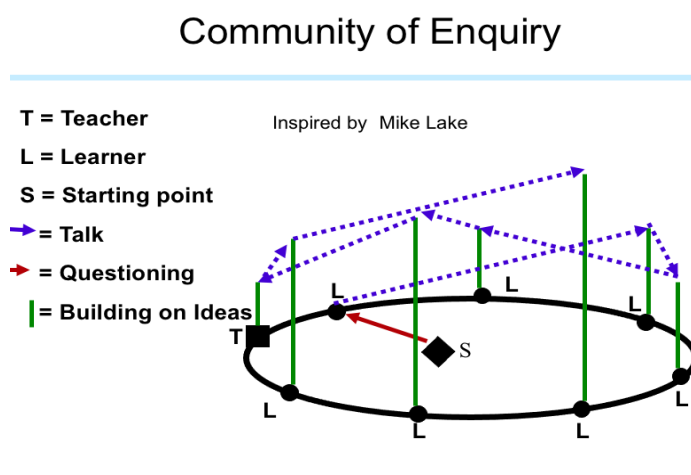
so it is an erroneous category. An important point to note, is that the whole bench was for white people, it was just written in 2 different languages: English and Afrikaans. There were not the same or a similar number of benches for people with different racial classifications. There are no benches for black people: if a park was reserved for white people, the black nanny (child carer/domestic worker) would have to sit on the grass if she brought the white children she was caring for, to come and play. The benches were a part of the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, quoted under section 7.2. The Act also stated that the facilities for different races did not need to be equal. There were similar signs on buses, trains etc, for where people categorised as different racial categories could sit, enter, exit, eat etc.

## 7.6 What the community of enquiry makes im/possible

I have been involved in training teachers and teaching students in PwC with Karin Murriss since 2017 (see chapter 4). One of the most useful diagrams to visually illustrate the dynamics of a CPE, Karin uses, is one she developed (see Figure 7.11) - inspired by British educational psychologist Mike Lake (Murriss, 1997, p. 98). In our co-teaching, we have used this diagram to great effect when sharing it with teachers and students learning about PwC. It shows visually how a CPE pedagogically differs from transmission-based education.

**Figure 7.11**

*Community of Enquiry diagram*



A visualisation developed by Karin Murriss, inspired by Mike Lake

In the diagram, above, Figure 7.11 the T is for Teacher the difficultator (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6 for explications about difficultator) and in a CPE the enquiry does not 'start' with the teacher/difficultator. There is no starting point or ending point, because that would assume a singular cause and effect which is not possible in the "onto-ethico-epistemological" theory of agential realism as developed by Karen Barad (2007, p. 410). It is also important to consider the dominating power of human scale in the Anthropocene. Scale is measured in terms of what humans are capable of hearing or seeing but when "...quantum ideas are applied to fields and forces...not only do our notions of space, time and matter get radically upended, but also that of nothingness, eternity, living and dying" Barad in interview with Juelskjær et al., (2021, p. 125). When the human is not the measure, then every-thing is always already on the move: the children, the thoughts, the chairs, the voting, the circle, the wind, the dust particles, the ants, the sweat, the flows, the disruptions, the questions are already in relation, already intra-acting. The provocation that 'starts' an enquiry is an agential cut – made by the researcher/teacher/difficultator about the material chosen to bring into the classroom. The tapestry has vital materiality too. This tapestry as data is a "constitutive force working upon the researcher as much as the researcher works on the data" (Hultman and Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 527). I would include child and the more-than-human as researcher too.

Re-turning to the transcript 26 May 2017

Each child stands to vote on the question they would most like to discuss. Unlike the brown buttons used with the Grade 3 group detailed in Chapter 6, this group voting by standing.

I then said:

RR: Grade 2's **why do you think different colour people have to sit on different benches?** Who knows or has an idea about why?

Amy: I have no idea.

[This is significant because at the beginning of this lesson during the initial discussion - Amy told the group that different colour people had to sit on different benches. Knowing something and knowing about something is different to knowing why. This is a different way to think about education.]

RR: You have no idea. Good, so now we're going to talk about it and learn from each other.

Kyle: I have an idea.

Ben: Skin

Amy: There's nothing wrong with skin, it's just people's skin.

RR: And what else do you think about that?

Amy: I think it's quite *dom*<sup>94</sup> in that way, as she says this she starts to smile broadly and then brings her hands up to cover her mouth.

RR: You think it's quite silly or something. *Dom* oh, what does *dom* mean?

Class: Lots of giggling and laughing

RR: I think that's an Afrikaans word, hey?

RR: Let Amy answer. It's an Afrikaans word. So, it's not actually a funny word. It's just an Afrikaans word but in English we wouldn't really call somebody stupid because that's more being unkind. But maybe you're right, maybe it is actually, it's the system that doesn't make sense.

Amy: It's a little bit *dom* to um um um to like make that rule.

Amy is possibly testing to see how far she can go to determine what is or is not allowed in this 'enquiry space'. She is talking about the Apartheid government that had made these 'rules'. I begin to moralise when I say: "well we wouldn't call someone stupid": and then I stop myself, I self-correct and say, "but maybe you are right, it is actually the system that doesn't make sense". Amy adjusts the severity of her judgement too and says it's a ***little bit dom*** to make that rule. Amy is thinking aloud and adjusts her comment. She and I both do. I would suggest we are diffracting through one another here as we become aware of our 'own' thinking (Lipman, 2003, p. 140) which is no longer our 'own' as we are in relation with each other, the concepts, the thoughts, the language and and and. This moment also contributes to how the rest of the discussion proceeds, with the children testing autonomy, the dominance of the teacher/facilitator and how much they are able to talk about and say. Her comment leads to lots of laughs and giggles.

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<sup>94</sup> The word *dom* in Afrikaans, is pronounced the same way as *dorm* would be said in English with my less emphasis on the r. It is very close to *dumb* in meaning.

Amy uses her multilingualism as a resource (Reynolds, 2013, pp.14, 107). She uses the Afrikaans word *dom* to emphasise what she is saying about the Apartheid government's law about the separate amenities act. The use of *dom* is also subversive as the Afrikaans language is the official language of the ruling party during Apartheid. Amy is not testing whether other people will know what she is saying, she has the knowledge that the use of the word, as slang will be understood by the others in the room.

When Amy says it is *dom* she is making a highly accurate and sophisticated comment – it is very stupid to say that different colour people had to sit on different benches – it logically makes no sense. So many of the Apartheid laws were incredibly cruel (and stupid) but needed to be followed as it was the law. These laws were deeply racist, but also sexist, ageist, homophobic and ableist. I am not equating the rules at schools with the laws of Apartheid, but want to draw attention to the many rules (laws) at schools that are also nonsensical, which we subject children to, as if they cannot tell they are problematic. Many of these rules stem from colonial times and from Apartheid laws that have not critically been evaluated, yet remain in practice. In South Africa there has been deep unhappiness and disgust about “taken for granted assimilationist practices” and what are considered racist “white hair policies” in schools for years (Jansen & Kriger, 2020, p. 42). This resulted in a revolt by students at Pretoria High School for Girls in Pretoria and Sans Souci Girls' High School in Cape Town in 2016. These protests happened shortly after the revolutionary #RhodesmustFall<sup>95</sup> and #FeesmustFall protests led by university students around the country, began taking place.

Other problematic rules are, that most teachers in primary schools expect that when writing in a workbook the date has to be written in the same place on the page by every child in the class. We also expect the children to line up and stand behind another child to move from one place to the next, raise their hands to speak or answer a question and ask permission to use the bathroom. Amy is doing something very important here at the beginning of this enquiry, because generally in schools children cannot say what they are unhappy about or what they think does not make sense. Teachers say what they are unhappy about or find nonsensical with much more ease, but because children have no political rights (Rollo, 2016a) which could affect change for example in terms of curriculum or how their work is assessed, we as adults easily dismiss what they offer as valid concerns. The CPE therefore makes a different way of

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<sup>95</sup> <http://postcolonialist.com/civil-discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/>

be(com)ing possible in the classroom, and requires this from all the participants: adult/teachers, children and the more-than-human. "Participants in a community of inquiry are trying to understand each other. Thus, they must learn how to listen.... - they must enter into the world of the other and see it from the other's perspective" (Sharp, 1996/2018c, p.55). This is not the demand we usually make in a traditional lesson, the expectation of the children as those who are there to *learn*, is very different from the teacher who is there to *teach* and the more-than-human is considered background. It is as if the ants do not also listen and enter into the world of the other.

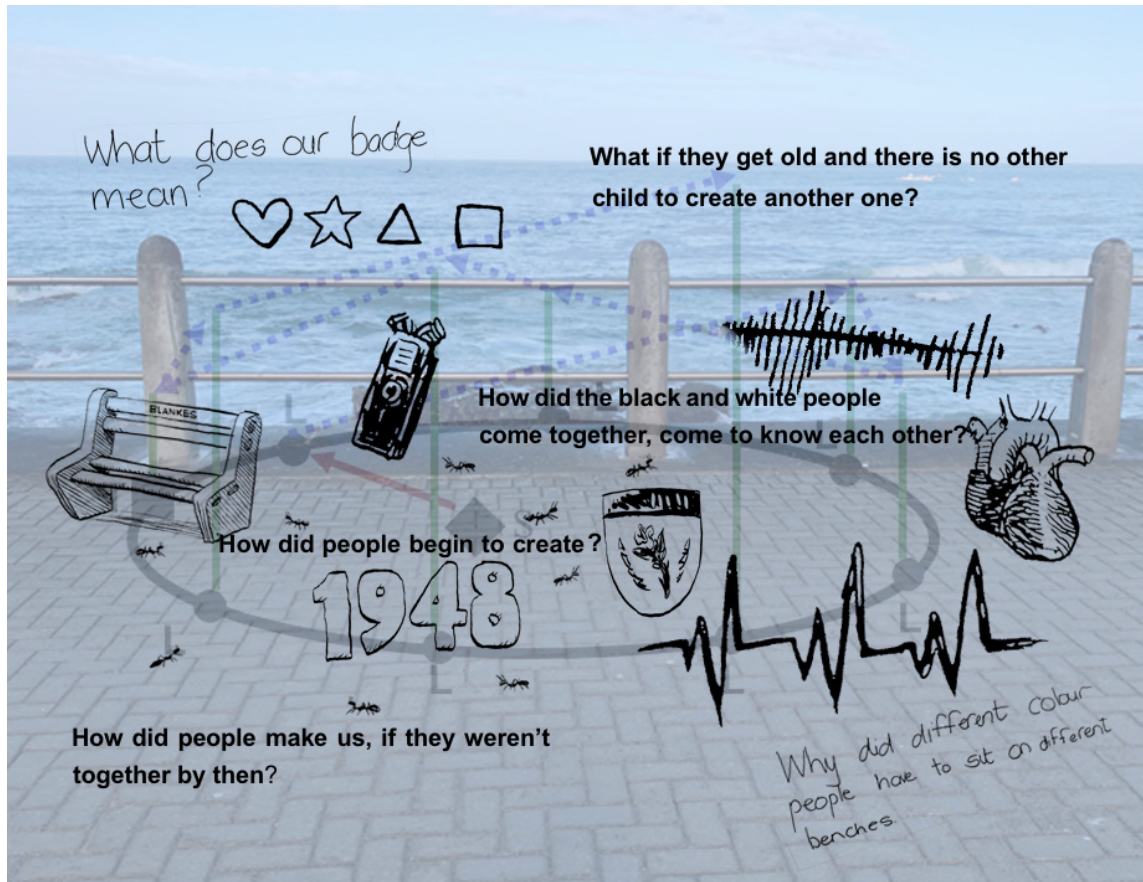
In Chapter 4 we discussed how children are silent and silenced by adults about what matters to them at school (Sharp, 1996/2018a, p. 176). Because we have a standardised curriculum in South African government schools, we offer children very few opportunities to decide how they want to learn something and whether they want to know this 'something' at all. Children in schools are also denied opportunities to be involved in making meta-decisions about whether something is worth knowing and who their teachers are (e.g. being involved in selection committees). A CPE makes a different kind of learning possible because of the porosity of the boundaries of what can be and is known: by the teacher, the children, the knowledge making practices and the material vitality of the more-than-human in the classroom.

Re-turning to the transcript 26 May 2017

We re-turn to Barad (2014, p. 179) with a diffractive insertion: "Boundaries of a *community of philosophical enquiry* don't hold; times, places, beings bleed through one another." The enquiry diffracts through Susie and her discussion with her friends, it also matters. The original Community of Enquiry diagram is diffracted through an image of a section of the Atlantic Ocean, 20 minutes from my home in Cape Town with a fluid/porous fence in front of it. This image below is inspired by Karen Barad's use of a quote by Gloria Anzaldúa (1987, p. 3): "The sea cannot be fenced, *el mar* does not stop at borders." Humans are always trying to fence the ocean and carve it up for different navies to patrol and defend. Humans have named the oceans and the beaches and decide who can swim and when. Also, who can drown, die and not be saved where and when. One example is the migrant crisis happening in the Mediterranean Ocean over the last 8 years.

**Figure 7.12**

*Unbounded Community of Enquiry diffracted image*



Developed by Rose-Anne Reynolds (Illustrations by Brandan Reynolds).

During Apartheid the *Separate Amenities Act of 1953* provided that there should be **separate amenities** such as **toilets, parks and beaches** for **different racial groups**. The beach/sea is porous, it is water, steam, gas, pollution, microplastics, sunshine, heat, sea life, and its changing matter means that even though humans try to fence the ocean, they cannot. Even if we try to contain the CPE to an event in one hall of a government primary school in Winter in South Africa, this is an im/possibility. The handwritten questions in the image above, diffract through the questions and comments that moved the enquiry to get to the point when *chronos* time demanded we 'stop'. The philosophical enquiry which started with **Why did different colour people have to sit on different benches** 'ended' with **How did the black and white people come together, come to know each other?** Matthew Lipman (2003, p.87) found when he worked with children many years ago, that "children, unlike adults, do not look insistently for answers or conclusions. They look rather for the kind of transformation that

philosophy provides not giving a new answer to an old question but transforming all the questions.” I do not intend for this to be a generalisation, rather a commentary which evokes a curiosity in me not always rigorously required in other areas of academic life. Lessons are so artificially separated in school and philosophy offers opportunities to have enquiries that cross all disciplinary boundaries. These enquiries also disrupt linear time and the way lessons and learning start and stop with bells. Rather, some enquiries can continue for months at a time, being re-turned to again and again.

I would theorise the questions and comments that emerged from the CPE as “multiple forces... at work in the construction of the world, where discourse is only one such force” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 529). These questions and comments as one force, move the CPE diagram in Figure 7.11 to the diffracted image above in Figure 7.12. Over the course of the 4 months and the 13 enquiries, no group of children developed the same question as another group, and each CPE started with a different question. Each different question highlights distinct concerns and perspectives from the children in each enquiry. Lipman (2003, p. 99) argues that “to question is to institutionalize and legitimize doubt and to invite critical evaluation”. Doubt is not a concept welcomed in transmission based education, but it is a powerful disruptor as evidenced in the CPE. The transcript, the account of the CPE *is* the diffracted image in Figure 7.12. There is movement away from a linear, chronological account of the transcript, and what happened before the children moved into the circle, as if we can ever account for one moment after another. Rather, reading the questions, concepts, circle, ants, philosophising, heart beating, electricity, benches, through each other invites the disruption of the boundaries of the CPE. The boundaries of the CPE and the circle are porous and inclusive.

In Chapter 8 we will re-turn to and honour the child art and drawings as philosophising and enquiring. The chapter will focus on how the visual ‘works’ and how it has helped create a new way of doing with theory. I make a particular experimental and methodological choice in the way the children’s drawings do the work of disrupting the political, ethical, onto-epistemological ways of doing/being in this thesis.



## 8. Absence as Presence

### 8.1 The drawings

Re-membering is a sacred practice<sup>96</sup>. The re-membering and re-calling of the tracings of the entanglements in this thesis include honouring the work the ants did, the material-discursive practices and the silenced child not considered fully human, including the child we adults still are. Ants, material-discursive practices and (un)silenced child are not habitually considered as part of research data and learning within early childhood settings, also in South Africa where this research is situated. “Re-membering is a bodily activity of re-turning” (Barad, 2017a, p. 84) as are the drawings embedded as watermarks on some of the pages of this chapter. The inclusion of the drawings is intentional. Each drawing is vital (Bennett, 2010, p. vii). They are re-membered as we re-turn to them and make a difference by creating a diffraction pattern. A world a little easier to love, with more vitality, intensity and hope. The inclusion of the drawings as watermarks is an opportunity to consider the drawings’ “trajectories, propensities or tendencies” (Bennett, 2010, p. viii). They “affect” not as emotion but through intensity (Massumi in an interview with Zournazi, 2002, p. 212) the human body and the more-than-human body of this page, computer, WiFi connections, differently, as the colours struggle to see or be seen, between the typed black and white letters. This is an enactment of inclusion of the material-discursive, a focus of this research. These drawings emerge between child, white paper, crayon, ideas, imagination and tapestry as provocation during a CPE with a group of Grade 2 children at the research site. Some of the questions which guide the rest of this chapter include: how do these drawings work to re-turn to a form of violence that is exclusion from ways of knowing? The violence that is the routine value of the discursive compared to the material-discursive in this specific instance, a CPE in a post-Apartheid primary school setting and in this an academic text, this thesis? “Agential realism theorises the hyphen between material and discursive” Juelskær et al., (2021, p. 138) and shows the already inseparable and entangled material and/as discursive.

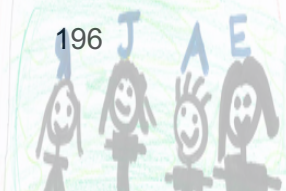
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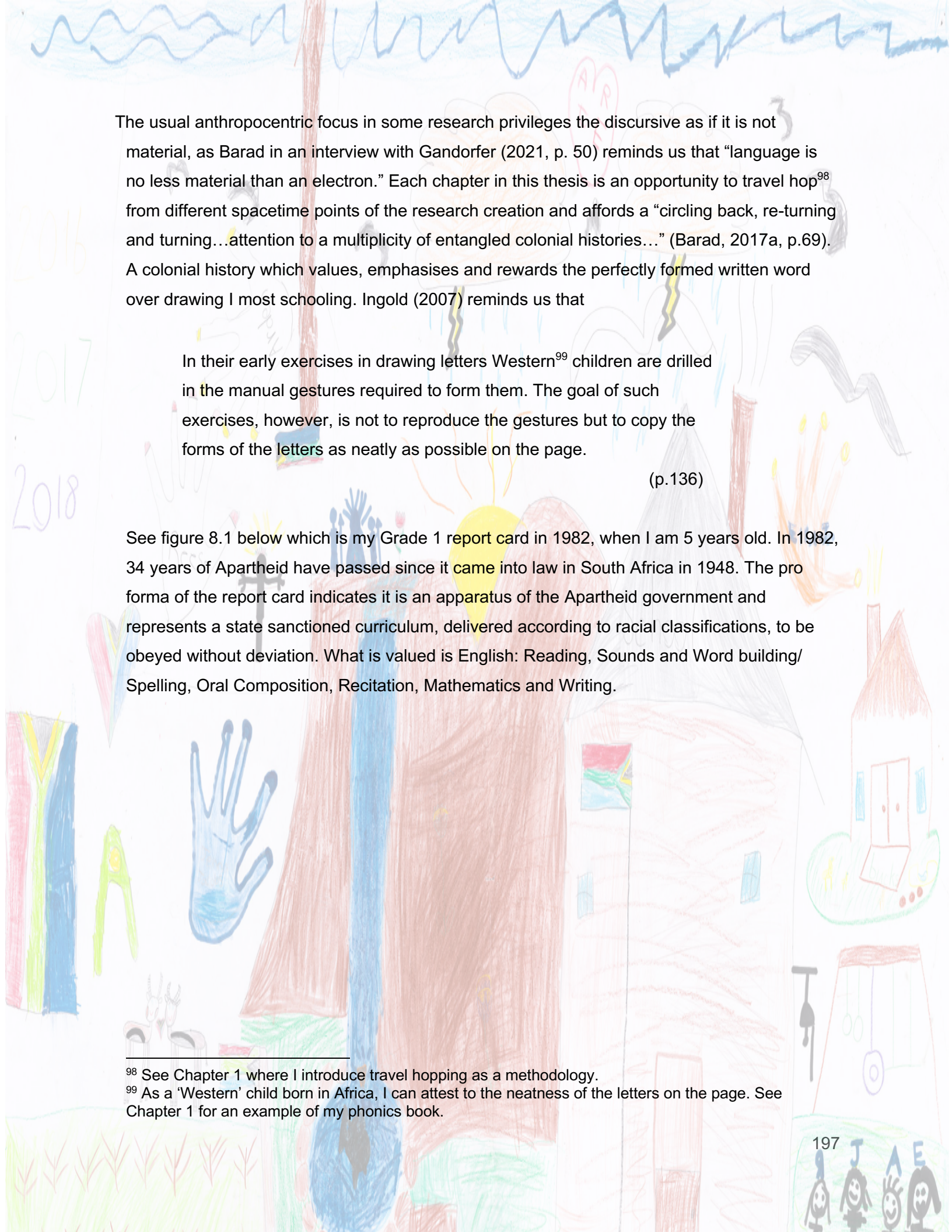
<sup>96</sup> This is the title of Chapter 1 in this thesis.



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<sup>97</sup> The pages interspersed with the drawings of the child(ren) are a refusal. A refusal to be analysed and excluded as less than the written words, unless accompanied by explanatory text.





The usual anthropocentric focus in some research privileges the discursive as if it is not material, as Barad in an interview with Gandorfer (2021, p. 50) reminds us that “language is no less material than an electron.” Each chapter in this thesis is an opportunity to travel hop<sup>98</sup> from different spacetime points of the research creation and affords a “circling back, re-turning and turning...attention to a multiplicity of entangled colonial histories...” (Barad, 2017a, p.69). A colonial history which values, emphasises and rewards the perfectly formed written word over drawing I most schooling. Ingold (2007) reminds us that

In their early exercises in drawing letters Western<sup>99</sup> children are drilled in the manual gestures required to form them. The goal of such exercises, however, is not to reproduce the gestures but to copy the forms of the letters as neatly as possible on the page.

(p.136)

See figure 8.1 below which is my Grade 1 report card in 1982, when I am 5 years old. In 1982, 34 years of Apartheid have passed since it came into law in South Africa in 1948. The pro forma of the report card indicates it is an apparatus of the Apartheid government and represents a state sanctioned curriculum, delivered according to racial classifications, to be obeyed without deviation. What is valued is English: Reading, Sounds and Word building/ Spelling, Oral Composition, Recitation, Mathematics and Writing.

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter 1 where I introduce travel hopping as a methodology.

<sup>99</sup> As a ‘Western’ child born in Africa, I can attest to the neatness of the letters on the page. See Chapter 1 for an example of my phonics book.



Figure 8.2 Report on progress of Rose-Anne Lawrence

Report on progress of Rose-Anne Lawrence

VR.E.103  
(For Substandards A and B and Standard 1)

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

NAME OF THE SCHOOL  
WINDHOLE PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
MATTLAND

REPORT ON PROGRESS  
OF  
Rose-Anne Lawrence

for the school quarter (1) 20 January 1982 to  
11 June 1982  
(2) 6 July 1982 to  
24 September 1982  
(3) 5 October 1982 to  
8 December 1982

CLASS Sub A8

FOR THE PARENTS  
After scrutinising this report carefully, please sign and return it immediately.

SYMBOL VALUES  
A: 80-100%  
B: 70-79%  
C: 60-69%  
D: below 60

SCHOOL RE-OPENS  
6 July 1982  
5 October 1982  
19 January 1983

SIGNATURE OF PARENT  
Report of Lawrence  
Report of Lawrence  
Report of Lawrence

At the end of the year this report becomes your property.

FIRST FOLD  
CITIZENSHIP

The colonial histories in this particularity, include the situatedness of Apartheid and the current post-Apartheid government schooling context in South Africa. Not post as in past, but rather Apartheid practices threaded through the present, past and future. The colonial histories that create the “notion of the human founded on the poison soil of human exceptionalism” which Barad (2017a, p. 86) calls on us (human and more-than-human) to engage in undoing.

## 8.2 Drawing lines to Chapter 8

In Chapter 2 the focus is on the inclusion of the “geo-political”, as in situated location in space (Braidotti, 2019, p.34) with space as a “spacetime-mattering”, inseparable from space or time or matter because of the ontological shift which “reworks the traditional notion of causality” (Barad, 2007, p.33). Therefore the re-turning and re-visiting of the land of the research site is a geopolitical spacetime-mattering. Land in South Africa is not neutral and is paid attention to as more than merely ‘background’ for the research. Also, tracing the land as constellation (Barad, 2014, p.34) and the void as full and not empty (Barad, 2017a, p. 78) endures, see Chapter 2. Chapter 3 enabled an enquiry with the question, ‘What is a school if the humans are not at the centre of the conversation?’ and an engagement with the more-than-human of schools in particular animals as pets, products, pests and prisoners. The inclusion of what it

would take to carefully consider what and who else matters at a school, is the focus on Chapter 3. Human exceptionalism is brought into question and the violences enacted when the exclusion of the more-than-human in various forms is justified in schooling. The troubled unequal relations between adult and child in a Community of Philosophical Enquiry (CPE) and the silencing of child in school is the focus of Chapter 4. Also, attention is paid to the disruption of the boundaries between the unequal relations between adult and child specifically in a CPE when children and the more-than-human continue to be silenced are paid attention to in Chapter 4.

In each chapter the notion of human as a fixed essentialising abstract category (Barad, 2007, p. 178) is troubled and the material-discursive entanglements are highlighted which make it im/possible to keep excluding what is excluded: the more-than-human; particular ways of thinking about, recording and recounting memories; land; child(ren's) drawings, and the materials like the chairs that co-create the circle in Chapter 5.

Chapter 6 provocatively queers the notion of PwC as a democratic practice because democratic practices rarely apply to all human beings especially children. Democracy as a concept does not usually include the more-than-human and not children. "Democracy should be creative. It is a set of tactics and a means to manage transition of power, including the leaking of power from adults to children" Haynes (2008, p. 48). I would include the leaking of power from adults, to children the more-than-human. What is necessary then is a careful tracing of how the more-than-human through the buttons (used for voting), the crouching of bodies, knees touching the floor and carrots in lunchboxes enact democratic processes. The latter denied to child and even more routinely to the more-than-human.

I also make the argument that when children, with no political equality to adults (Rollo, 2016a, p34), vote on philosophical questions this act performs as a radical inclusive pedagogical practice in a CPE. The inclusion of child(ren) and the more-than-human in decision-making about how a lesson can proceed is rare in early childhood education in South African schools. Although practices might include the more-than-human, research does not take the more-than-human into account as part of, for example, learning.

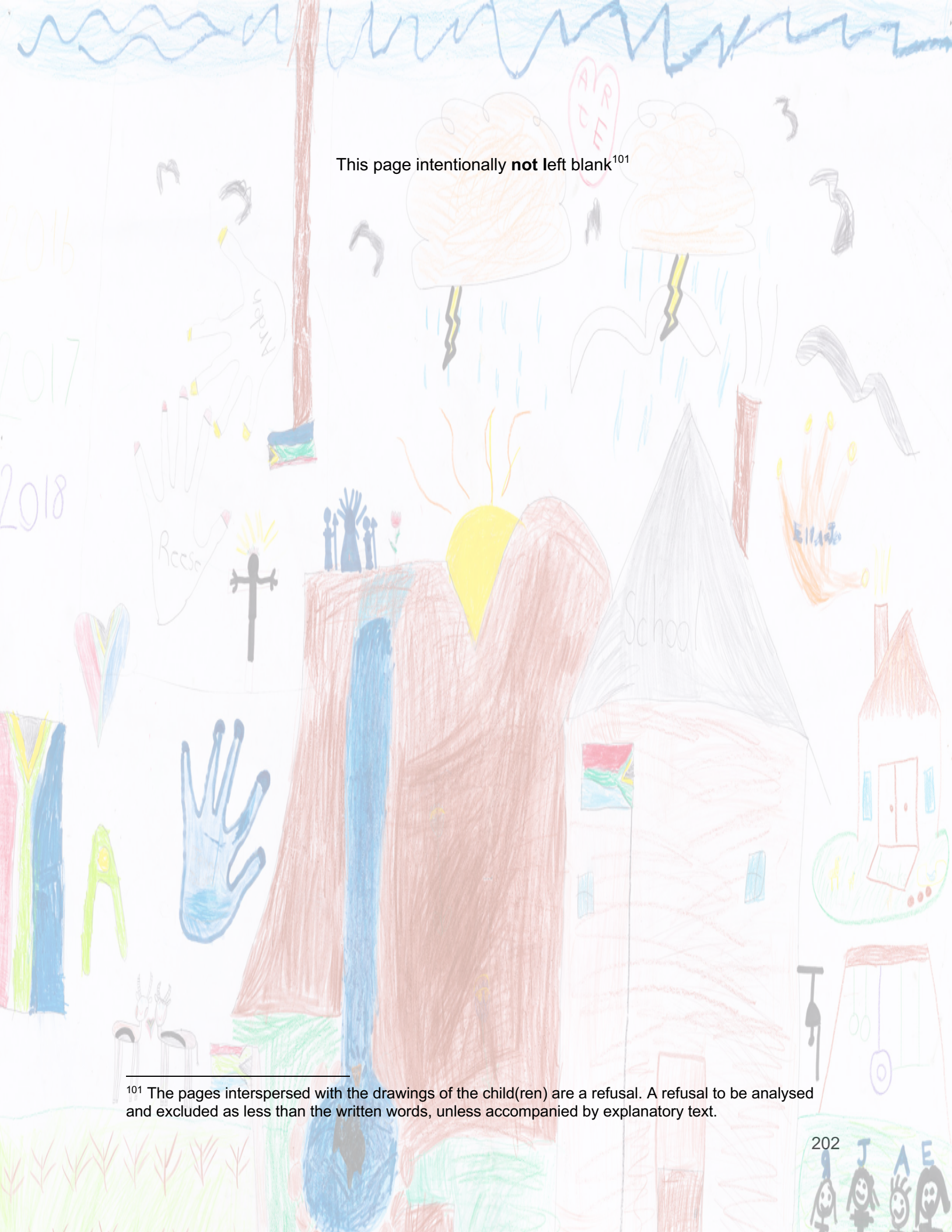
In Chapter 7 the boundaries of the CPE are troubled. Posthumanism offers an imaginative and richer description of co-enquiry with child(ren) and the more-than-human in reality.

Persistently contesting the unequal relations between adult and child and the more-than-human in schools, leads us to Chapter 8.

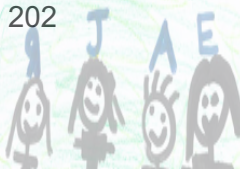
This chapter pays attention to the drawings co-created and co-imagined by the child(ren) and the more-than human (crayons, white paper, air, thoughts, floor, sunlight) during ‘thinking time’, which is an element or step in the process of the CPE as described in Chapter 4. It is not practiced in this way by all PwC practitioners because there is diversity in the practices all around the world. I value the drawings and child art because it is a poetic language of children. I appreciate that the discursive is material because “separability is not taken for granted and this means that all phenomena—all the entanglements—are open to analysis and questioning. Nothing gets to have some privileged existence because entangled phenomena in their specificity are inseparable from one another” (Barad in an interview with Gandorfer, 2021, p. 51). The practice of honouring this poetic language, through the child art and watermarks, is about decentering which adult human concepts, knowledges and practices (Barad, 2007, p. 334) matter most in schooling.

Re-turning to how the material-discursive is undervalued in PwC, in this next section of the chapter, I will share briefly, some empirical studies that have been done in PwC, drawing specific attention to how the dominant discourses privilege the discursive. The ‘white’ pages that follow this page are an enactment of the ways in which the discursive habitually excludes and erases the material- discursive. It is so routinely accepted in academic texts, it is hardly noticeable and the drawings and vivid colours currently capturing our attention can be seen as unusual, strange, an oddity maybe? *The Routledge International Handbook on Philosophy for Children* (Gregory et al., 2017) hardcover is R4485.00 without a single drawing, image or colour besides black and white and yet the picturebook, *How to Live forever* by Colin Thompson (1998) paperback with every single page in colour costs only R152.00

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<sup>101</sup> The pages interspersed with the drawings of the child(ren) are a refusal. A refusal to be analysed and excluded as less than the written words, unless accompanied by explanatory text.



### 8.3 What is usually valued in a Community of Philosophical Enquiry?

A study to measure the effectiveness of P4C across 48 schools in the United Kingdom, was evaluated by a team at Durham University. This was paid for by the Education Endowment Foundation<sup>102</sup> and the interventions in the school were led by the British charitable Society for the Advancement of Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERRE).

The main emphasis of the intervention is to allow pupils to **think** and **ask questions**. With guidance from the teacher, the **dialogue** is focused not only on the chosen questions but also on the assumptions that lie behind the answers and the criteria used to make **judgements**. P4C aims to help pupils' to **think logically**, to **voice their opinion**, to **use appropriate language in argumentation**, and to listen to the views and opinions of others.

(Education Endowment Foundation, 2015, p.10, my emphasis)

In bold are some words that identify the 'perfect' PwC subject as a rational individual and verbal human subject.

- Think
- Ask questions
- Dialogue
- Judgements
- Assumptions
- Think logically
- Voice their opinion
- Use appropriate language in argumentation

These are all worthy goals of any educational programme but it does create the conditions with which we can ask another question: Who is the ideal Subject in PwC?

...the normal Subject, the standard by which other earth dwellers (including more-than-humans) are measured, is of a particular

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<sup>102</sup> [http://teachingphilosophy-fisp-org/images/philosophy-in-the-world/Philosophy\\_for\\_Children.pdf](http://teachingphilosophy-fisp-org/images/philosophy-in-the-world/Philosophy_for_Children.pdf)

gender (male), race (white), able-bodied, and with a particular sexual orientation (heterosexual); the humanist ideal...

Murris (2019, p.15)

This normative Subject as described by Murris (2018) helps to problematise the political questions we can ask when educators only focus on oral dialogue. Who does the dialogue work for? Who does it serve? Philosopher of education, Marie-France Daniel and a team of researchers have engaged in research on Critical Thinking and P4C for more than ten years. This research has taken place in Quebec, Ontario, France, Mexico and Australia (Marie-France Daniel et al. 2017, p.238). The findings of the research suggest that thinking, dialogue, critical thinking and logical thinking is conceptualised as happening *in* the mind of the child. But this assumes that this is where thinking happens (cognitively) and then the child's voice articulates the thoughts in the dialogue. The result of becoming a critical thinker may manifest in a more creative artwork for example, but the artwork routinely does not count as meaning making in the enquiry or contribute to what counts as meaning making in the enquiry the process of enquiry remains discursive.

The analyses of the transcripts also revealed that the manifestations of these four thinking modes (logical, creative, responsible, meta-cognitive) included in our cognitive model are articulated along a spectrum from the simpler to the more complex.

(Marie-France Daniel et al., 2017, p. 238)

The transcripts of the research were used as evidence to make these assertions and while the practices of transcribing and discourse analysis is well established in empirical qualitative research, usually only what the teacher and children are saying is recorded. The more-than-human is usually bracketed or avoided or erased. Recording technology is routinely taken for granted as representing a world – out there. Transcribers also make judgements about what is more or less important, what is included and what is excluded.

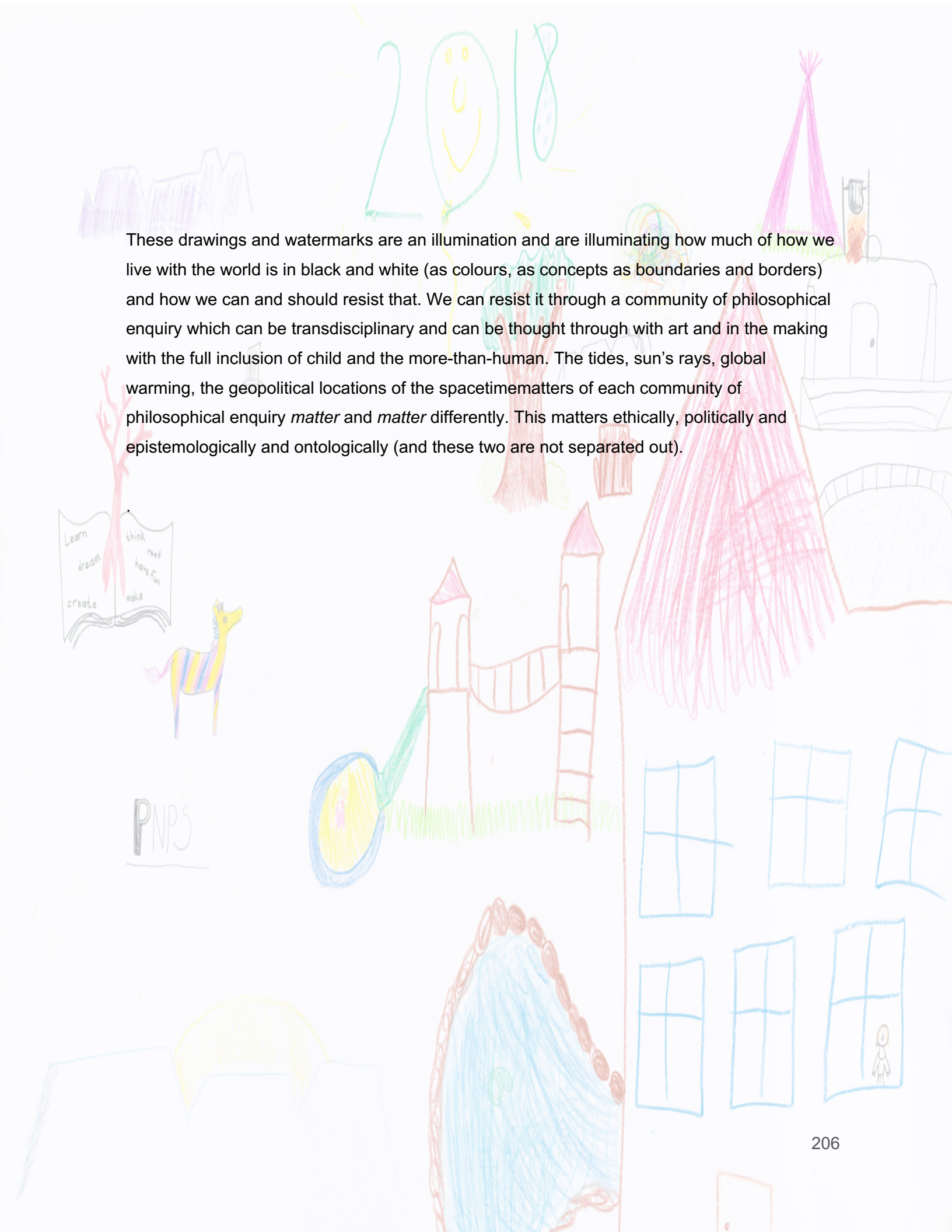
Echeverria and Hannam (2017, p. 4) argue, that in schools where CPE are practised, "...the intention...of the dialogical discussions is to build together, to try to understand each other..." Again, the focus is (verbal) dialogue and discussion. Eugenio Echeverria and Pat Hannam are scholars whose work I respect and have been able to grow from. We need to focus on the

dialogue, this *is* very important, especially when child's voice has been marginalised and ignored. I am grateful to Eugenio Echeverria and Pat Hannam for doing this important work as well as many other PwC theorists and practitioners who are changing what is happening in classrooms and moving away from children being required to answer questions about the sun, from a given list of answers, or being given the label leg bone for the tibia (see Chapter 7). I would therefore suggest that my work is about recognising the value of the material-discursive as an 'and and', *and* the artwork, *and* the discussion before the enquiry, they (and much more ad infinitum) contribute to the dialogue. I would theorise the dialogue as material-discursive too. It also helps us as researchers to take account of the material conditions of production as well as creation of what we tend to simply regard as 'objects' as opposed to (human) Subjects.

It can be revolutionary to include for example: the bodily act of mourning, drawing, believing what counts and can be included in the philosophising in a CPE. This raises questions about what it means to know, to participate as a knower and what it means to think and philosophise. A focus only on a narrow interpretation of language and dialogue (even though language is material) *only* (as important and well researched as it is) raises deep concerns about what is erased and silenced: the more -than-human and what is privileged and highlighted: the recognised human ability to rationalize thoughts through language "...in traditional humanist accounts, intelligibility requires an intellective agent (that to which something is intelligible), and intellection is framed as a specifically human capacity" (Barad, 2007, p. 379). We need to acknowledge that the discursive is not only human, the watermark which is about to start again also has discursive agency. It is not just a drawing by children inserted on the white page, it is doing particular work which should not be ignored. Taussig (2009) offers a stark reminder,

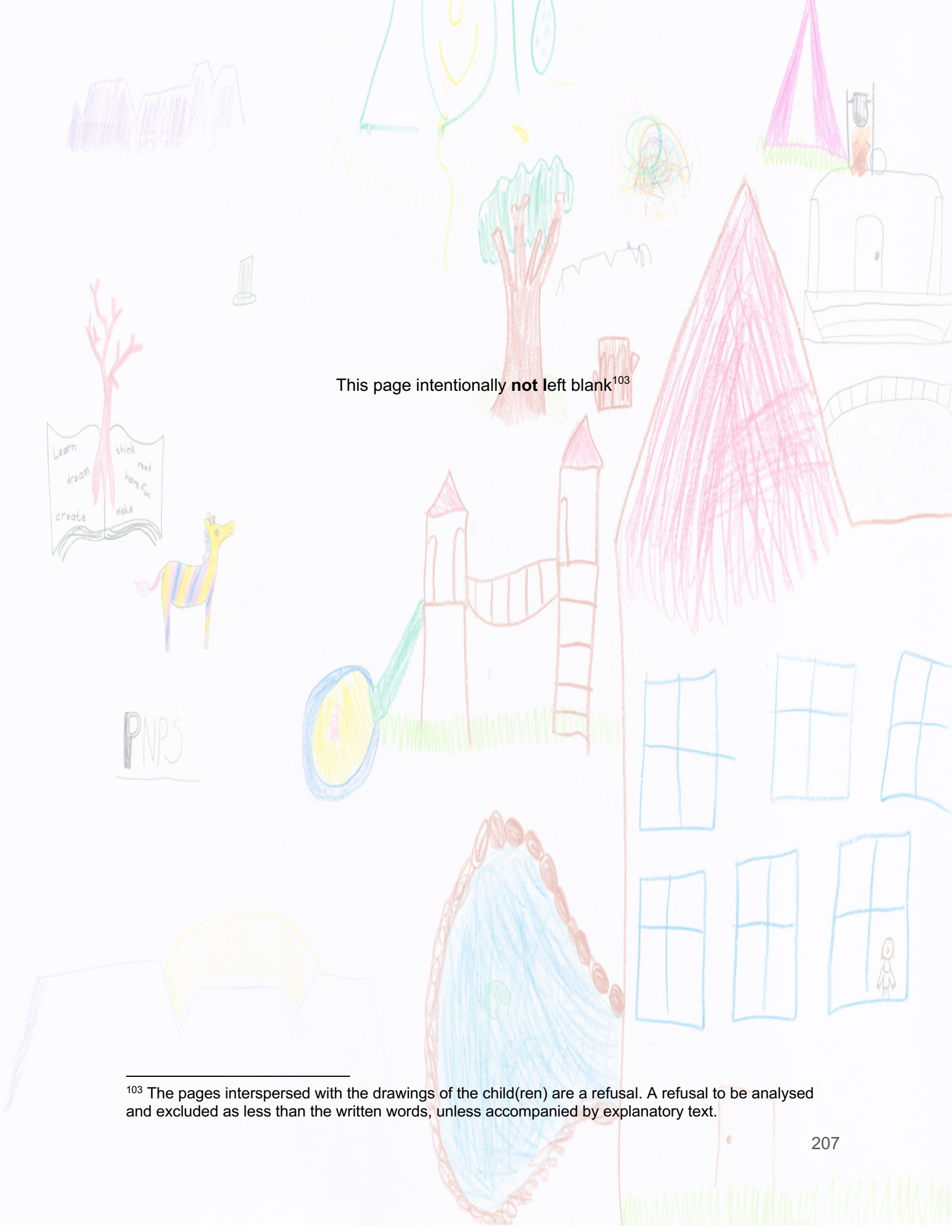
It is as if the black marks economically running across the whiteness of the page today are in fact the startled remnants of what before were more like actual pictures of the world and of the human imagination that went along with it—or if not pictures, then, even more interestingly, flashes of light and color. What is alarming if not miraculous, then, is what effort it took to eliminate or, should we say, de-illuminate the illumination. What have been the costs thereof?

(pp. 251-252)



These drawings and watermarks are an illumination and are illuminating how much of how we live with the world is in black and white (as colours, as concepts as boundaries and borders) and how we can and should resist that. We can resist it through a community of philosophical enquiry which can be transdisciplinary and can be thought through with art and in the making with the full inclusion of child and the more-than-human. The tides, sun's rays, global warming, the geopolitical locations of the spacetime matters of each community of philosophical enquiry *matter* and *matter* differently. This matters ethically, politically and epistemologically and ontologically (and these two are not separated out).

PNPS



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<sup>103</sup> The pages interspersed with the drawings of the child(ren) are a refusal. A refusal to be analysed and excluded as less than the written words, unless accompanied by explanatory text.

## 8.4 Drawing in the air<sup>104</sup>

In this section I look to CPE practitioners, philosophers, difficultators, the child humans and the more-than-human which disrupt the notions that PwC and CPE are captured by a humanist dominion. Specifically I start this next section by drawing on the work of Gareth Matthews (1994) to situate the child art and drawings. I draw your attention to the drawings and child art visible in the watermark on the pages of this chapter. The child(ren's) drawing that is the focus of this chapter is a just(ice) response to the violence that is the exclusion of children's drawings in schools in ways that matter, in research unless it can be analysed or in education unless it is assessed and graded (and then often discarded). I draw courage from Barad (2017a, p. 86) when she declares: "It is bodily bringing together the structures of nothingness – tracing their entanglements – that the unnamed come to matter and are recognised as the ongoing reworlding of the world." I trace the entanglements of why the drawings are the 'unnamed' in the CPE and circle back and re-turn to various drawings co-create between child-crayon-paper-molecules-dustmites-concepts-tapestry-research. This will also create multiple opportunities for mourning. This mourning is a doing, like Kyoko Hayashi, the protagonist in *From Trinity to Trinity* (2010) does "... mourning as a political, embodied labour – a commitment to justice" (Barad, 2017a, p. 70). The mourning is that we live "in a world obsessed with quantification, reductionism, normalization and predetermined outcomes" (Vecchi, 2010, p. xxii). The many child(ren's) drawings, images, photographs, diagrams included in this thesis are co-creators of this project and are included and theorised with intensity, yearning, desire and imagination.

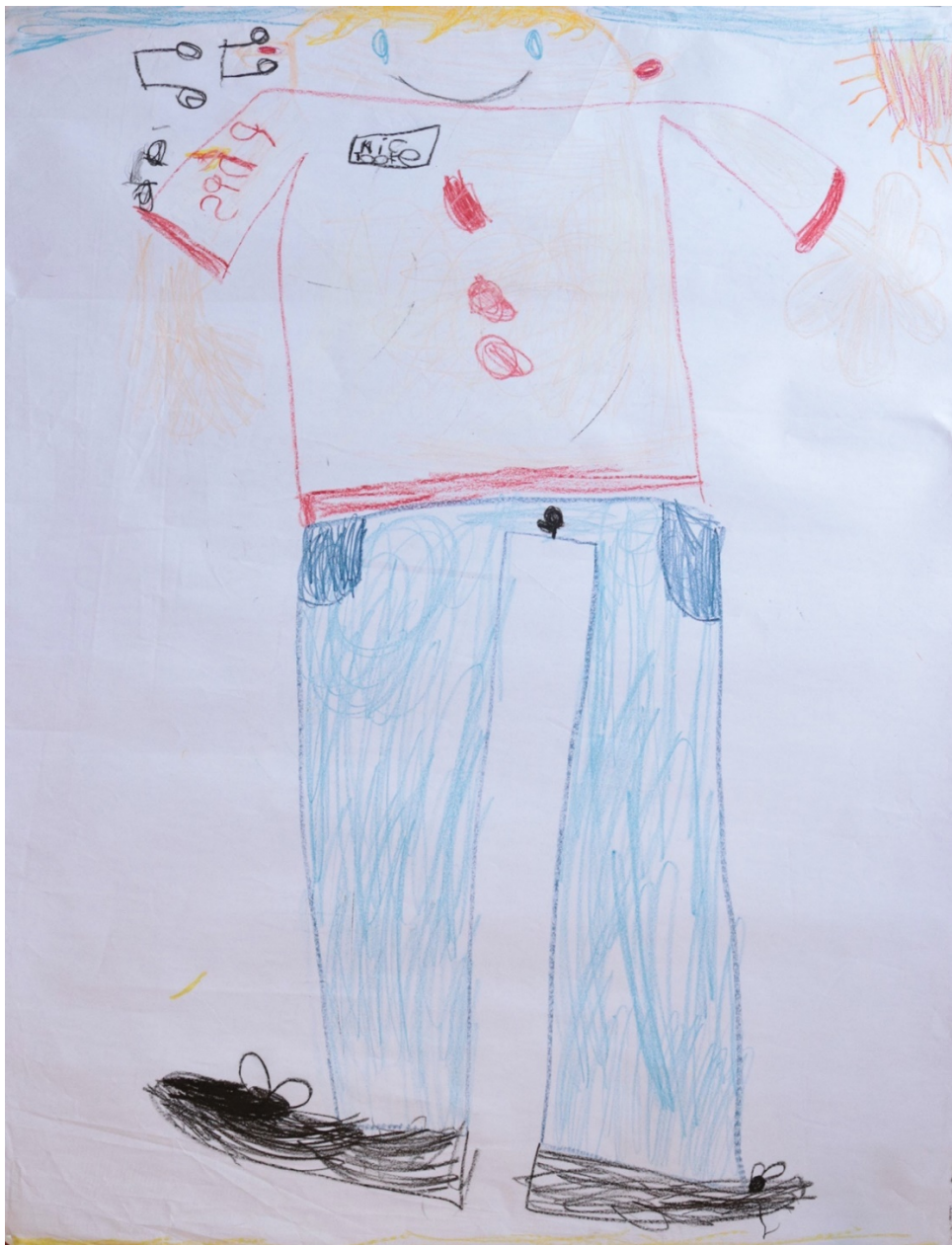
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<sup>104</sup> I draw inspiration for this title from Ingold (2007, p.135-136)

## 8.5 Child Art

Gareth Matthews (8 July 1929-17 April 2011), philosopher of child and childhood, is helpful to think with in terms of committing to acts of social justice as someone passionate about PwC. Child Art is the name of the chapter in his influential book *The Philosophy of Childhood* (1994). I have re-turned to this book and this chapter again and again. He offers a radical, gentle, affirming, re-working of child and art. Matthews (1994) develops a thought experiment throughout the chapter and invites the reader to engage with it. He asks provocative questions about children's art specifically about a piece of art his four year old daughter painted. He asks whether an art curator would consider displaying it in a famous museum, he probes about what criteria would be necessary to answer: 'yes!' Matthews (1994, p. 112) queries which category might his four year old's painting excel in. Matthews (1994) argues that the painting he has called *Three Figures* would not be accepted in a mainstream museum because these collections are defined "historically and geographically" (p.114). He then reminds us that this is actually a political question. In a society made up entirely of children, they might decide to celebrate the art of their own kind. "In our current society children do not have the power to make a decision it would be an adult decision - a decision concerning financial resources under adult control - whether to collect children's art for a major museum" (Matthews, 1994, p. 116). He then draws on the work of Michael Slote to show that there is a "devaluation of the goods of childhood" Matthews (1994, p. 117-120). Matthews then asked us to consider comparing child art and child philosophy and he argues that "children do philosophy naturally with a freshness of perspective and a sensitivity to puzzlement and conceptual mismatch..."(Matthews 1994, pp. 121-122). He ends this thought experiment, by calling on us as adults to discredit the "maturity assumption", because only then will it be possible to think about how "our attitude toward children and toward the value system that systematically devalues their thought, their sensibility, and the works of their creation" will become possible to change (Matthews, 1994, pp. 123-124). He also adds, hopefully, that child liberation will lead to adult liberation (Matthews, 1994, p. 124). I would add this liberation for adults would be from developmental and recapitulation theories that use time as a prison and growth as a marker of what is not yet able to be achieved. Moreover, it would hold for both nations as well as individuals (Burman, 2017).

Gareth Matthews in one book and in one chapter has sounded a rallying cry - I choose to respond.




### 8.3 Playing with the straight line

As a PwC difficultator/theorist/practitioner/researcher, Karin Murriss, Sara Stanley and Joanna Haynes are three PwC difficultators<sup>105</sup> who I have been able to learn from and do my training with to become a certified PwC level 1 trainer (some of these entanglements are also traced in Chapter 4). Their influence has not only been on my training to become a PwC trainer, but has deeply affected my research, my ability to facilitate and difficultate CPE's with teachers, children, teaching students etc. All three of them contribute to the body of scholarship about research in PwC with articles and books they have edited, written and contributed to for example: *Why Think?* (Stanley, 2012); *The Routledge International Handbook of Philosophy for Children* (Gregory, Haynes & Murriss, 2017); *The Posthuman Child* (Murriss, 2016b); *Children as Philosophers* (Haynes, 2008); *Literacies, Literature and Learning: Reading Classrooms Differently* (Murriss & Haynes, 2018a). All these books are in the watermark behind and in Figure 8.3 below.

Traditionally in a research or in my current experience of the norms of scholarship in the field of Education Studies in higher education (specifically at the University of Cape Town where I am based as an academic) the focus is usually on the body of scholarship in its written, formal 'academic' form which can be accessed in libraries as books or articles as pdf's or e-documents and then re-written about. Not only have I been able to access the academic body of knowledge but also have the privilege of working/playing/learning with and from Karin Murriss, Joanna Haynes and Sara Stanley from '2013' to *the present*. This present is not a result of a linear past. I continue to draw inspiration from Kyoko Hayashi the *hibakusha*<sup>106</sup>, first introduced in Chapter 1. The translator of her novel Eiko Otaka writes that "Hayashi's narration does not maintain a linear structure. In her stories, past and present are not only related, they are intricately united" (Hayashi, 2010, pp. xx-xxi). I would argue the same and

<sup>105</sup> Walter Kohan is also included in this list, but I have chosen to honour him and his work in this thesis in Chapter 4 and Chapter 6. (He is here too).

<sup>106</sup> "*Hibakusha* is the Japanese word for victim or victims of the atomic bombings" (Hayashi, 2010, p.ix).



not united as in carefully layered where it would be easy to separate the learning and research from 2013 and compare it to 2019. No, rather it is a delicate and intricate entanglement. Research, theory and practice are and remain entangled. It is not just something I have only learned from 'books' through the written word with carefully placed (and negotiated with the publishers – from my experience of publishing in academic peer reviewed journals, edited collections and in handbooks over the last 3 years) images interspersed to illustrate a written point. I have chosen, struggled through, breathed with, come up for air in these moments of deep immersion in the 'doing' (and doing is not separate from being, thinking, becoming). I have benefitted from research through the doing of CPE at : PwC trainings; with the students in initial teacher education at UCT; with my husband and children (and their friends); with the many children I worked with from 2013-2016 when I was employed at the research site; with the children who co-created the CPE's of this research with me as PhD student/ researcher/ difficultator; with the participants of Mindboggles on Saturday mornings. Dewey (2001, p.172) argues that "method means that arrangement of subject matter which makes it most effective in use. Never is method something outside of the material." This helps us to think about how necessary it is to disrupt the theory/practice binaries which divide what counts as knowing in the field of education ( from early childhood education through higher education).

In this next section I show the entanglements of the Figure 8.3 as an apparatus: a specific material-discursive practice and how it produces differences that matter, through boundary making practices, because of the phenomena produced (Barad, 2007, p.146) and how it leads to the inclusion of the drawings of the children of the research site, as material-discursive matter. The ants are here and there. I wrestle with how to show the 'doing' of this learning and I settle on a slightly inadequate, but this deeply affecting assemblage of materials that matter. The dining room table surface in my home is the play(ing)ground, the land above the troubled land (of Pinelands) on which I can do the work of re-membering the moments, the books, the learning of and through...so I gather some of the books in my precious picture book collection and lay the books carefully out on the table. Titles I have been introduced to by Karin, Sara, Joanna. Some titles I have been introduced by my own children and children I have taught. These are books I have come to know and love, which I re-turn to again and again. I use love not in its sentimental definition, but rather as a radical response to the bland textbooks and moralistic stories written for children. Murriss (2016b, p. 14) explains her deliberate use of philosophy with picturebooks because of how they create opportunities for any adults who

work with children, to “experience for themselves the material-discursive force of young children’s philosophical thinking.”

I re-turn to the physicality of a marble in my hand, as it falls onto the table, I am limited and restrained by gravity. I picture this assemblage swirling as a more than 3D movement – human exceptionalism does not help me at all. I co-create with the picture books and the striking front covers and titles, the beads that are thrown across the table re-membering the Mindboggles morning where we co-created with bead maps of the world. We played with the beads to create the world and compared their constant moving to the static nature of the lines drawn on maps the way we use maps to write on land. Even though we know “the map makes no claim to represent a certain territory” (Ingold, 2007, p. 49). Beads make it possible to play and imagine the world differently. The Colleen crayons, oil pastels, oil I have smeared on the white page and the wax crayons speak of the countless drawings, pieces of art possibly imagined and then finding their way onto pieces of paper, and often thrown into bins post the CPE. Murriss (2016b, p. 197) discusses Sara Stanley as a philosopher/practitioner and this is my experience too, “In philosophy with children she includes the other languages of drawing, artwork, play and actions in her work” with very young children, students involved in initial teacher education and teachers in-service. I witness what possibilities are created when other languages are included, not erased or relegated to specific ‘age groups’. I have knitted my way through this thesis, through seminars and conferences, Reading Groups, on planes to PwC and ICPIC conferences when air travel was expensive but accessible (pre-Covid), in lectures, during Mindboggles sessions, on the couch at home, when I was thinking with and through the patterns which emerged and guided my thinking/being/doing. A completed blanket square with a fair isle pattern in coral and white rests on *Duck, Death and the Tulip* (Erlbruch, 2015).

Figure 8.3

Assemblage of the disruption of the theory/practice divide in PwC



Back to the table play(ing) ground, I am struck by the materiality of the colours of the covers of the picturebooks which are vibrant and I know the pages inside are filled with colour too.

Colour that affect, create, make, transition, re-member. Colour is a guide for the ants walking past, over and through. There is more colour in this assemblage than in the pile of academic books on my desk, books I have read about teaching, PwC, pedagogy, higher education and even books about children's art and drawings. The assemblage is about frustration and anguish, that colour is imprisoned and relegated to the fringes of education and educating. It is about the sadness and despair about what is often referred to as different modalities of enquiry, when drawing or colours are included in an enquiry or learning activity. It is not a

different mode of enquiry, for difference in this respect means other than the norm, rather it is a less privileged and marginalised mode of enquiry. A colour photograph must fight to be included in an academic text (photographs with the correct number of pixels, explanations from the authors why it is significant, justifications about cost<sup>107</sup>, copyright and usage), the many black and white words need no army to come to their defence. We have forgotten that “writing is still drawing” (Ingold, 2007, p.122).

The picture books, beads, crayons, pencils, handwritten questions from participants in various training sessions, the bright yellow wool, the knitted square the grey rat, the paint, UCT/Mont Fleur/PGCE/ICPIC/ Madrid/Cape Town/Johannesburg/Bogota/Luanda- the places where intra-actions with Sara, Joanna and Karin occurred are not in this image as sentimental memories firmly located in my ‘mind’. NO! Barad in an interview with Gandorfer (2021, p. 17) reminds us that “...memory is not a capacity of human subject, but rather a re-membling, a reconfiguring/rearticulating (of) **the world**” (my emphasis). What I have shared are re-memberings, re-turnings, re-calling of the ways I will continue to become a PwC difficultator/ researcher/ student/ practitioner. This image (Figure 8.3) helps me trace the entanglements and makes it possible to suggest that “...paying attention to the material shows that a repositioning of agency in human and more-than-human bodies is warranted” (Reynolds and Peers, 2018, p.143) in understanding PwC differently. This is a political desiring and an engagement with justice. ‘Tracing the entanglements is essential to facing questions of justice; both are infinite tasks’ Barad in an interview with Gandorfer , 2010, p. 33). As justice is infinite, it is not past, it has not already come, it will not come and be ‘here’ but will always need to be pursued, worked for, acted upon in order to continuously be engaged with.

<sup>107</sup> *The Routledge international handbook of philosophy for children* (2017) hardcover is R4485.00 without a single drawing, image or colour besides black and white and *How to Live forever* by Colin Thompson (1998) paperback with every single page in colour is R152.00 in 2021.

## 9. What is left out because it does not matter that it is *already* in?

Figure 9.1

*Knitted-felted-embroidered blanket square of blanket in be(com)ing*



10 May 2017. I complete the first square of one of three blankets - I intentionally learn how to knit more than the two stitches I can do: plain and pearl, during the course of this PhD research, see Figure 9.1. As I have done in previous chapters, I will intentionally use different fonts in this chapter. I expect and intend for the affect of this agential cut to be jarring. I would suggest, just as the size of paper and materials used in schools is not neutral (Vecchi, 2010, p. 111), so too are the font sizes in this thesis, not neutral.

11 May 2017<sup>108</sup>. An email pings in my mailbox and its contents state I have received ethical clearance from the School of Education Ethics Review Committee to do my PhD research project.

17 May 2017. Another email I have been waiting for arrives in my inbox. This email is from the Directorate: Research of the Western Cape Education Department, approving my application to do research in a government school in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Getting these approvals from both these institutions is necessary, but the marks left on my body and the body of this research, include:

1. Being bound by the constraints and boundaries of stagnating, unchanging structures at highly bureaucratic institutions like the University of Cape Town and the Western Cape Education Department. Both these structures are obligated to mostly fixed academic research conventions.

**AND**

2. Reworking and rejecting the daily constraints of academia and doing the work of being open to the opportunities for instability, inconsistency, tensions and necessary refusals which posthumanism brings.

The ethics application at the university and the subsequent application to do research in a government school in the Western Cape are just some of many doors that have to be unlocked with keys held by very specific people, committees and structures in order to embark on this research. The blanket in its be(com)ing is the refusal. There is no application form necessary to include the blanket in the research; it is not worthy of that consideration.

This research asked: How does critical posthumanism reconfigure Philosophy with Children in a government primary school in South Africa? This has emerged as the 'main' research question and as guiding the enquiry of this thesis in its unfolding.

We are accountable for and to not only specific patterns of marks on bodies-that is, the differential patterns of mattering of the world of which we

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<sup>108</sup> See Appendix 1

are a part-but also the exclusions that we participate in enacting. Therefore accountability and responsibility must be thought in terms of what matters and what is excluded from mattering.

Barad (2007, p. 394)

This agential realist research suggests that the child(ren) and more-than-humans of the research site, are already 'there' (because it is grounded in a relational ontology), but the 'thereness' does not automatically mean they matter. This research is about paying attention to how the research practices participate in enacting the exclusion of child, more-than-human at the primary school which is the research site and beyond this specific piece of land in South Africa. Even though the child(ren) and more-than-human are present, they are excluded from actually mattering in a political and ethical sense. They are part of the way in which the world is materialising in its materiality, but they do not matter in terms of political agency (Rollo, 2016a). The visual arts, the stories, the ants are continually drawing our attention away from only human ways of knowing, being and towards disruption and unease.

This research is a response and opportunity to show how it is possible to be accountable for and response-able, as "having the ability to respond" (Bozalek, 2021, p.135) to the child and more-than-human who are excluded and to recognise how they *already* matter. The recognition is not enough and so the *doing* of this research, the *practising* matters as much as the *theorising*. Bozalek (2021, p.136) who draws on Haraway (2015) asks: "What if we were to reconfigure research processes and practices as playing?" I love this and have played with colours, textures, wool, children, picture books, drawings, art and different arrangements of photographs. I have played with ideas and bounced them over the boundaries and had to listen and be attentive to their responses. I have enjoyed the moments of creativity where the emergence of something new that was produced could take my breath away. In these multiple moments I press save, close the chapter, and step outside to catch my breath. In doing so, a world has been created which is a bit easier to love.

10 January 2018. Another email pings at 10:39am. I do not hear this one, it is in my student inbox and I give this inbox scant attention. However, when I see this email, the attachment is a letter dated 17 December 2017 from the Doctoral Degrees Board of the University of Cape Town. It confirms that my application for registration as a PhD candidate has been approved. The rules I am bound by, governing my doctoral candidature are included in the main body of the email and there are attachments to consider. There is a reference to the 80 000 **word**

limit. As in schooling (see Chapter 8) the obsession with words to the exclusion of every other poetic language (Vecchi, 2010) is an example of the boundaries of stagnating, unchanging structures of academia.

In the next section of this chapter, attention will be drawn to the 'what' and 'how'. *What* has mattered in writing this thesis and *how* it has mattered.

## 9.1 What has *mattered* and *how* it has mattered in the writing of this thesis.

The *how and what* has mattered in the writing of this thesis. How the research has found its way onto these (not entirely) white 'sheets of paper', the deliberate use of the children's drawing as the watermarks on the pages in Chapter 8, *matters*. Each re-turning<sup>109</sup> to the data that has been co-created has allowed for a different sedimenting of this research, this *matters*. Diffraction as a methodology and diffractive pieces have helped propel the movement of each chapter which can be engaged with by other chapters through a Community of Philosophical Enquiry and this *matters*. The careful curation of images, photographs, drawings and the child art, has served to provoke and destabilise the power language has been granted (Barad, 2013) and this *matters*. The canvas of this PhD has been sprayed with colours in nearly the entire spectrum to counter the weight of the black and white letters that march across the pages and this *matters*. The *child* as co-researcher, speaking, shouting, proclaiming, whispering, being, through 'their' images, quotes, drawings, art, photographs, insights, philosophical questions, questions, answers, philosophical answers, voices heard through the audio recordings and bodies mapping classrooms differently in the video recordings, *matters*. Through my learning with and through, the child(ren) who co-researched and co-created the data that I have been able to learn from, through and with and tried to convey on these pages, *matters*.

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<sup>109</sup> Re-turning, according to Barad (2014, p. 185) is about diffracting. I write more on re-turning in Chapter 1.

The theorists/academics/philosopher others walking these pages with me, *matter*. Some hand me the keys, to unlock the doors of the rooms I need to enter into in academia. Some leave the doors ajar for me to slip in quietly behind them. Some gently nudge me towards different paths and some whisper about alternate ways. Others bring ladders for me to climb over the impenetrable fences and still others hand me small shovels to dig slowly through the rock and stone under the ground, in order to tunnel to a different kind of 'freedom'. This is an incomplete list, but includes: Karen Barad, Karin Murriss, Walter Kohan, Brandan Reynolds, Joanna Haynes, Fikile Nxumalo, Donna Haraway, Vivienne Bozalek, Matthew Lipman, Ann Margaret Sharp, playdough, David Kennedy, Gareth Matthews, Lisa Delpit, Maughn Gregory, Kai Reynolds, Gaile Canella, Radhika Viruru, Eugenio Echeverria, Peter-Paul Elicor, Theresa Giorza, Ella Reynolds, Judy Crowther, wool, Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw, ants, Jason Wozniak, Magda Costa-Carvalho, Sara Stanley, Lena Green, Xolisa Guzula, Tim Ingold, pine trees, Siddique Motala, Loris Malaguzzi, Vea Vecchi, colours, Tiziana Fillipini, Marie Lisette Olsson, Hillevi Lenz Taguchi, Peter Moss, Elizabeth De Freitas, dates, Nathalie Sinclair, Candace Kuby, Gunilla Dahlberg, power, oil pastels... The entangled disciplines and research interests include: Critical Posthumanism, Early Childhood Education, Feminist Studies, Philosophy for/with Children, Philosophy of Childhood, Reggio Emilia, Childhood Studies, Anthropology, Initial Teacher Education and Post-Qualitative Research.

**Figure 9.2**

*Squares all joined together*



Each square of this initial blanket, every stitch, every learning and unlearning, philosophising, including and excluding of ideas, ideologies, philosophies, is diffracted through the theorists/philosophers/academics, the PhD journey and the first ball of wool which grows this blanket from May 2017. The knitting and then sewing and finally crocheting the edges take place in my home, family members' homes, friends' homes, conferences, in seminars, at the weekly Thursday Reading Groups in Room 321 at UCT or in HUMA at UCT, a Deleuze and Guattari conference at UWC. The knitting carries on at Mont Fleur on two DECD writing retreats at Monkey Valley with Karen Barad, on an aeroplane to Johannesburg to an AERA Africa Reggio Alliance conference, and at Mindboggles Meetings on the first Saturday of every month.

### 9.3 Decentered and Foregrounded

Braidotti (2019, p. 35) offers a helpful reminder that human has never been a neutral category and so these human concepts, practices and knowledges I formulate as adult ones for specific adults as they perform in schools. Murriss (2020, p. 68) urgently reminds us that child is excluded from the category of human especially as part of a posthuman formulation and needs to be considered as child as phenomenon not just child as subject.

The deliberately rudimentary illustration I created and offer below shows a pathway to the contributions of this research to Philosophy for/with children, Early Childhood Education, and Initial Teacher Education in the geo-political context of South Africa. Decentering the human concepts, practices and knowledge (Barad, 2007, p. 334) and foregrounding reimagined child, a reconfigured community of philosophical enquiry, with a particular focus on the more-than-human land/animals/visual/ child art and drawings.

**Figure 9.3**

Decentred and Foregrounded

Decentred:

Human  
concepts

Human  
practices

Human  
knowledge

(Barad, 2007,  
p.334)

**Foregrounding and inclusion of**

**Re-imagined  
Child(not considered  
fully human)**

**Reconfigured  
Community of  
Philosophical  
Enquiry**

**More-than-human  
land / animals**

**Visual - Art - Drawings**

**Diffraction pieces**

How do the research questions do the work of decentering what is usually centred and foregrounding what is usually background/avoided or erased.

Re-turning to the visual to read with and through the research questions is a methodological decentering and foregrounding move.

The question which has guided this research is: **How does critical posthumanism reconfigure Philosophy with Children in a government primary school in South Africa?**

The sub-questions:

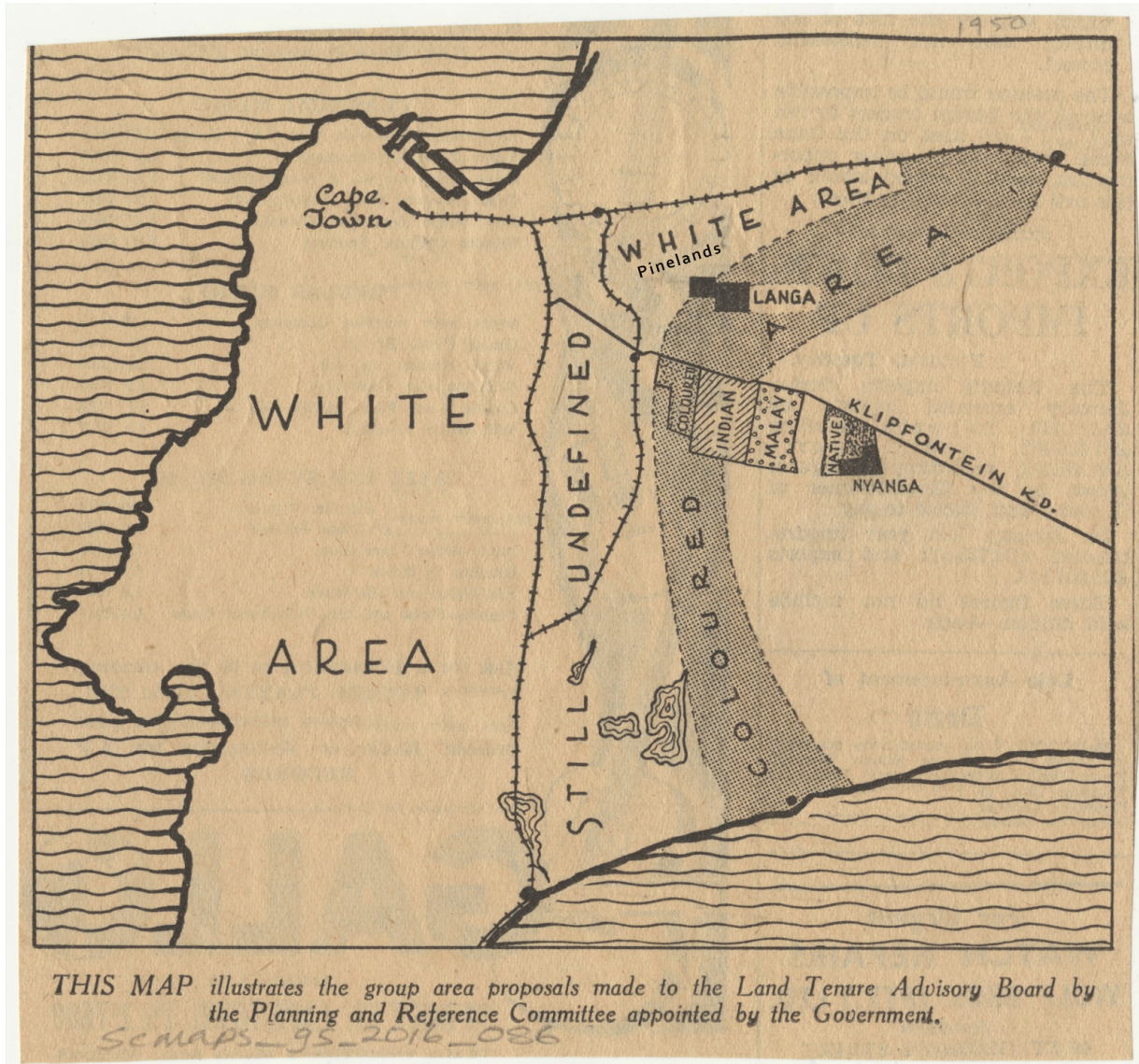
- a. What is the new material-discursive produced when using a tapestry as the provocation for intra-generational enquiries with one school?
- b. How does age work to include or exclude in the un/bounded enquiry spaces of Philosophy with Children and how does critical posthumanism reconfigure adult child relationality?
- c. How can the community of philosophical enquiry become re-configured as a posthuman pedagogy and a post - qualitative research methodology by including the more-than-human?
- d. What are the ethical and political implications of the ontological and epistemological shift in understanding a community of philosophical enquiry as a de/colonising posthuman pedagogy in the South African education system?

The work of this thesis has been an attempt to “begin exploring new, posthumanist directions in research, curriculum design and pedagogical practice ” (Snaza et.al. 2014, p.40). Each chapter is therefore entangled with the research sub-questions in new ways to respond to research, curriculum design and pedagogical practice. As this has been an emergent and emerging, creative and experimental thesis, the post-qualitative research methodology has shaped each chapter, through the layout, the arts, the use of images in very specific ways and the particular images that have been ‘chosen’. We re-turn to the tapestry first introduced in the Introduction, *How can I be reponse-able to that which I love* and to the map ‘first’

introduced in Chapter 1, *re-membering as a sacred practice* to make our way through the chapters from the Introduction to Chapter 4.

**Figure 9.4**

*Re-turning to the map*



The words written into the land WHITE AREA, STILL UNDEFINED, COLOURED AREA, WHITE AREA, COLOURED, INDIAN, MALAY, NATIVE, the shading, the curly font for Cape Town and the railway line do very particular work. All enact a very specific kind of violence we cannot turn away from again and again. The railway lines which look like a zip, continue to

painfully separate parts of Cape Town according to colonial and then Apartheid based racial categorisations and in terms of socio-economic access. Enacting Apartheid separation 'from' (Minh-ha, 1988) and entanglement 'with' (Barad, 2017a). The railway lines drawn into the earth resemble stitches applied to a wound on the skin. The stitches create more wounds as they close the original wound, the scars have scars, the hauntings haunt. Barad (2017, p.83) reminds us that the "...landscape is not merely visually akin to a body, it is the skin of the earth." The land of this research site is important as the more-than-human and this skin of the earth re-members the violences that create/d its scars and this matters for a reconfigured community of philosophical enquiry in Pinelands, in its specificity, and as this land of and with the school. The histories and futures, as partial as they are, need these stories to be told, because they have not been before, not in these particular ways. This contested land in a country as complex as South Africa, needs what Haraway (2016, p. 10) suggests " ... recuperation in complex histories that are as full of dying as living, as full of endings, even genocides, as beginnings" and I would add pandemic(s). These are some of the entanglements that were tunneled through in order to respond to the research questions.

Chapter 3 also provides a partial response to this question about the inclusion of the more-than-human. We re-turn to the tapestry. In this particular section of Chapter 3 I enact a doing of *how can the community of enquiry become re-configured as a posthuman pedagogy and a post-qualitative research methodology by including the more-than-human? And what is the new material-discursive produced when using a tapestry as the provocation for intra-generational enquiries with one school?*

2017/2018/2020/2021/1998/2016/2022. I sit with the children in the enquiry, I am (and am not) in the tapestry in situ in the foyer of the school, I am and (am not) in the colour photocopied laminated tapestry the groups of children hold, fold, return to, tuck under their arms, squeeze between fingers with tapestry responding in return, to investigate, sneeze on, cough onto, walk across, to be provoked by and provoke in return.

**To make this methodological point I reinsert a section from Chapter 3, performing a 'cut and paste' which is a cutting together apart (Barad, 2014), in order to re-turn to.** When we re-turn to this section which we have already seen before I bring into question what it means to re-turn and how "re-membering is a bodily activity of re-turning" (Barad, 2017a, p. 84). As we re-turn so does Chapter 3 re-turn in a new way. Kuby (2017, p.16) suggests as we

shift from humanist research practices, we need to think about new ways of doing research and “expand and rethink, perhaps, taken for granted concepts and definitions.” Let us re-turn:

The tapestry is sentimental to me because I am stitched into it, I am and am not ‘just’ the Miss



Lawrence<sup>110</sup> that has been embroidered in the dark brown embroidery cotton. I am not only in the cotton and left there, left behind, because there is no there and here but rather there/here. I am “living between worlds, crossing (out) taxonomic differences, tunnelling through boundaries (which is not a bloodless but a necessary revolutionary political action), Anzaldúa<sup>111</sup> the material multiplicity of self, the way it is diffracted across spaces, times, realities, imaginaries (Barad, 2014, p. 174). I am teacher, student, mother, father, child, adult, animal, microbe, quark, dust, cotton, the “warp and the woof ” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2014, p. 475). In 1998, the school’s 50<sup>th</sup> year of existence, I am the first racialised as ‘other’ employed at the school, now I am stitched into the fabric, tethered into the void. Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2010, p. 135) argue that early childhood spaces are “gendered, racialised, ethnically marked spaces in which certain categories already count more or are more privileged than others.” In order to read this tapestry differently and to move away from the anthropocentric reading of this tapestry I trouble engaging with the “various material-discursive apparatuses of production” that make up this tapestry (Barad, 2017a, p. 75).

I think and do the theory as I crop the tapestry and diffract it with Karen Barad’s (2007, 2014, 2017) theorising of the void.




According to quantum field theory, the vacuum is far from empty; indeed, it's teeming with the full set of possibilities of what may come to be. Matter is regularly created and destroyed. And the zoo


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<sup>110</sup> Lawrence is my maiden surname

<sup>111</sup> Karen Barad diffracts with her experience, friendship and scholarship of Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*



of subatomic particles including electrons, quarks, positrons,   
antiquarks, neutrinos, pions, gluons, and photons-isn't  comprised of  
simple individual objects  occupying specific positions in the

vacuum we call space and time:  1948- not only is the very idea that they  
take up determinate

positions in space not to be taken for granted,  but part of their very nature  
seems to be wrapped up in the bubbling sea of possibilities that was to be but an  
inert backdrop for matter's passage.

(Barad, 2007, p. 354)

When we re-turn to the tapestry/quote we read and respond and the tapestry/quote reads and responds differently too. There is a new haunting. Memories do not only reside in (adult) humans. This is a "circling back" (Barad, 2017a, p. 69). This tapestry is a "spacetime point" (Barad, 2017a, p. 69).

I have tried to diffract through the images into the life and death of this thesis. Substantive, colourful, significant, arresting, the diffraction pattern in the making because the new that is produced is the act of seeing differently, reading with body, seeing with ears, noticing the ants and why they are there or not there.

Chapter 4 offers something slightly different, a response to another research question, *How does age work to include or exclude in the un/bounded enquiry spaces of philosophy with Children and how does critical posthumanism reconfigure adult child relationality?*

The im/possibility of teaching and researching helps to answer this question. This school is a place leaking with the wounds of colonisation and the brutality of Apartheid. A reconfiguring of philosophy with children, through the pedagogy of the community of philosophical enquiry helps to create new possibilities, while not ignoring the ongoing violences. The reconstruction of power in the classroom through a community of philosophical enquiry, destabilises the fixed adult/child binary and reconfigures it as relationality. *In relation*. Rollo (2016) helps us think about how a decolonial politics of childhood is a possibility in child making decisions that matter in the classroom. When all in the classroom, the children and the more-than-human are able to engage in full participation, as ongoing.

Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 respond to various aspects of each of the research sub questions. The tapestry guides each enquiry so it is in every chapter doing the work of disrupting the material-discursive apparent separation. The circle and chairs in Chapter 5, the children placing their own chairs into a circle, making a choice within a choice which they are not always freely given in their classrooms – of where to sit, as this remains an adult prerogative in schooling and especially in early childhood education. This minor act works to destabilise the adult/child binary and reconfigures the relationality. Ingold (2007, p. 75) suggests that diverting from the predetermined route (the usual layout of their Foundation Phase classroom) is an act of wayfaring which is about movement and about being the movement

The children developing the questions (and deliberately not the adults), voting on the questions as a pedagogical practice and the ways to think about how this works for the political equality and not only moral equality of child in Chapter 6 are primary concerns. A guiding question: 'Where is the place for these kinds of philosophical questions and this kind of philosophical thinking/drawing/creating/being for child (and adults) in schools? I argue that a reconfigured process of philosophy with children and the community of philosophical enquiry makes the space for these philosophical questions– so that the richness of these pedagogical encounters can really matter and make a difference to the teaching and learning happening. There is a response to Freire (2012, p. 75) arguing that the role of teacher and student in transmission based teaching must be disrupted, so that the learning could be more just. I (and

every teacher) need to acknowledge our roles as oppressors and how we enact everyday acts of oppression against children. When children can ask questions that do not immediately open a door to an obvious answer this brings to the fore the multidirectional and multi-species relations that exist between questioner, questions and answers. Also, when the more-than-human is taken into account in these democratic processes, the notion of democracy gets overturned and not taken as a given. This kind of learning and teaching is valuable and worth engaging in and can be decolonising, because it shatters 'who' controls 'who' and 'what' matters. Philosophical questions are powerful and can contribute to a de/colonial politics of childhood (Rollo, 2016a, p. 33) for many different reasons. Epistemologically for being able to question what knowledge is; ethico-politically: because they disrupt ways of knowing and being that maintain the colonial relations of adult vs. child, known vs. to-be-known in this post-Apartheid school setting and also very specific relations to land, as the void which needs to be undone. Also the opportunity to engage in transdisciplinary work where subjects are not bounded by false demarcations.

Rollo (2016a) argues that "whatever we wish to name it, the exclusion of children is a remnant of colonial injustice, the preservation of which has a profound impact on modern politics" (p. 32). A reconfigured CPE provides ways to think differently about what child(ren) already offer and bring to the learning process and the land they are learning with and in a community of philosophical enquiry with.

The boundaries and borders of the community of philosophical enquiry are troubled in Chapter 7. A philosophical question developed by a group of the Grade 2 children: **Why did different colour people sit on different colour benches?** (during Apartheid) opens up the enquiry. Attention is paid to what else is happening in the room and an audio-recorder brought in to illuminate the voices of the children as they are speaking and philosophising opens up the zip, that keeps so much of what really matters in school, zipped close. That what the children are talking about, how they are thinking and making, with the drawings and the colours – the philosophising that is already taking place, if we are willing to reimagine curriculum and pedagogical practice, radically differently. It is a matter of ethics and deeply political. We discount most of what is actually the learning happening in schools and classrooms because of a fixation with a normalised developmental model of learning, of what can be known, when and by whom (Burman, 2017, p. 22).

The child art, drawings and use of the watermark in Chapter 8 has been an enactment of how the material-discursive matters and how what and who child(ren) are and do matters. It is also about doing research in ways that is uncomfortable, startling, affecting and then also opening up im/possibilities. The difficulty which endures around 'making the watermarks work on each page' and conforming to the parameters of Word documents /Apple products /pdf's/ PhD thesis conventions was an act of bodily mourning with the ways child(ren) are made to conform in schooling to rules, regulations some which are valid, but many which are rigid and norm based. Conventions are forms of violence. This chapter specifically was a way to honour the art, to acknowledge colour as a poetic language in Early Childhood Education and beyond. It was a way to recognise how child(ren) are made over and over again to write in lines, in books, or on the same sized pages every day, with not enough choice about how their learning, enquiring, engaging and creating could be radically different. A reconfigured philosophy with children is one opportunity to live more justly. Engaging in the aesthetics of school and life differently and to produce ways of being in the world which counter current dominant narratives.

The work of this thesis has been to disrupt the ideas of time and space as being containers and why this is significant for child and early childhood education. The disruption of adult/child relationality through rethinking who asks the questions in class and what these questions mean. Showing how children can make pedagogical decisions about their learning through moving and movement, moving their own chairs, choosing where to place them and whether to sit on them, to learn, voting on and deciding about what they want to learn about. Being able to engage in transdisciplinary encounters with knowledge. The paper matters, the size of the paper matters, where learning takes place matters. The story of the land and the colonial and Apartheid violences need to be told so new histories and futures can enact justice. The work of this thesis has been to disrupt what counts as knowing and who does the knowing that matters in classrooms. In a community of enquiry the theory/practice binary is disrupted as there is a *doing* in the philosophising. There is a rejection of child as deficit and rather child as expectant, emergent, creative, possible, interesting, interested, able to respond. A reconfigured community of philosophy of enquiry makes it possible for childlike knowing and embodied be(com)ing to emerge in a Foundation Phase classroom setting and to count as learning and knowledge making practices.

In this last part of Chapter 9, I re-turn to a different part of Loris Malaguzzi's poem titled *No way. The hundred is there* (Edwards, et.al., 1998, p. 3).

*...they tell the child  
to think without hands  
to do without head...*

And so with the ants we re-turn to this theorising, the thinking, the making and doing, the being and knowing which cannot be separated. I thought with my hands, I did with my head and engaged in multispecies encounters which enabled a different way of being in the world.

### 9.3 Spiralling crochet blanket

**Figure 9.5**

Spiral crochet blanket



July 2019 this blanket seen in Figure 9.3 is conceived and then it flies from Cape Town, South Africa, via Paris, France, to Bogota<sup>112</sup>, Colombia, a small emerging rectangle, and a big ball of colour-filled wool. The crochet and crochet blanket-to-be is now at the biennial ICPIC (International Council of Philosophical Enquiry with Children) conference held in Bogota, Colombia. The crochet, enquiries, philosophical discussions, theorists, participants, Spanish, Portuguese, English, entanglements and intra-actions of the land, air, sea, thoughts all crocheted 'there' and 'here'. The double knit stitch used throughout the piece looks the same 'in front and at the back' so the piece is never right way up - for which way is that? Deleuze and Guattari draw a comparison between knitting and crochet, suggesting that, "in knitting the needles produce a striated space; one of them plays the role of the warp, the other of the woof, but by turns. Crochet, on the other hand, draws an open space in all directions, a space that is prolongable in all directions—but still has a center" (1987/2014, p. 476). This open space of the crochet that flew to Bogota, is a rectangular interrupted spiral, but the piece grows outward. I think, pick up, am attached to, wool sliding and gliding through my fingers to dance with the other stitches joined together. It thinks with me as the stitches form and grow and grow and grow.

The piece flies back home to Cape Town, South Africa, across time zones. Picking up dirt, dust, sweat, spilled water and Rooibos tea and the longed for Colombian coffee droplets, recycled air conditioned air in the plane all the way through the ways of spacetime mattering. The heat that persists and exists as the growing blanket lies collapsed over legs, lap, chest. Heat molecules are trapped and released, energy and condensation, experimenting. The clashing complementing colours which meet each other are intra-acting, there is no pattern but this is the pattern. When more wool is bought, blanket in tow, it reveals itself by spilling out of the too small canvas bag, murmurs of appreciation from the staff at Cowgirl Blues in Maitland, Cape Town where the wool is produced, exclamations about the beauty, then touching. There is no crocheting without touch. Jokinen and Murriss (2020, p. 48) remind us that whatever hands touch are "already part of material discursive entanglements." Fingers poke, wool wraps around and the touching continues. Words emerge from the sales assistant and language erupts with the colours of the hand blended and dyed wool. Words say: "this is from a reject ball, we have never made it again, this one was too blue that's why it was on sale", each different spiral produces a story about rejection and inclusion, to include and to reject intra-acting to make a piece of art. Like the children did when they were thinking

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of their questions and the questions revealed, unfurled, emerged, it seems a similar process when the crochet emerges and the questions of the PhD research bring forth the light, the colour, the choices. When I am crocheting and tell those who ask that I am crocheting and knitting through my PhD, with my PhD, as part of my PhD, I frequently get blank stares and very few ask for an explanation, as if it cannot be so. Loch, Henderson and Honan (2017, p. 67) academics who write with crochet ask “does the image of women doing needlework produce a lack of intellectual endeavour?” If I held a book between my hands in the same place as the crochet hook and the wool I would need no explanation about its place and relevance for my PhD.

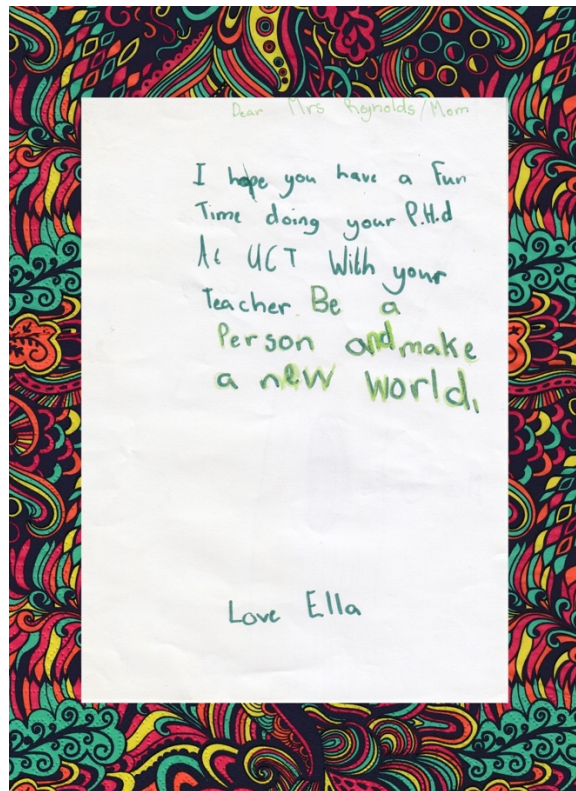
This research takes on the response-ability to trace some of these in/finite entanglements that emerge as questions (Jokinen & Murrin, 2020, p.48). This tension carries itself through the wool through the crochet hook, through the picking up and letting go. This thesis embodies this tension, these inconsistencies. How some materials matter more, paper that has marks drawn on by adult count more than paper that has marks drawn on them by child. How hooks, needles and wool matter less than paper, ink and books over and over again. How black and white as colour and signifier are privileged in the academic books, texts, journal articles that are read. Colour emerges in the book covers and then is lost to the black and white. This is in sharp contrast to the photographs, video footage, all the art and questions that emerged (and continue to emerge) through the data co-creation. It is virtually in technicolour, the wool used in the crochet is everything but black and white. A disruption of the binary black/white. Besides the tension there is also joy as the colour, the weight, the indeterminacy and instability, the puzzlement signal a different way to be in the world. What Kohan in conversation with Kennedy (2008, p. 6) argues passionately for - a time of childhood. These have been just some of the contributions this thesis has made.

## 9.4 Epilogue

I choose to 'end' with another provocation, which is inevitably a beginning, as it in some way has held this whole thesis as a community of philosophical enquiry.

**Figure 9.6**

'Be a person and make a new world'



July 2016. After an 8 year uninterrupted<sup>113</sup> stretch teaching at the school, which is the research site, I resigned to become a PhD student. I received farewell letters and notes of encouragement from nearly all the children at the school. This note in Figure 9.6 was/ is from my daughter Ella who was a Grade 3 pupil at the school in 2016. Her letter of encouragement and words of hope, vitality and affect have guided this research process. Ella used the forward

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<sup>113</sup> I taught at the research site from January 1998-June 2000 (then resigned to teach in Atlanta, Georgia), returned to teach in July 2002-December 2002 and (then resigned to move to Johannesburg where our son was born in 2003), returned as a learning support teacher in 2004-2006 (then resigned and our daughter was born in 2007) and then returned to develop and lead the inclusive support department from June 2008 until I resigned in June 2016 to do my PhD.

slash as she addressed me as Mrs. Reynolds/ mom before I had really even engaged with Karen Barad's work and yet it would become so significant to me and my writing/thinking/doing/being. The agential separability of (teacher) Mrs. Reynolds/mom (mother) and everything uncontained in 'me' is in the light green forward slash. I inserted this note into a picture frame. It makes the re-membering of first receiving the letter and each iteration as it has remade the world again and again as I have re-turned to it, a sacred practice.

In responding to the other, to Ella, as daughter/girl/racialised as coloured, black/ pupil/ knower/ known/ philosopher/ theorist /fully posthuman child: I have tried to have fun with my PhD. A fun that entails justice, inclusion and belonging, with my teacher(s) for these were multiple and they were human and more-than-human. And through this PhD have tried to be a person (a particular posthuman formulation of a human) and have hope(fully), vitally, justly played a part in making a new world – a world as Kohan<sup>114</sup> (2021) inspired by Freire suggests, a world a little easier to love (and be loved in response).

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<sup>114</sup> Walter Kohan in his book launch for the English translation of his book, *Paulo Freire, a philosophical biography* on YouTube on 22 April 2021 says: "...Imagine a world that is a little easier to love."

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# Appendix 1

Ethical Clearance School of Education UCT

Ethical Clearance WCED 2017

Ethical Clearance WCED 2018

Information Sheet Pupils

Consent Form Pupils

Information Sheet Parents

Consent Form Parents (for themselves)

Consent Form Parents (for their children)

Information Sheet Staff

Information Sheet Principal

Consent for Videotaping Staff



**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Dr Carolyn  
McKinney**

University of Cape Town, Private Bag X3, Rondebosch, 7701  
Physical address: Neville Alexander Building, University Ave South, Upper Campus  
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 2757 / 2772 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 3489  
E-mail: carolyn.mckinney@uct.ac.za Internet: www.education.uct.ac.za

EDNREC2017-03-16

11 May 2017

Rose-Anne  
Reynolds PhD  
Programme UCT

Dear Ms

**RE: Ethical Clearance for Student Research Project**

I am pleased to inform you that ethical clearance has been granted by the School of Education Ethics Review Committee of the Faculty of Humanities for your PhD research project entitled: '**Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary space**'.

I wish you all the best with your

Yours

[Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wyngaard@westerncape.gov.za)  
tel: +27 021 467 9272  
Fax: 0865902282  
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000  
wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20170517 -977

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Associate Professor Carolyn McKinney  
**Chair, School of Education Research Ethics**

Mrs Rose-Anne Reynolds  
Xxxx

**Dear Mrs Rose-Anne Reynolds**

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: INCLUSION/S RECONFIGURING THE UN/BOUNDARY SPACES**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.

2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **18 March 2017 till 29 September 2017**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN**  
**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 18 May 2017**

[Audrey.wynqaard@westerncape.gov.za](mailto:Audrey.wynqaard@westerncape.gov.za)

tel: +27 021 467 9272

Fax: 0865902282

Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000

wced.wcape.gov.za

**REFERENCE:** 20170517 -977

**ENQUIRIES:** Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Rose-Anne Reynolds

xxxx

**Dear Mrs Rose-Anne Reynolds**

#### **RESEARCH PROPOSAL: INCLUSION/S RECONFIGURING THE UN/BOUNDARY SPACES**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

12. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
13. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
14. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.

15. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
16. The Study is to be conducted from **23 January 2018 till 28 March 2018**
17. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
18. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
19. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
20. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
21. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
22. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services**  
**Western Cape Education Department**  
**Private Bag X9114**  
**CAPE TOWN**  
**8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard

**Directorate: Research**

**DATE: 09 October 2017**

## **INFORMATION SHEET PUPILS**

5

April 2017

Dear Pupil (I will insert their name)

My name is Rose-Anne Reynolds and I am a Phd Student in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town

I am doing research on **Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary spaces.**

My project involves coming into your classroom and doing a 1hour Philosophy for Children Community of Enquiry session with you. In this session we will exchange our ideas, thoughts and questions about your school.

I was wondering whether you would be willing to be a part of my research project. I need your help with participating as I want to do research with you, not on you. So your ideas, your thoughts about PNPS and inclusion are important and I need you to participate as I want as many different people to contribute to this project. I actually want more children to participate than adults. I am actually hoping to work with every child at PNPS!

Remember, this is not a test, it is not for marks and it is voluntary, which means that you don't have to do it. Also, if you decide halfway through that you prefer to stop, this is completely your choice and will not affect you negatively in any way.

I will not be using your own name but I will make one up. You can help me make one up for you too, this is an opportunity to choose your own name. So no one can identify you, and all information about you will be kept confidential in all my writing about the study. Also, all collected information I will store safely in my personal computer and filing system.

Your parents have also been given an information sheet and consent form, but at the end of the day it is your decision to join us in the study. Could you talk to your parents about your decision too as I also need them to agree to allow you to do the study and then the final decision is yours if you want to do the study. The consent form is on the next page, that is where you indicate yes you would like to participate, or no you would not like to.

I look forward to working with you!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you

Rose-Anne Reynolds  
Address was provided  
Email was provided  
Mobile was provided

### **Consent Form from Pupils in Grade 1-3 for Discussions**

Please fill in the reply slip below and return to school, if you agree to participate in my research project **on how the concept of inclusion works at this school.** the discussions.

My name is: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle either 😊 Yes or No 😞 for each question below.

1. I agree to take part in the discussions during the study



YES / NO



3. I know that I can say no that I don't want to take part any more at any time



YES / NO



**I will not use any images or video-recordings of you without asking your permission and your parents' permission.**

Sign \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Many thanks,  
Rose-Anne Reynolds  
[rose-anne.reynolds@uct.ac.za](mailto:rose-anne.reynolds@uct.ac.za)

## INFORMATION SHEET PARENTS

5 April 2017

Dear Parent

My name is Rose-Anne Reynolds and I am a Phd student in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

I am doing research on **Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary spaces**

My research involves doing Reggio inspired Philosophy for Children, Communities of Enquiry with the entire school community the parents, staff and children. I will be working with one class at a time and any additional adults who can and are free to join us, doing 1 hour Communities of Enquiry. The second part of the project will involve a longer term project working with about 30 children across the school for one hour a week over 8 weeks. The time frame should be May-September 2017

The reason why I have chosen your child's class is because I want to work with every class in the school so I can be doing research with your children not just about them.

I was wondering whether you would mind if I do this research with your child (and you if you choose).

Your child will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. S/he will be reassured that s/he can withdraw her/his permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your child will not be paid for this study. Our child's name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. His/her individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be kept safely and password protected.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Rose-Anne Reynolds

*PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH FORMS ON THIS PAGE*

**Consent Form Parent (for themselves)**

Please fill and return the reply slip below and indicate your willingness to be part of my voluntary research project **on how the concept of inclusion works at this school.**

I, (My name) \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement to be part of group discussions/enquiries,**

I Agree/Do not agree (please delete as appropriate) to be part of group discussions/enquiries.

I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential in all academic writing.

I am aware that the records of the enquiries will be kept safely and password protected

**Permission to be audio recorded**

I give/do not give (please delete as appropriate) my consent to have the activities and interviews recorded.

\*Please tick the boxes if you agree

I know that I can stop the audio recording of the activities at any time without repercussions.

I know that the recordings will be kept safely and password protected.

**Option to withdraw**

\*Please tick the box if you agree

I know that I may withdraw from the study at any time and will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

**I will not use any images or video-recordings of you without asking your permission.**

Please provide your email address so I can contact you about when these sessions will be taking place.

**Parent/guardian email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: Rose-Anne Reynolds

*PLEASE COMPLETE BOTH FORMS ON THIS PAGE*

**Consent Form Parents (giving permission for their child)**

Please fill and return the reply slip below and indicate your willingness to be part of my voluntary research project **on how the concept of inclusion works at this school.**

I, (My name) \_\_\_\_\_

**Agreement for my child to be part of group discussions/enquiries,**

I Agree/Do not agree (please delete as appropriate) **for my child** to be part of group discussions/enquiries.

\*Please tick the boxes if you agree

I am aware that the researcher will keep all information confidential in all academic writing.

I am aware that the records of the enquiries will be kept safely and password protected

**Permission for my child to be audio recorded**

I give/do not give (please delete as appropriate) my consent to have the activities and interviews recorded.

\*Please tick the boxes if you agree

I know that my child can stop the audio recording of the activities at any time without repercussions.

I know that the recordings will be kept safely and password protected.

**Option for my child to withdraw**

\*Please tick the box if you agree

I know that my child may withdraw from the study at any time and will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

**I will not use any images or video-recordings of your child without asking your permission.**

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person: Rose-Anne Reynolds

**INFORMATION SHEET FOR TEACHERS**

5 April 2017

Dear Staff Member (I will insert name)

My name is Rose-Anne Reynolds and I am a Phd student in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

I am doing research on Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary spaces.

My research involves doing Reggio inspired Philosophy for Children, Communities of Enquiry with the entire school community. The parents, staff and children. I will be working with one class at a time and any additional adults who can and are free to join us, doing 1 hour Communities of Enquiry. The second part of the project will involve a longer term project working with about 30 children across the school for one hour a week over 8 weeks. The time frame

should be May-September 2017. I will probably only conduct one interview, with you the principal.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of my 19 year association with the school as a teacher and its journey towards becoming an inclusive school. I was wondering whether you would mind if you and the staff and children would participate in this research opportunity.

I was wondering whether you would mind if could do a 1 hour Community of Enquiry session with your class at a time most convenient for your timetable.

Your name and identity will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. All research data will be safely stored in my personal computer and filing system.

You will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. Your participation is voluntary, so you can withdraw your permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study.

Please let me know if you require any further information.  
Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Rose-Anne Reynolds

5 April 2017

Dear Principal

As you know, my name is Rose-Anne Reynolds and I am a Phd student in the School of Education at the University of Cape Town.

I am doing research on **Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary spaces**

My research involves doing Reggio inspired Philosophy for Children, Communities of Enquiry with the entire school community, the parents, staff and children. I will be working with one class at a time and any additional adults who can and are free to join us, doing 1hour Communities of Enquiry. The second part of the project will involve a longer term project working with about 30 children across the school for one hour a week over 8 weeks. The time frame should be May-September 2017. I will probably only conduct one interview, with you the principal.

The reason why I have chosen your school is because of my 19 year association with the school as a teacher and its journey towards becoming an inclusive school. I was wondering whether you would mind if you and the staff and children would participate in this research opportunity.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

The names of the research participants and identity of the school will be kept confidential at all times and in all academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

All research data will be kept safely and password protected.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Rose-Anne Reynolds

## Consent Form Staff Videotaping

Please fill and return the reply slips below and indicate your willingness to be videotaped in my voluntary research project called:

### **Inclusion/s reconfiguring the un/boundary spaces**

#### **Permission to be videotaped**

I, \_\_\_\_\_

GIVE my consent to be videotaped for this project OR

DO NOT GIVE my consent to be videotaped for this project.

I know that I may withdraw from the study at any time and that I will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way.

I know that the videotapes will be used for this study only.

I know that the tapes will be kept safely.

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Many thanks,

Rose-Anne Reynolds

\* please tick as appropriate