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Towards an Ethico-Aesthetic of Parenting: Sensing Ritornellos of Play with GoPro Data

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Abstract: This article argues for an ethico-aesthetic approach to parenting as an alternative to the neoliberalisation of parenting, and its critiques. This ethico-aesthetic approach focuses on affect and the intensification of collective life. In the article, it is explored in connection to a group of parents and children under six who participated in a play event called *Moving with lines and light*. As parents, researchers and players who participated in this play event, the authors think together with fragments of GoPro data and the concept of the *ritornello*. They do this as an exercise in sensing the non-linear time of parenting in/with the play through a prolonged, active and relational process of recollection and narration that combines analogic and technologic events. With these, the authors discuss the parenting body in postdevelopmental modes of existence organized around sense, territory and technicity that propel a thinking of parenting beyond practices of symbolic control, and as living ecologies of action.

Keywords: ethico-aesthetics; parenting; play; ritornello; gopro; technicity

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1. The Neoliberalisation of Parenting and Its Critique

Discourses around family life and childrearing have been increasingly economised, rationalised and highly governed, which make many speak of a *neoliberalisation of parenting* (McRobbie 2013; Moss 2014; Dahlberg 2016; Jensen 2018, etc.). In the United Kingdom, practices of family governance have been long established. They can be tracked down to the major influence of John Bowlby (1907–1990) on family policy, which propagated the consideration that parents' education is a form of "preventable social work" (Burman 2007, p. 15). However, neoliberalism is a different moment is this history, one in which the labour of biological and cultural reproduction centres on self-actualisation, and self-sufficiency. As Dahlberg (2016) describes, in neoliberalism parents are active, positive, affirmative entrepreneurs who learn new skills, buy adequate materials, gain social capital with the aim of taking the right choices, appropriate judgements and calculated actions to augment their children's human capital (Moss 2014; Dahlberg 2016).

The neoliberal model of parenting emerges in the Thatcher era, where a discourse around common sense and responsible families as social pillars unfolds in a context of dismantlement of the welfare state, privatisation of social services and alteration of the social bonds. As Jensen (2018) argues, such a neoliberal ethos has not receded but progressively intensified in the subsequent New Labour (1997–2010), coalition (2010–2015), and Conservative (2015–present) governments, where parenting both in policy (e.g., Field 2010; Allen 2011; Department of Work and Families 2017) and political discourse has been portrayed as the origin of a variety of social problems, and the space where these problems need to be addressed as early as possible and in the most cost-efficient ways. The expectation is that parents do all the reproduction labour with very little public support, but with the condition that their children's development will be intensively monitored through performance measures and tests.

One of the outcomes of this is that state provision for families is organised with a deficit perspective, primarily directed to a parenting subject that is constructed as inadequate, devious and unable to perform this model of autonomised parenting (Burman 2007).

Critical approaches to the neoliberal discourse of good parenting have revealed how misleading and oppressive is the assumption that good parenting is unaffected by the social and economic circumstances that define parents' lives. In significant policy documents such as the Field Report (Field 2010), good parenting is practically articulated as a moral mental state separated from material circumstances and the historical-cultural trajectories of parents (Dermott and Pomati 2015), and how these circumstances and trajectories qualify or disqualify families to participate in certain practices of childrearing (Dahlberg 2016). Studies in the sociology of family have been strategic in exposing the limitations and ideological constructions behind discourses of good parenting in family and early intervention policies, noting the levels of colonisation and state surveillance inflicted in minorities, migrant parents, parents living in poverty, single mothers and parents with alternative lifestyles. Researchers in this field have developed studies in collaboration with parents, listening to their perspectives, resistant practices and modes of navigation of institutions and policies (e.g., Grover and Manson 2013; Schiettecat and Vandenbroeck 2016; Vandenbroeck et al. 2009).

We argue, however, that still many important contributions that interrogate and question the neoliberalisation of parenting deploy a limited concept of subjectivity that hinders possibilities of thinking parenting otherwise. On the one hand, these contributions reasonably criticise the modes of oppression deployed through good parenting models. On the other hand, they "assume their dominant modes of existence" (Rolnik 2017, p. 3), the neoliberal subject. This is so, because their critique centres on issues of access and inclusion in the existing parenting models, rather than radically rethinking what reproduction, care, childrearing and being a parent could be/could do. In the section that follows, we argue how a reinvention of parenting requires of an alteration of the model of subject and subjectivity in which policy-informed research is still dominantly anchored—the socio-cultural model.

Towards an Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm of Parenting

Following Rolnik (2017), we affirm that critical discourses on family and early intervention work with a concept of subjectivity that is limited to a socio-cultural paradigm. In the socio-cultural paradigm, subjects develop through cognition, the ability to use individual perception and feeling to connect to a world of known representations, and to communicate these to others. For Rolnik (2017), this view of the subject is not the all of subjectivity. Subjectivity is also the process of a sensing body that lives among and is transformed by the forces of the world. It is in fact the vital force of subjectivity that sets the subject in continuous variation, affected, altered and mutated by forces and states not dependent on subject's intentions. The world of the vital force does not work through communication but through sense and empathy with the other. Most importantly, Rolnik (2017) affirms that only in the world of the vital force the new can be improvised, and transformation can occur. Rolnik (2017) describes neoliberalism as populated by a *colonial-capitalist unconscious* whose aim is to pimp out from subjects the vital force of subjectivity, and reduce subjectivity to the socio-cultural subject, "which excludes its immanent experience of our living condition: the outside-the-subject. This exclusion is extremely harmful to life" (p. 5). Thus, the problem that we want to grapple with in this article is not how marginal and vulnerable populations deviate, resist, or access any given standard of good parenting, but to think parenting with the outside-of-the subject and the vital force of life.

We do this by working in an alternative paradigm, the ethico-aesthetic. Following, Rolnik (2017), but also Guattari (1995), Braidotti (2006) and scholars in curriculum studies (Springgay and Rotas 2015), early childhood studies (Dahlberg 2016; Hackett 2017; MacRae 2019; Trafí-Prats 2018, 2019), and environmental education (Rousell and Cutter-McKenzie-Knowles 2018), we understand an ethico-aesthetic paradigm as one that engages in sensuous and affirmative becomings with bodies, materials and technologies that endanger the perpetuation of neoliberalized parenting by generating embryos of other possible parental worlds (Rolnik 2017). We follow Guattari (2000) in considering that

parental ecologies could be transformed through new aesthetic and analytic practices that intensify sense and affect. We conceive artwork as a force of interruption and estrangement of acquired sensorio-motor habits that is world-making (O'Sullivan 2011). This is a view of artwork that is not necessarily engaged in the production of objects of appreciation but in the creation of occasions to activate the virtuality of the not-yet in relational encounters (Manning 2016). We consider that art can introduce generative conditions that open up the possibilities of thinking social research by intensifying and radicalising its practices and lifestyles (Manning and Massumi 2014).

2. Situating Ethico-Aesthetics in Material Play with Families

The implications of ethico-aesthetics (Guattari 1995; Braidotti 2006; Rolnik 2017) in rethinking social and educational research are broad and beyond the reach of this article. The goal of this section is to situate how ethico-aesthetics oriented the study that we aim to discuss here, a series of sessions of material play with families, titled *Moving with lines and light*. In these sessions, Laura with research assistants Evelyn, Eric and Alex facilitated play to children under six and their parents centred on collective forms of engagement around materialities, movement, mark-making and modulations of light. For this, Laura selected a series of materials connected to artistic practices in the fields of performative drawing and contemporary dance. The sessions of *Moving with lines and light* sought to facilitate a space for parents to habituate to sensing, attuning and valorising how materials, objects, atmospheres shape encounters of parent and children bodies. We structured the play in four movements described in Figure 1, which provoked children and parents to sense and move in different ways with each other.

Play movements	Collective modes	Materials	Generated embodiments
1.*Collective mark-making #1:*	Bodies organize in pairs of child-adult drawing together.	All the floor covered in paper. Thick, large crayons.	Movement towards the horizontal of the plane: Bodies kneel, bend, fold, lay on the floor. Bodies mark with both hands.
2.*Collective mark-making #2:*	Bodies mix with other bodies. They don't work anymore in the enclosure of the parent-child pair.	The same paper continues in the floor. Fluorescent chalk markers attached to long sticks.	Movement towards the vertical of the plane: Bodies stand up and walk, run, acquire speed. Bodies mark with one or both hands.
3.*Light and Shadows:*	Bodies need to coordinate with other bodies how to play with light and shadows. The parent-child pair comes back, although groups mix more than in moment 1, when children and parents stay together.	The same paper continues in the floor. Main lights are turned off. Flashlights. Thick black sharpies and transparencies.	Movement towards the vertical of the plane: Bodies walk, project light and shadows, follow the sources of light. It takes time to acquire speed. The darkness is disorienting.
4.*Projected marks:*	Projection of lines and graphics from an iPad into the paper floor. Bodies move with the movement of lines in the projection. Children and parents mix.	The same paper continues in the floor. Main lights continue off. Projection of lines and graphics in the floor. The lines and graphics are being drawn by a child or adult at the same time they are projected.	Co-presence/Co-movement: Between body who draws with the iPad app and bodies who move with the lines that are being drawn and projected into the floor from the iPad. Speed is picked up again.

Figure 1. Moving with lines and light: co-alignments of play movements, their collective modes, the materials present in each movement, and the generated embodiments.

A central ethico-aesthetic premise is that art and play intensify life and collective experience and constitute a basis to explore and learn the new (Guattari 2000; Dahlberg 2016). Such intensification of experience opens play to collective modes of engagement with other possible lifestyles that we do not know yet.

MacRae's (2019) critique of a dominant approach to play in early childhood where sensorio-motor modes are seen central to play, but at the same time become subsumed into symbolic modes is important for our study. Taking inspiration from Ingold's (2013) concept of *correspondence*, and Manning's (2016) concept of *minor gesture*, MacRae (2019) suggests a thinking of play which cares for its sensuousness. This is, play as dynamic entanglements of bodies and things that carry indeterminacy and resist mastery. This notion of indeterminacy is especially relevant to the sessions of *Moving with lines and light,* because they did not pursue specific outcomes but generating knowledge situated in a minor key (MacRae 2019; see also Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Manning 2016). Minor knowledge centres on the specifics of the sensorio-motor and aesthetic activity shared between parents, children, materials, space in its emergence and variation.

Additionally, we draw from Olsson et al.'s (2016) work in early years settings, and their articulation of aesthetic forms of learning based on *sensorial contagion*. They encourage practitioners to reflect deeper on the materials that they choose to present to children, and how these materials are gathered in a space. With this, they interrogate how in early childhood settings, one tends to find the same types of materials repeatedly. This creates habituation, predictable uses of materials and stops innovation. Drawing from Deleuze's (1994) philosophy in which art is connected to the thinking of the new, Olsson et al. (2016) affirm that unexpected, interestingly arranged materials in a classroom can arouse children's curiosity, invite them to formulate questions, invent and explore problems.

Similarly, in the preparation of the material play sessions, we considered that encounters with interestingly arranged materials could take parents and children out of their adopted common places and create other ways of being together (Manning and Massumi 2014). Olsson (2013) has devised material arrangements for the early years' classroom inspired by the work of contemporary artists, affirming that similarly to artists, children enjoy more learning that is invested in a logic of production rather than in a logic of acquisition. We think that this logic of production is ethico-aesthetic, because it moves by affect rather than communication. Affect is what happens when materials provoke the type sensuous contagion that Olsson et al. (2016) argue in favour. Guattari (1995) writes of how *aesthetic assemblages* are made of non-semiotic substances that take possession of us. Lifted from their original objects, we carry these sensuous fragments in the surface of our bodies. They constitute a virtual potential that actualises and re-assembles in new modalities of expression fully disconnected from the original object. Guattari (1995) writes that the aesthetic assemblage constitutes a processual production of subjectivity that exists between the subject and the vital forces of materiality. As Massumi (2002) notes, affect "escapes confinement in the particular body" (p. 35), it has force "or potential for interaction" (p. 35). An "affective scape . . . is nothing less than the perception of one's vitality, one's sense of aliveness and changeability" (p. 36) distributed across things and bodies.

Aiming to facilitate a collective situation organized around affect, Laura avoided as much as possible guiding the play event through verbal instructions. As families entered the room, they encountered the floor covered in paper with groups of thick crayons at the edges. In the large central screen, a series of images of embodied drawing performances were projected in a loop to function as motivation and contagion. These remained visible during the initial twenty minutes or so of the play. The play began with Laura and her daughter, Ingrid, kneeling in the floor. With arms fully extended and thick crayons in each of their hands, they reached and drew around each other's body in a repetitive back and forward interlacing movement. This inscribed large linear arches in the paper demarcating the space around their bodies. This act was first imitated and soon mutated by other parents and children who began kneeling, laying, sitting, rolling and exploring the limits of each other's bodies. Beyond this moment of modelling action, the rest of the play was facilitated by thinking the play from the event's emergence, attending and responding to the variation, flow, mutation of

materiality and bodies (MacRae 2019; Olsson et al. 2016; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. 2016), while keeping emergent styles of collective life moving and forming (Manning and Massumi 2014; Dahlberg 2016). Laura placed and relayed materials at different moments of the event, considering how the introduction of one material could create new conditions for practices to intensify or evolve into new practices (Manning and Massumi 2014). For more concrete detail on the organisation and evolution of the play, in Figure 1 we have co-aligned the four movements of play, with the collective modes, the materials involved and the movements observed. Additionally, Figures 2–5 show different moments within each of the four movements.

Figure 2. Collective mark-making #1: mother marking around the body of her three year old daughter, as in turn her daughter retraces marks with her feet and body, skipping and squatting.

Figure 3. Collective mark-making #2: Group of children and one adult playing with the markers-on-the-stick. Play relations are not based on filiation but on transversal connections.

Figure 4. Light and shadows: A six year old boy walks holding two torches, one in each hand, around the perimeter of the paper. As the projected circles separate, join, merge, the painted feet step in and out of their projected circles. Now the fluorescent paint on the skin glimmers, now it disappears.

The ethics of these ethico-aesthetics is immanent, its aim is to seek modes of collective life that intersect and create with the latent, virtual and differential forces of the world as ways of enhancing oneself and one's milieu (Rolnik 2017). Therefore, bringing ethico-aesthetics to material play fosters a view of the parental subject not as one who supervises, supports, scaffolds children's play while remaining outside the event. It conceives parents as participating bodies traversed by forces affected by the immediacy, emergence, process and unexpectedness of the play, as bodies joining in the midst of activity in continuous variation. By focusing on the material forces of play and their sensuous forms of contagion and affect, we situate the attention in parenting as an *experimental togetherness* (Stengers 2005) that encounters new existential relations open-endedly, with curiosity, to pose new questions.

Figure 5. Projected marks: Collective movements with torches and projections.

3. Context of the Research

The material play sessions took place during two consecutive Saturdays on February of 2020, in the drama studio of the Brooks Building at Manchester Metropolitan University, where both authors work. The project was self-funded by Laura the principal researcher as a pilot study seeking to understand, from inside its practice, how an ethico-aesthetic approach to material play with families would work.

Four parents and six children participated in the first session, and five parents and five children participated in the second session. The recruitment of families was through flyers that were distributed in community and cultural centres with family programs in Manchester. The flyer was created following institutional ethics protocols. It included information about the days, time, place of the play, and briefly described the nature of the activities. The flyer also specified that the play was connected to a study project and that it was free. It offered information for families to enrol via Eventbrite, a web-based application for announcing and managing events. Due to the capacity of the Brooks drama studio, and for safety reasons, we only offered fifteen individual tickets per session.

Upon their arrival parents were welcomed by Evelyn, one of the research assistants, who briefly explained the study and handed out the research information about the study. Parents sat inside or

outside the drama studio to read the information. Laura moved around family groups introducing herself and responding to questions. The research information and consent form specified different ways of participating in the material play sessions. For example, parents could opt out from participating in the study while still participating in the play. In this case, neither their own activity nor the activity of their children would be the focus of analysis and writing. In the consent form, parents could agree to participate in the study while at the same time not check the box permitting the use of images of their children or themselves in publications.

We also asked parents to describe the study to their children, listen at their possible questions and find out if there was something in the study that made them uncomfortable. Following institutional ethics requirements, we outlined two adaptations of the research information form for parents to use in describing to their children the research activities. One of these was for 2–3 year olds and the other for 4–6 year olds. These described that GoPro cameras would be used during the play to record it, and explained that GoPros are cameras that people could carry attached to their bodies and that show what happens from the perspective of your chest, head or other parts of your body. Some children were already familiar with GoPros and had seen them before. Some had even used them. Finally, the information reassured parents that it was acceptable to cease their participation in the study at any moment that they considered appropriate.

We had four GoPro cameras and four chest-harnesses that we offered to anyone, adult or child, who wanted to wear them. At the beginning of the session, the cameras were situated on the large white paper covering the drama studio floor. This gave a space before the start of the session, for children and parents to explore and talk about them with Eric and Alex, two of the research assistants. In the first session, two children expressed an interest in wearing cameras, one was three and the other six. In the second session, two children expressed an interest, one was six and the other four. The child who was four only wore the camera for part of the session and independently decided to take it off and asked Eric for assistance. Laura wore cameras during the two sessions. The remaining camera was installed in a tripod outside the play. Sometimes the camera in the tripod was moved around the perimeter of the paper by one of the research assistants.

The two authors have collaborated in the writing of this article with the purpose of exchanging and elaborating their different perspectives of being participants in the sessions with other parents and children: Laura participated as a curator and facilitator of the play. During the play Laura developed research from inside the event, working with the assumption that play-thought had to be activated collectively, and collaboratively in action and in the specific materiality and conditions of the play milieu (Manning and Massumi 2014). Lucy participated as a mother and researcher too. She attended one of the sessions with her husband and two children with special interest on the use of GoPros in relation to children, play and movement. Lucy had written her doctoral thesis around the use of GoPros in a computer club with primary children (Caton 2019). After the play sessions, Laura and Lucy remained in conversation about the experience. Laura shared GoPro data with Lucy from the session where she had participated. They initiated a collaboration of viewing, reviewing, thinking together and in conversation with the GoPro data.

4. Thinking the Data as Ritornellos of Play

Conceptualisations of the study project continued moving and taking form in parallel with its life and phases. Extended ways of thinking the ethico-aesthetic in material elaborated as Lucy and Laura watched, re-watched and had conversations about the videos of the play. In these conversations they found themselves returning to Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the ritornello. Thinking the data as ritornellos of play gave us a framework to attune and attend to the sensuous, expressive, spatial and collective qualities of its milieu.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe ritornellos as rhythms that have been territorialized, like a child entering a dark room and creating a sense of reassurance by singing a song. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argue that ritornellos emerge from chaos, the chaos of entering a territory that is strange, like

a room whose floor is covered in white paper, and where parents are invited to move following the movements and rhythms of children, as it happened in *Moving with lines and light*. It is because bodies engage with the chaos of a territory that they develop specific milieus and collective rhythms. (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 1994; also see Grosz 2007) offer the example of the *scenopoeetes*, a bird from the Australian forest that uses the milieu of leaves, plumage and song to attract, predominate over other birds, and create territory. The same applies to the parents–children material play: In the videos, the materials and bodies enter in mobile relations ones with the others. They express relations with the territory and constitute expressive motifs that did not exist before. In the ritornello bodies, materials, places co-compose creating variation, while expressing the territory in terms of contrapuntal moves that consolidate rhythms. In this respect, the ritornello of play is post-developmental. It does not deploy a homogenous measure of time that is imposed from outside and that happens to parents and children. It speaks of a lived non-linear time that is made through dwelling in place and with materials (Sauvagnargues 2016). The ritornello forms a collective more-than-human subjectivity. Sauvagnargues (2016) writes: "The self is not pre-existent: it assumes form as an ethology of affects in accordance with the concrete ways we inhabit a milieu and transform it in a territory" (p. 133). Therefore, a focus on the ritornello helps us think in parenting as an ethico-aesthetic logic that connects signs, materials, biological codes, enunciations, sound, and affects to provoke and intensify relationality (Sauvagnargues 2016). For us, this allows a valorisation of parenting in connection to its singular styles of movement, occupation, and material expression rather than through the redundancy of stereotypical modes. As MacLure (2016) expresses, the ritornello is a space-time where relations of filiation, oedipisation, representation become undone, or fully deterritorialised to create new crystals of collective-becoming.

As mentioned earlier, our thought around conceptualizing the material play as ritornellos developed in the context of an accumulated series of sensory events: participating in the play, watching and sensing video-data from GoPro cameras and the layered montage of video stills using Adobe Photoshop, an image editing software. It is through the processual relation between the play and the images, the organic and digital materiality, the bodies and visual-technologies that we came to sense the non-linear time of the material play ritornellos (see Figures 6 and 7). This aligns with Manning's (2013) argument that perception is processual and accumulative, meaning that the research knowledge is (re)formed by strands of pastness, presentness, and futurity that do not move in linear ways. An initial sense of the play emerged from Laura's and Lucy's direct participation with theirs and other children and parents in the play. This sense was recomposed in the later experience of watching the videos, where the slowing down of the video, and the pausing on specific stills made us see and recognise the creativity of and relationality of movement in ways that it cannot be seen when one is in movement (Manning 2013; see also MacRae 2019). In turn, the experience of watching the videos opened speculative futures that made us begin talking of how to imagine and condition the milieu of new play sessions. Manning (2013) affirms that the intermixing of technological and analogic modes of relation, embodiment and materiality is *technogenetic* because it opens bodies to wider relational potentials and future becomings. Thus, technogenesis is a powerful concept for thinking of play post-developmentally but still considering transformation and change.

Lucy and Laura discussed repeatedly how the images from chest-mounted GoPros carried by children made it impossible to produce a retraceable and consistent figuration of the play, and thus provided resistant and difficult data that we found generative. In parallel to this realisation we became critical of the decision of having situated a camera observing the play from outside. We thought that the resulting footage from this outside camera kept us anchored, in a linear mode that fed into familiar ways of knowing and relating to children based on a representational fantasy (MacLure 2016). Thus, thinking with Marks' (2000, 2002) concept of *haptic visuality,* Lucy passionately argued that the chest-mounted GoPro video was significant for us as mothers and researchers because it disrupted our desires for epistemic control. The footage pushed us into the surface of the screen, and enchanted us with the porosity, materiality, relationality of bodies and worldings through combinations of pixels,

light, and moving lines (Caton and Hackett 2019). In this sense, Lucy considered that the GoPro videos not only rendered moments in the play that displayed transformative relations of bodies and materials. She also thought that the videos themselves, along with the practices of watching, re-watching, slowing down, and extracting stills constituted radical research becomings. The GoPro videos decentered our ways of knowing and made other materialities connected to the worlds that we share with our children and other parents to be consequential in the re-thinking of how we live responsibly within these worlds (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). We developed an aesthetic of care for looking closer and differently to the materiality in the play: the materials used and how intersected with the bodies, but also the digital materiality of pixels, light, sounds and the featured body parts (hands, legs, feet, arms) (Caton and Hackett 2019).

Finally, we engaged in processes of image-editing with Adobe Photoshop. This software allowed us to compose and layer different video-stills as a way to further attune to the materiality of play, and appreciate the emergence, formation, and elasticity of movement and expression (Manning 2013). Editing these images made us aware of the inseparability of bodies-materials-light-pixels compositions. We divided the footage in series of stills and played with practices of sequencing and layering images seeking to create what Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) calls a *touching vision* of parenting relations in the play for others to see and sense. Figures 2–7 are examples of these practices. A *touching vision* resists to consider bodies as configuring objective visible events. It proposes that seeing in closeness to the body brings up the unknowability of the other and the impossibility of knowing wholly (see also Marks 2000, 2002). We believe that the ethico-aesthetic practice of making-viewing images mobilises connection while reaffirms unknowability and mastery. It fosters exploration, prospection, and experimentation in relations.

5. Ritornello #1: Ritornellos That Transform Ritornellos

This Ritornello happened early in the play. In Figure 1 we described it as Movement #1 of collective mark-making, where the bodies of parents and children entered the floor covered in white paper and organized in pairs to follow and respond to each other's movements. More specifically this ritornello centres on Nan and Elliot, who are mother and child, Elliot is three. They are on the floor, facing each other. Nan is kneeling, but since Elliot is carrying the GoPro, we cannot say whether he is sitting, kneeling, squatting or a bit of everything. For the size of his projected shadow, we can infer that he is close to the floor too.

The footage begins with Nan and Elliot performing larger arm movements towards each other. Since they are both holding crayons, these movements produce long linear marks in the paper in the space that is between each other. Nan's arms and marks extend towards Elliot's body in response to Elliot's arm-crayon's strikes, in a movement that repeats back and forth. The scene makes us think in one of Manning's (2013) definitions of movement. Movement does not belong to the body but to a flow that connects bodies. It is an ongoing recombination of the body towards the forces and intensity propelled by the other body. To Elliot's boldest crayon strokes, Nan responds with larger arm arches and resounding crayon marks on the paper surface.

Early in the footage we see Elliot taking extra crayons from the floor and holding one in each hand. Elliot utters twice a sound of rebounding double strokes as he rapidly pounds with both hands the paper. In response, Nan rebounds too still extending arms and eyes towards Elliot. Elliot recombines movements and materials again. Elliot extends his arms up and bangs the crayons against each other, in a gesture that resembles what musicians do with drumsticks. (Later, Nan reveals that Elliot plays drums at home). Soon, Elliot double rebounds, extends the arm pointing at Nan and screams, "bang it!", "and bang it!", "and now bang it!". Again, in a back and forth movement, Nan responds to all the bangs with large arm gestures and strokes of crayon on the paper. At this moment of the ritornello, something important happens. There is a recombination of habits, signs and materials through the drumsticks motive that creates rhythm and territorialisation. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) argued, in a ritornello, there is always some case of transduction, where a milieu internal to the subject (being a

drummer) serves an external milieu (materials available in the environment, in this case the crayons) and an intermediate milieu (the virtual passages of memories playing drums that propel Nan and Elliot to move together).

In the constitution of a territory, the rhythm needs to keep moving and vibrating acquiring consistency through repetition. In Figure 6, we have tried to invent a visuality for the interval of Nan and Elliot's bodies moving and co-existing in *banginess* for others to see and sense. Perhaps the montaged image evokes Nan and Elliot building this territory of banging. Perhaps it offers a sensation of the vibratory qualities of their gestures, the bridging of the time-space, the tones of their stroking and marking, the back and forth of their advancing and retrieving.

Figure 6. Nan and Elliot's *banginess*.

Eventually, a new force enfolds in the rhythm. This manifests when Elliot's moves from repeating "bang it!" to utter "crash" as he smoothly moves both hands holding crayons from the side of his body to the front, meeting in the middle. Once there the hands crash. Long arched lines appear on Nan's side of the paper as she repeats Elliot's crashing movements. She tends more and more her body towards Elliot's space. Speed picks up, and the initial "crash" becomes a series of "nyaaaa-crashes!". As Manning (2013) affirms, rhythms are elastic, they have "an infinite potential for recombination" (p. 15). Nan and Elliot's bodies become intensive, they matter not for who they are or what they know, but for their potential for movement, and variation.

Finally, the crashing punctuates with sounds like 'bruuuur", "nyaaaaa" "poughhhh" while crayons mark but also roll over the paper. As this vibratory energy grows, Elliot stands up and begins collecting more crayons dispersed in the floor. He moves away muttering the tune of *The*

Year of the Tiger, defining a new vector of territorialisation as he departs from the territory that Nan and he had created together. In the same way that expressive motives are produced, they are exited. Territorialisations are constantly deterritorialised. For Sauvagnargues (2016) what may be important is not to stabilize a ritornello that produces new possibilities for collective life. What it is key is to think which are the ritornellos that transform other ritornellos that have become habits, stultifying modes of expression, places where the vital force of life has been pimped.

A conversation around one of these stultified ritornellos occurred at the end of the play during a debriefing with parents. Nan explained how Elliot at home did not spend much time drawing. She confessed that when she entered the room and saw the paper and drawing materials in the floor, she thought that they would need to leave early because Elliot would not be interested in drawing for two hours. Then, Nan corrected herself, "perhaps, I thought this because I understood drawing as drawing things or talking about things in the drawings". (This is the stultified ritornello). Then, Nan explained that Elliot loved music and to play drums and that he was taking lessons. She expressed her surprise of how music, songs and the gestures and sounds of playing drums blended with mark-making through the session. She added that she found easy to play and mark-make along the figurations of playing drums because it was familiar to her everyday relation with Elliot. "We have invented several new pieces of music", Nan added. (Thi is the ritornello that produces new possibilities for collective life).

The idea that drawing should be a platform to represent, name and extend vocabulary contributes to a dominant developmentalist narrative in field of early childhood education (e.g., British Association of Early Childhood Education 2010). Parents often adopt the expert views conveyed by these narratives working against their own personal, emplaced and collective knowledge of parenting (Hackett 2017). The possibility to eventalise existence through art, materials and ethico-aesthetics opens portals where connections with stultified ritornellos could be reorganized and mobilized otherwise (Dahlberg 2016), so to valorise and cultivate singular existential styles like the one invented by Nan and Elliot.

6. Ritornello 2: A Collective Becoming Intense

The second ritornello centres on a remarkable piece of footage that is 47 s-long recorded by a GoPro that Tye, a six-year old, carried on his chest. Tye came accompanied by his mother and dad, and his younger brother Douglas. His mother is Lucy. At the beginning of the footage, Tye is holding two sticks with fluorescent chalk markers attached at their end. One is yellow and the other orange. We see Tye's legs, feet and the two chalk markers on the sticks being held at the sides. He begins to walk fast. We see the hands, legs, feet, sticks and markers moving over the paper, drawing linear marks. Six or seven steps forward Tye falls. We hear an "argh!". We see from the perspective of the paper and the floor, noticing Tye's bended knee and feet. From this awkward position, Tye's hands and sticks move and scribble. He seems re-enchanted with the marks over the paper and adds few lines and loops. Soon, Tye stands up and begins to run again. This time faster and faster. In the background, we hear a constant and resounding clock, clock, clock from the sticks being banged on the floor by other children and adults. As Tye catches speed, he moves the sticks back and forth in the air and begins to shout "aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa", while running in circles across the extension of the paper. Tye's movement encircles and traverses other bodies with sticks and markers. The GoPro renders these juxtapositions of bodies, materials, spaces, atmospheres, speeds in blurred, pixelated, ghostly images that reveal the incipiency and passage of movement and how movement moves relations (Manning 2013) (see Figure 7).
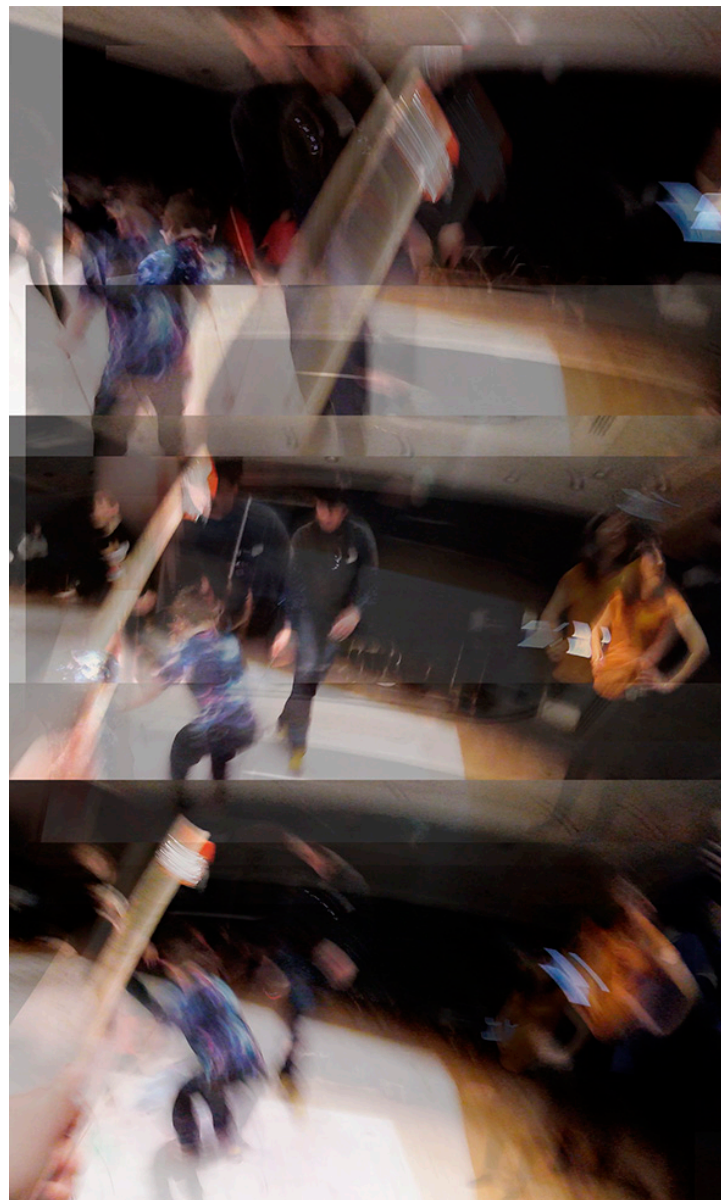
Figure 7. Sticks-markers-bodies-pixels-lights-speeds moving relations.

At a given point, Tye stops in a corner of the paper and bangs both sticks on the floor until the tip of the yellow chalk marker flies out and separates from the marker's body. By slowing down the images, we see how the yellow little thing flies in the air and falls on the floor. We hear Tye's voice saying "Oh", in a tone that perhaps mixes surprise and disappointment. This unexpected event deterrioralises Tye from the territory that he had just created. We note this because he suddenly slows down, and walks towards his mother as the rest of bodies continue moving intensively. We see Tye's hand holding the yellow tip in the air in front of him, as if he was led by it. Lucy looks towards the tip with a certain concern, as if asking "what happened?".

A moment before this footage was recorded Tye and the rest of the children, plus one parent, had covered the top of their naked feet with strokes combining the yellow and orange of the available chalk markers. Before the marking of the feet, Ingrid, Laura's daughter, was jumping high over the paper pretending, in her own words, that the stick was "a spear and I was trying to fish in a stream". Ingrid's jumping and stomping with the stick passed into other bodies. From this movement the clock, clock, clock of sticks continued, and all bodies in the play began to intensify and speed up in different ways. Tye encircles the cosmic forces of chaos projected by the speed and multiplicity of movements

and makes "qualities to emerge, to live and to induce sensation" (Grosz 2007, p. 16). The ritornello's rhythm is not any more the rhythm of the different characters, as we saw with Elliot and Nan. It is the configuration of what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call a *melodic landscape* in which "the rhythm itself is now the character" (p. 318). In this melodic landscape the collective has transversalised and articulated its own ways to operate according to its needs and desires (Guattari 2015), to provisionally experiment with a new form of life invented through the play. At this moment of the play, we do not see any more groups of child and parent interacting together. We see intergenerational bodies moving not linked by filiation but by affecting and being affected by others. It evokes parental and children bodies that are more-than their institutional organisations, bodies-without-organs that reach toward the world "to extend into matter, and matter into forms" (Manning 2007, p. xviii). It is a mode of being with others, things and spaces that is not articulated through communication, and a symbolic subject where the adult worlds the child in the word order (MacLure 2016). As a matter of fact, at this point one cannot hear any words coming out from the play, only sounds that possibly mark the ethological rather than the symbolic dimension of the territory, where bodies subjectify in ecologies of action that are more than human (Sauvagnargues 2016). Specific milieus, like the one created through *Moving with lines and light*, are a prerequisite for these ecologies of action to make with what is available (crayons, sticks, bodies, lights, paper, and so on) new networks of relations that gently destabilise normed functions and gradually infiltrate everyday life. These ecologies of action make parenting more than what we know or think of it as a body-becoming, a body in excess of itself (Manning 2007).

7. Conclusions

We end with the proposition of thinking parenting relations as body-becomings. Policies of parenting (e.g., Field 2010; Allen 2011; Department of Work and Families 2017) conceptualise parenting as a purely rationalised order that excludes parents immanent living experience, or what Rolnik (2017) describes as "life knowing or ethological-knowing" (p. 5). Life knowing is an indispensable aspect in the production of subjectivity, one that connects to empathy for what is other, new and strange. How we can use parents–children play and other creative spaces to nurture personal and collective attunement to such sense of empathy for the other? This has been one of the questions leading our exploration.

At the same time, Rolnik discusses that there is not a possible reconciliation between the familiar, such as the dominant modes of parenting defined by a representational subjectivity, and the strange, such as the ethico-aesthetic modes of parenting that we have presented through the intense collective engagements of parents and children in the material play. The production of subjectivity is always situated in the paradox of the strange-familiar relation between a movement that presses towards the power of life to germinate and possibly embody new modes of existence, and the movement towards conservation and modes of life that the subject can already recognize herself living. Rolnik (2017) affirms that the production of subjectivity is always grounded in the continued negotiation between these two movements. The greater the destabilisation the more the subject can react reclaiming what is established and received. While parents like Nan, Lucy, Laura and others engaged in the germinative force of the play, other parents offered feedback on the play that repeated the received discourses that stratify, classify and get childhood, parents and researchers stuck in stereotypical positions.

In this respect, being more aware of the actual an unresolvable tension between the familiar and the strange in the production of subjectivity seems key for researchers, artists and activists trying to engage in alternative practices with parents. As Rolnik (2017) proposes, the ethico-aesthetic is central to micro-politics and everyday transformations. Ethico-aesthetic work with parents is a generative space to condition milieus through material gatherings and spatial arrangements that intensify modes of collective experimentation, cooperation, and action-thinking. At the same time, we are aware that it is not a matter of participating in one play event that one builds another body and leaves the shell of the abused body aside for a new embryonic parenting body-becoming to happen (Rolnik 2017). However, we firmly believe that unexpected contagions occur in in aesthetically conditioned milieus that can produce minor geminations and eventually new cartographies of everyday life.

Laura and Lucy's prolonged experience as parents and researchers with the play event (in the play, with the videos, with the montages) speaks that sensing is different from making sense and that sensing, attuning differently, remaking your body takes time and develops through multiple modes of expression. As Manning (2007) writes, "Ethologies are not about knowledge as end-points but about accumulation and difference. They are about extension, about expressions, about events, about becomings" (p. 144). For Laura and Lucy, the sessions of material play set the beginning of a possible trajectory towards differencing the practice and talk around parenting, and parents–children play in early childhood. Following Manning's (2007), these sessions do not offer any end-point, but deploy important minor differences at the expressive sensuous level that need continuation, extension, further exploration with parents and children.

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