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DISCUSSION

# Infantmethodologies

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Q8

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Q1

## Introduction: towards the philosophy of infantmethodologies

Infantmethodologies is a concept that was playfully invented to gauge philosophical interest in the intersection between infants (or a chid; or infancy; or childhood) and methodologies (and philosophies, theories and concepts). This provocation aims to debate this intersection and weaves thinkers from around the world in order to generate discussion on the question, 'How do we study a child'? Asking this question generates further questions: What processes, methodologies, and methods are in place, and when does such an interface occur? What theories, concepts and philosophies come to mind when such a question is asked?

How to methodologically study an infant is an equally complex question for the child psychologist, the paediatrician, the educator, the philosopher or the methodologist. It requires us to ask, how do we understand an infant (and childhood) and how do we understand methodologies? Are methodologies (and its powerful 'methods') even the right concepts when we engage infants or young children? This collective paper reaches for this threshold space, and for the creativity and the openness to debate the philosophical questions that arise from such intersections.

Infantmethodologies could have been very much mis-represented in this process. CDC (2021) provides us with guidance on how to measure a child at home. The World Bank gives us a toolkit for measuring and 'doing it right' (World Bank, 2021). This paper, however, aligns more closely with philosophy as a method, which is a concept that is often useful to utilise when thinking about these intersections, including the intersection among methodology, philosophy and a child (Tesar, 2021). There is something powerful when we think of the right methodology; and there is something very seductive to debate when we have the child at the centre of philosophy and methodologies. Equally, one may understand infantmethodologies as to study a child – an infant – as someone utterly other to the adult and the human. Infant and childhood methodologies have been contested during each era, especially when they are traced in philosophy (see Malone et al., 2020).

Infantmethodologies is another instalment in a series that started with Infantologies (Peters et al., 2020), followed by Infantologies II - Songs of the Cradle (Gibbons et al., 2021b); Infantilisations (Tesar et al., 2021c), Infantasies (Gibbons et al., 2021a), Infanticides (Tesar et al., 2021b) and most recently with Infantographies (Tesar et al., 2021c). We have also recently

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Q2

completed collective thinking with philosophers of education asking, 'What is the future of philosophy of education?', in which Western, Global South and Indigenous philosophers and thinkers contemplated how they see the future of the discipline. Many considered the future to be linked with the idea of the demise of 'the method', and with deconstructing and re-thinking the importance of traditional Western ontologies, epistemologies and axiologies (Tesar et al., 2021a). Similarly, in this collective writing, the threshold of the infant and meth-odologies – infantmethodologies – is alive, powerful and productive. While perhaps traditionally it has faced substantial methodological shifts and failings and direct criticism, this collective writing offers a different view. Here we see this threshold as: shared labour (Duhn); the anni-hilation of Infantmethodologies (Nordstrom); creative activities (Koro); praxiography (Sparrman and Orrmalm); zoom and the act of knowing (Boycott-Garnett, MacRae and Hackett); a philo-sophical orientation (Kuntz); motion and aesthetics (Trafí-Prats); the imminence of infancy (Boldt); beyond human (Rautio); incubations (Ulmer); *queer*-feminist *philosophical methodologies of the infant-toddler-child* (Lenz Taguchi); childlike deconstruction (Murris); and child-like ques-tions (Kohan). We start this reconceptualisation of Infantmethodologies where we perhaps should: geborensein.

## Geborensein

Iris Duhn
Monash University

In this short text, I ponder the idea of 'becoming life' as an invitation to be curious with infantmethodology. The very idea of infantmethdology is an invitation to play with language and with emerging liveliness. At this time of planetary upheaval, when new life emerges into precarity, the very idea of 'becoming life' as hope and as possibilities for yet-to-be-imagined futures is invigorating. Infantmethodology generates curiosity about nascent methodological futures.

I have been thinking with Hannah Arendt's (1981) 'Geborensein', translated into English as either 'being born' or, following German syntax, as 'birthed being' or, also possible, 'birthed being'. As is obvious from my attempt at translation, 'Geborensein' invites the mind to enter into complexity, ambiguity and linguistic meandering. 'Being birthed' hints at the labour that is involved in being born, while 'birthed being' indicates that birth is shared labour. The one is born from the body of the other through shared action. Perhaps infantmethodology could be conceptualised as shared labour and as the event of something new coming into life that is created from and with an existing body?

Arendt (1981) herself refers to Natalität as the philosophical concept of 'Geborensein'. This is translated into 'natality' in English renderings of Arendt's work. Arendt, as a 20th century humanist philosopher, puts much hope and belief in humanity's ability to become enlightened, to progress towards mindful rationality and clear-eyed agency for the betterment of all. In this vein, she refers to natality as a miracle that disrupts human expectations. Natality in its essence holds the promise of new beginnings, to be realised through actions that follow from 'being birthed'. In Arendt's philosophy, this is limited to humans as humans hold Enlightenment's hope of, and belief in, freedom, solidarity, tolerance, secularism and universal rights. At the heart of Arendt's belief lies the hope for western liberal democracies as a robust political system that cradles and treasures natality as its creative life force (Kristeva, 2001). It is through the miracle of birth that it becomes possible to engage in this thinking-with the mystery of new life as it emerges into air and separation.

Perhaps infantmethodology provides opportunities to shift methodological concerns and actions from human exceptionalism towards the more-than-human hope and belief in planetary rights, solidarity with the diversity of earth beings, freedom from domination, exploitation and

extraction for all beings? This would be a shift towards earth citizenship (Shiva, 2003) and towards methodologies that flow away from human exceptionalism and across species divisions.

I am intrigued by the affect of thinking with natality and thinking with Geborensein. I am reminded of Donna Haraway's (2016) delight for mud and for belonging to the earth. I am here because I am made of earth, of calcium and phosphate, and all those crystallised traces of elements and minerals, this incredible miracle of coming into being and being here. Geborensein. It makes me shiver with awe to be of earth. For infantmethodology, this attunement to liveliness in all its forms and to the unexpected solidarities and alliances that emerge when planetary natality becomes hope and belief in the Arendtian sense, is exciting and invigorating.

## Long live le' enfant terrible

Susan Naomi Nordstrom
University of Memphis

A conventional Western conceptualization of time makes infant methodology an impossibility. An infant has yet to become beholden to a construct of time in which past, present, and future are clearly delineated. Infant time is a series of nows punctuated by affective shifts of bodily needs, larger humans, nonhuman animals, and nonhuman objects. These events happen and pass through infants from sunrise to sundown, though most infants do not seem to notice, much less care about, these markers of time. Constructs such as sunrise and sundown construct time into something that can be made predictable and manageable.

Western adults have a peculiar passion for organizing time. Elaborately color-coded diaries that align with apps inform adults when, where, and sometimes how to be. These calendars, planners, and apps are worshiped as gods and goddesses. Not one day can go without praying to their altars. Each prayer expresses gratitude for a well-organized past as well as beseeches an equally organized present and an even more organized future. Each prayer petitions for predictive moments of relief in a chaotic world.

Infants do not recognize these gods and goddesses. If anything, they pray to a delightful enfant terrible, an unconventional super infant who howls, squalls, and cackles at such a conception of time. These prayers to le' enfant terrible destroy things like schedules and planners that assume mastery of a series of event-filled nows.

These prayers annihilate the term 'methodology.' The etymology of the term methodology includes that of the term method. Method derives from the Greek, of a pursuit or following after. This indicates a construction of a time in which there is a past one can follow after. One follows after phenomena hoping to organize them, represent them, and make them become known.

If an infant's time is a series of nows, then there can be no methodology. One cannot follow after, much less grasp, a series of robust, urgent, and unending series of nows with a predetermined methodology. Le' enfant terrible laughs at the mere thought of such a possibility as they smash infant methodology to smithereens.

Western adults experience these series of nows, too. They just have accepted the construction of time that makes methodology both possible and desirable. They must make themselves as vulnerable as infants are to the series of nows to soften their skulls to something otherwise. Adult bones must become so vulnerable that they can become shaped by a series of nows. A body made malleable by the series can be born again and again to an inquiry practice that is continuously transforming with and transformed by the series of nows. Such supple bodies must swear allegiance to le' enfant terrible, one who shatters conventional constructions of time and delightfully coos and giggles through a series of nows that mutate all that it passes through. Perhaps only when adults can be made soft by the birthing canal of a series of nows can we then begin to articulate what infant inquiry might become.

## Infant-methodologies

Mirka Koro
Arizona State University

In this brief imaginary I propose that infant-methodologies as methodological practices cannot be completely planned and known in advance. In addition, infant-methodologies always carry intersectionality, hybridity, and multiplicity (also conceptual and theoretical) within them. Infancy and infant-methodologies can be framed as important in their unfinished time dimension, urgency, and immediacy, while also partially unknown and unrecognizable in their practices, forms, and intentions. It is also possible that to achieve a sense of tentativeness, infant-methodologies might need to forget predictability, traditional scientific method, and concerns about validity and gen-eralizability. Rather, they could function as promises, hesitations, and speculations. Not much may be known about infant-methodologies beyond senses, relational experiences, and materiality, and scholars may need to acknowledge that much of sensing and living could be beyond human recognition and sensibilities. Infancy also operates at the level of minor; something that works the major from within in subtle ways changing directionality and qualities. Like Manning's (2016) notion of minoritarian tendencies, infant-methodologies create subtle shifts and continuous variations within the experience and field of methodologies. Potential methodological pathways could be only tentatively designed and conceptualized since infant-methodologies operate in the present through their activation, complex and situational aesthetic forces, and material and relational elements. In addition, the tentativeness of infant inquiries, knowing, living, and being is always plural and could be situated, for example, in the intersection of Deleuze's (and Guattari's) becoming (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), Whitehead's process philosophy (Whitehead, 1978), and Shaviro's specu-lative realism (2014). Deleuze's becoming brings to the forefront methodological differences within the (infant) sameness and seemingly similar (infancy) which enable scholars see the world differently and anew. Continuous production of 'something' will shape complex actions and outcomes asso-ciated with these processes. In addition, infant-methodologies as creative activities move through different (infancy and methodology) events. Becoming infant time stimulates methodological assemblages, hybridity, and liminal spaces and various forces (data, subjectivities, analytics, power, matter and more) create speculative scenarios where infant-methodologies become possible, each time differently. Intersecting infant-methodologies multiply and ongoingly intersect with multiple theories and concepts without taking a stable form of anything from the past and anything that could be anticipated. Interrelated events, feelings, arts, ethics, and senses shape the onto-epistemological experiences and processes creating 'whats and hows' of actual occasions and temporal entities such as radical forms of methodology. 'Speculative philosophy has an irreducibly aesthetic dimension; it requires new, bold inventions rather than pacifying resolutions' (Shaviro, 2014, p.43). Thus, infant-methodologies are always virtual and surprising in their processes of production and composition. Infant-methodologies approach an object *for its own sake* beyond legitimacy, usefulness, and assumed interpretations and relational functions. Finally, the aesthetics of infant-methodologies build on affective potentialities and they cannot survive without creativity, experimentation, ethical responsibilities, and care. Infant-methodologies function as a matter of degree and help us to build a world of relational differences within continuously shifting (and growing) relational ecologies.

## Babyography

Anna Sparrman and Alex Orrmalm
Linköping University

We want to think about *infant methodologies* through Annemarie Mol's concept of praxiog-raphy (Mol, 2002). Praxiography was developed with ethnography in mind, excluding the 'ethno-'

in favour of practice (Jensen & Gad, 2009). The idea we follow is that practices enact babies and babies enact the practices in which they are engaged. It is important to note that we are not talking about infants because the term 'infant' directly implies speechlessness and lack of language (Peters et al., 2020, p. 16). The concept mutes babies and ignores other ways of being in relation. The everyday concept of 'baby' belongs to no specific methodological convention and is therefore open for situating babies within their lived practices (Orrmalm, 2021).

Consider Ron Mueck's sculpture, *A girl*. (Click: https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/imitation-and-illusion-ron-mueck-at-the-wag)[1] It is a realistic looking sculpture of a newborn baby in all her naturalness placed on a white museum podium. She is lying on her side with traces of blood remaining on her body and part of the umbilical cord still attached. Her face is wrinkled and her eyes swollen, making her look simultaneously both young and old. She is naked, unprotected and without the parents or material things usual for a Western, ethnically white baby. She is still, as though asleep. Through her extraordinary size, which is revealed by her relation to the person in the background, the baby dominates the space, even though there is no activity. As this baby is a sculpture, there can be no motion, and still she a/effects and challenges us. How is this baby part of enacting herself, the woman, the space, her naturalness and babyness? And can this baby do anything for other babies?

Her size and complete exposure urge us as researchers to stay with her stillness. This giant baby sculpture moves the idea of babies as research subjects past being explained through their caregivers, or the prospects of development and growth. She makes us reflect on an ethnographic study with a one-month-old baby conducted by Alex in which the video observations were stopped every time the baby fell asleep, because seemingly nothing was going on. This resulted in very little recorded research material. Instead, we need to keep the video recorder on to enable us to recognize the a/effect that babies have just through their stillness, and how this stillness, such as during sleep, invades space far beyond the baby's body. This can be illustrated by the way in which adults make calm soft loops around sleeping babies so as not to wake them. Thinking with Mol suggests that things and people are made in and through practices; this means that, even when seemingly doing nothing, babies are taking part in this enactment.

These two babies help us to push praxiography one step further by recognising the enactment of stillness as moments when *something* is indeed going on, and as practices that constitute babies and their surroundings. We exclude 'praxis-' in favour of 'baby-' and call this babyography, a method for staying with the babies *whatever* is seemingly going on.

## The (im)possibilities of zooming with babies

Ruthie Boycott-Garnett, Christina MacRae and Abigail Hackett
Manchester Metropolitan University

> We see the babies in momentary sweeps of the phone or as they move their bodies into the periphery of the screen. As a mam tells us a story of her day, the baby's hand stretches out to the ceiling and stays in the centre of the shot, fingers splayed, a solid silhouette. Sometimes the weight of their bodies, and the movements they make in their mam's arms, causes moments of juggling, shifting and rearranging of baby and phone so that the phone lies at an angle and I see the whole room on a slant.

(Field notes, Boycott-Garnet, January 2021)

Babies have always presented a challenge to traditional methodologies, disrupting assumptions about communication, rationality, and agency that undergird qualitative methodology (Gottlieb, 2000). Elwick et al. (2014) suggest babies show us that we *cannot* fully know them; we are forced to confront the impossibility of knowing. Likewise, for Cannella and Viruru (2004), working with Glissant's concept of opacity, this impossibility of knowing is productive.

This last year, Boycott-Garnett (first author) moved some of her fieldwork, intended to be with parents and babies at a playgroup in northern England, onto Zoom. During these sessions, babies were frequently present but out of shot, glimpsed as movement or sound on the other side of the screen. Zoom, as a tool for communication, is set up for a speaking subject in the middle of the screen. Babies' bodies, movements and sounds exceed the boundaries of the Zoom screen whilst altering what the researcher can see.

Video has long played a central role in educational research (de Freitas, 2016) and particularly in conceptualising the developing infant by 'shaping the narrative of unilinear progress from immaturity to maturity' (MacRae, 2019, p. 2). Scholars have productively experimented with video to disrupt habitual assumptions about childhood through, for example, slow motion video (MacRae, 2019) or film shot from unexpected angles. However, fieldwork over Zoom brings into sharp relief our habitual thinking in assuming we need to create visual material *of* infants in order to shift these habits.

Whilst doing in-person fieldwork is a multi-sensory experience (beyond vision), we still tend to create fieldnotes or visual materials based on what we perceive and can make sense of. In that sense, the field is a site of extraction (of meaning) but at the same time, it is also a site of production through the encounter - through us 'being there'. As a virtual fieldsite, Zoom undercuts the ethnographic authority of authentic being-there and perceiving-whilst-there. Babies' momentary movements in and out of the field of vision resist meaning/interpretation and displace the site of the encounter. Perhaps this contributes to the discomfort we feel as ethnographic researchers on Zoom. Added to this displacement, the researchers might encounter the baby but the baby might not encounter the researcher. Such research can never be about knowing babies but rather, asking: *How is my knowing changed when I encounter the impossibility of knowing this baby?*

## Philosophical methodologies – infantmethodologies

Aaron M. Kuntz
Florida International University

There is the tendency, a reflex, to understand the infant as a new beginning, some empty potential absent inscription. Similarly, there seems to be a corresponding claim for an 'infant methodology' as a mode of inquiry that has yet to take shape or endure the moulding of a control society—a not-yet that remains on the precipice of being claimed among the populations that inform biopower. This is the seduction of an extracted new beginning—an outside untethered to the norm of the day. It is also the misguided search for a wholly neutral entity— the infant as perfectly balanced emptiness. Of course, this notion of the infant as some unblemished dawn—an in-between unmarked by the intensities of previous day or forthcoming future—is misplaced. As Deleuze (1990) notes, 'in a control-based system nothing is left alone for long' (p. 175).

Given this, I offer a series of questions that aim to situate the infant as a problem, though not one to be solved (solving a problem concludes its potential, closing it off and confining it to the answered—we do enough of this in education): 1) How to understand an infant outside a progressive (and developmental) model built through the force of a 'becoming-adult'? 2) What relations mark us as no longer an infant, no longer young—when is an infant no-longer? 3) What are an infant's effects, the means by which an infant extends beyond itself; an infant as excess(ive)?

Such questions perhaps nudge us to an orienting inquiry with the infant that is not dependent on its subjected definition (not making a subject of an infant). The first question addresses the truncated potential to situate an infant as a possible-adult—a predetermined unfolding outside itself yet into a prescribed spatio-temporal locale. The second asks for a relational understanding of the term—infant-in-relation. And, the third refuses an infant-subject, as though

it could exist unto itself. These are but some of the philosophical challenges invoked by the notion of an infant, given our contemporary moment.

And, of course, similar challenges extend to the very notion of inquiry itself. That is, how might inquiry refuse a determined progressive ordering bent on invoking a destined place achieved over prearranged time? What are the blurry definitional limits inquiry might provoke as the material for transgressive potential? And, how might inquiry generate effects that extend beyond its prompted ordering, its habitualized claim on producing meaning that 'makes sense'?

In response, we might invoke a notion of 'infantmethodologies' as a philosophical orientation that learns from the problem of the infant yet refuses easy claims on that problem's conclusion. To invoke infantmethodologies, then, is to engage in a philosophically recursive process of discerning, mapping, and producing. That is, one discerns normative ordering, maps the limits of what has become, and experimentally generates relational effects that exceed the contemporary moment. In real ways, infantmethodologies work to short-circuit material processes of rendering probable the unpredictable—disrupting the very logics under which control and governance operate.

## Background-foregrounding childhoods

Laura Trafí-Prats

Manchester Metropolitan University

In this short piece, I am thinking with a 5-minute video featuring a three-year-old girl and her mother playing. The video is part of a dataset collected in a workshop that I facilitated with six children (3-6 years of age) and their mothers, titled *Moving with lines and light*[2]. The girl runs around her mother, who is sitting in the floor. The mother holds a torch projecting a light beam. Every time that she reaches the projection, the girl stops, gathers force, propels her body up, and jumps on the bright oval shape.

Earlier footage from the girl and mother shows them repeatedly using their bodies as ways of relation and communication. One can see them outstretching towards each other, holding crayons in both hands, striking, and dabbing the space in between; the girl circling around the mother's body while tracing her contour; the mother drawing and redrawing an arched line at the girl's feet as she jumps over. All are examples of kinaesthetic compositions and re-compositions of bodies that relate because they move. Such movement is what makes the relation of girl and mother to take form again and again in trajectories that 'exceed the predomination of the ground' (Manning, 2012, p. 6). Without a fixed place, these bodies in movement become sensuous, carrying the environment with them (Massumi, 2002). By stopping and starting the video, I notice the girl's blurriness, her body being a volume without a clear contour blending with spatial, material and digital processes, passaging from one state into another.

Almost two decades ago, Ellsworth (2004) argued that architecture, like the curated architecture of an open wood floor fully covered with paper, combined with media, like crayons, torches, projections, could shape pedagogies that could think of subjectivity as relational processes of taking-form rather than make subjectivity fit in the fixed points of a grid of established social formations (Massumi, 2002). Playing with photographic layers helps me to think of childhood as taking-form through space, time, and materiality. I compose a tryptic of the girl jumping[1]. In each image, I layer two video-stills and set the foreground layer at a lower opacity. This makes aspects of both layers, background and foreground, visible while others ungraspable. Manning (2020) writes that in practices of background-foregrounding we can perceive 'what is not quite within the register of the perceptible' (p. 17). As a method, background-foregrounding cultivates an attunement to what is difficult to observe and verbalize in children's lives, making it felt through an aesthetics of co-composition, blurriness, vibrancy, molecularity, and layers of duration that momentarily touch upon qualities of experience that were unknown to us. Thus,

background-foregrounding reveals 'the differential that moves experience from the shape we know to an unshapeability that affects the knowing" (Manning, 2020, p. 23). It trumps the knowledge of childhood and demands of slow encounters where adults become more sensitive to childhoods that emerge in activity in constant peaks and falls of experience, always opening to new modes of existence yet to be known.

## Fernand Deligny and the imminence of infancy

Gail Boldt
Pennstate University

In his introduction to the English translation of Fernand Deligny's (2015), *The Arachnean and Other Texts*, Bertrand Ogilvie writes that Deligny suspends the 'inaugural gestures' of Louis Althusser's interpellation and its close relative, psychoanalysis. For Deligny, these gestures — the calling into being of the subject through the hail of the authority or the Law of the Father — represented a narcissistically flattering image of humans as able to dominate one another and deny the efficacy of the other-than-human to affect, to matter. Deligny worked in France from the 1930s to the 1980s, primarily with non-verbal autistic children by the 1960s. His passion was to enter the world of children outside language (Boldt & Valente, 2014). Non-verbal autistic children, not submitting to the demands of normalization instantiated through language, could for Deligny be considered separate from the strictures of interpellation (Krtolica & Sibertin-Blanc, 2019).

Our overdetermining faith in the domination of language is the focus of my current research and seems an appropriate focus to bring to questions of infant methodology. I am not naming infants as autistic as once was common in psychoanalysis. Rather, I am drawing from Deligny's insistence on seeing children as something other than 'processes that must lead to something other than themselves: "the advent" (l'advenue) of the desiring subject', and 'that "speaking-being" would not exhaust what it means to be human' (Krtolica & Sibertin-Blanc, 2019, pp. 215 & 218). I am attempting an experiment, asking what might be produced if I approach a kind of research-being with infants in ways that Deligny worked to create a living environment with the children with whose care he was charged, whose difference he had no interest in curing.

Deligny was a researcher, mapping the daily 'lines of wandering' of the children with whom he lived. But his purpose in research was 'not to constitute a body of knowledge but to shape a gaze in order to change habits and allow for a common life' (Ogilvie, 2015, p. 13). His method was resolutely indirect. I am thinking about infant research through Deligny's method, the focus of which 'is not that of communication but that of an entry into a resonance of gestures' (p. 13) it requires a focus on imminence, wandering along with, 'tracing rather than naming or interpreting' (p. 13).

Participating in the immediacy of the lives of infants may offer the daily experience of a-signification, what Deligny (2019) called 'the unthought-out project,' which challenges our devotion to will and intention, with its attendant, language. Still, given that there is seemingly not much to think or say about the imminent nature of moment-to-moment life with an infant, much of what we consider about infants privileges infancy as subjectivity-in-the-making.

Deligny was devoted to telling the stories of children with autism as self-evidently human, disrupting the versions of what a human can be that rely on purpose, planning, and language. I do not doubt that there are other useful stories to tell about infants including ones that consider infants as purposeful. For now, I am interested in the possibilities of thinking about infants through Deligny, who worked to enact living in relation to life as imminent, not dependent upon an imposition of significance or direction or even recognizable intersubjectivity.

## Whose infancy? Ecology and existentialism with human infants, foals, and baby octopi

Pauliina Rautio
University of Oulu

Conventional qualitative and to an extent postqualitative methodologies in education and childhood studies tend to include a division into research practices (or methods) for working with child participants, and those used with adults. While this methodological work is much needed as the adult-centrism of science at large is still widely uncontested, *the only* available route is not to counter adult-centrism with child-centrism, especially as this can, at worst, further essentialize and universalize the notions and experiences of 'child' and 'childhood'.

In this brief text the idea of what it is to be an infant in this world is broken free from its anthropocentric cocoon to begin with. Leaning on the recent resurge of existentialism as coupled with ecology, albeit forming no coherent field (e.g., Gosetti-Ferencei, 2020; Mickey, 2016), I note that methodologies exploring what it means to be human in the midst of unbearable uncertainty and intimate interconnectedness need to break free from the human consciousness and extend beyond humans.

To this end, the following sketch introduces three ecological-existential takes on infancy in an attempt to scramble the monospecies child/adult divide on which to base a methodology: that of a human infant, a foal, and a baby octopus.

> **The infancy** of a human (*Homo sapiens*, lifespan on average 79 years) is defined as the period of life between birth and the acquisition of language. The time of our own species' infancy is characteristically the great unknown – inaccessible through conscious memories – existence without words, filled with slow and awkward movement, and one of vulnerability and extreme dependency of at least one parent or carer.

> Infancy among horses (*Equus ferus caballus*, lifespan of c. 25-30 years) is considered to be the period of life between birth and weaning. The infant foal will stand up almost immediately after birth, its existence epitomized in the ability to flee in a matter of hours, while emotionally dependent on its mother for months. As virtually completely domesticated, the life events of horses are controlled by humans: weaning is made to take place usually between 5 to 7 months of age.

> Infancy among octopi (the Giant pacific octopus, *Enteroctopus dofleini*, lifespan of c. 3-5 years) is a period of life from hatching when they are small in size (about the size of grain of rice), until full adult size (20 kg and radial span of 6 m). The infant octopi don't need parental care but hatch into complete independence regardless of their tiny size. The period of their infancy is defined by a very high mortality rate (about 1% of hatched octopi make it into adulthood), and a uniquely fast and adaptive cognitive development.

Ecology, as a branch of biology, often stands for determinism and operates at the level of groups or species, whereas existentialism foregrounds absolute freedom of humans as individuals. Combined, the two offer a frame for exploring the dynamics of individual experiences and choices coupled with co-existence across species and the ensuing differing dependencies and responsibilities (e.g., Barash, 2000). This translates to infant methodologies that explore the beginnings of life as a multispecies phenomenon, accounting for shared vulnerabilities as well as the profound existential differences, and the uneven, situational injustices *within and across species* (Lupinacci, 2019).

## Methodological incubation

Jasmine Ulmer
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Sophisticated versions of neonatal incubators involve a variety of environmental controls, many fostering the conditions for growth, development, and health in real time. This is not

unlike the application of incubators in scientific laboratories, for instance, where incubators are used in experimental research to study cell cultures and the conditions in which they grow. Incubators make for regular laboratory equipment and, having been normalized in science, the language of incubation has made its way into the larger entrepreneurial vocabulary of which higher education is a part.

There has been a proliferation of university initiatives involving incubation of this sort, and these go by many names: university accelerators, university business incubators, incubation centers, research incubators, technology hubs, etc. Across the board, postsecondary incubators have attempted to promote growth and development by intentionally creating different types of environmental conditions and controls—ones that strategically and innovatively bring people together on behalf of common goals. And while growth, development, and short- and long-term institutional health can be worthy aims in and of themselves, there may also be more that incubation at the postsecondary level can do beyond solely profitable ventures, perhaps shifting more emphasis to promoting the public good.

The terminology within neonatal incubation and research incubation can be similar, but what can be overlooked is the focus that neonatal incubation has on sustaining life through safe and supportive healing. This raises several questions. To start, what if we attended to the people and ideas within higher education with a similar focus on care, treating people as people along the way? Furthermore, what intellectual ideas are we growing, what contributions are we developing, and why are we making the choices that we do?

Responding to the prompt to think through methodological infancy, then, I've been thinking about how we do—and also do not—support in-progress methodologies though incubation. This has ramifications within and beyond our research communities, as we are not the only ones to be affected by the methodologies we sustain and create, including methodologies with yet-unrealized potential. This is especially important in times of crisis, as methodology has the potential to help.

For many, multiple crises have resulted in ongoing trauma, and those working in higher education have not been the exception. If and when we return to our campuses, we will be returning to landscapes that vastly differ from what we unexpectedly left. Beloved colleagues have suddenly retired, perhaps even passed. For the first time we'll meet the students and new colleagues we had only interacted with virtually. Research projects have been interrupted, labs shut down, resources eliminated, units reorganized and reduced, and far more than can be listed here. All the while, restorative justice is still overdue.

The ability of higher education to respond to multiple crises involves research incubation of a different sort. Namely, one that nurtures the newly reset; one that re-envisions opportunities for health, recovery, and restoration; one that collectively approaches methodological and research incubation from an expanded and more wholistic point of view.

## Philosophical methodologies of the infant-toddler-child (PITCH) as inescapably Queer-Feminist (QF-PITCH)

Hillevi Lenz Taguchi
Stockholm University

How can I pitch a vision for *philosophical methodologies of the infant-toddler-child* (PITCH) in the wake of a global pandemic and climate crisis, which shoves humanity towards the edge of an abyss, pitching steeply towards extinction? Accompanied by a number of other companion-species we slither in the leftover, dark, sticky pitch distillation residue of coal-tar and petroleum. This particular pitch has been generated during a fraction of time of human-driven natureculture exploitation, as acts of extraction that can be likened to the masculine penetrative pitching of the feminized counterpart – and of Mother Earth herself.

Consequently, the vitalist force needed for contemporary PITCH must, I claim, inevitably be of a *queer*-feminist kind – QF-PITCH – to necessarily put the concept itself and its methodologies into an iterative state of rupture and recreation. In this way, pitch/PITCH can take on the meaning as the verb of *throwing, setting up* or *establish*, and as an adverb to describe a *downward direction* into an abyss. Or, as a noun of the *playing field*, or a *degree of intensity*, as in the *pitch of music*; and as that destructive, black sticky substance formed in distillation of petroleum. PITCH, when pitch refers to the *density of character* in print, can thus be queered and recreated into various forms of practices of knowing.

Personally, I am in need a QF-PITCH to avoid the *hyper-humanism* that has emerged with the Posthumanist/New Materialist turn to ontology: re-erecting a metaphysics of *one* ecology and system of interconnected life – a materialist monism, sometimes understood as immanence (Colebrook, 2014). This has undermined the imperative message of the last 35 years of feminisms: that of a *multiplicity* of realities (ontologies) and ways of knowing (epistemologies), decisive for a continuous querying of the human tendency to construct yet another God Trick narrative. My QF-PITCH thus follows Haraway who, since *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985), calls for inter- and transdisciplinary engagements. Such engagements neither exclude natural science's *facts* from the humanities and social-sciences, nor the art of *narration* as a vital methodology of the natural-sciences.

A QF-PITCH attends to how the biological (cellular, molecular) matter of the body-mind of the infant-toddler-child is a matter of natureculture co-production: i.e., how cells in the embodied brain are co-constituted by cultural practices in socio-emotional interactions and material events; and how the cultures of interaction, play and learning are co-constituted *with* the embodied brain and body. Inquires of infant-toddler-child natureculture co-emergences must consequently acknowledge the condition of multiple ontologies, to explore the differences and productions of *differing,* in events of encounter that take place at different scales of worldlings (becomings) and knowings (scientific facts, experiences, etc.) (Haraway, 2003; Lenz Taguchi & Eriksson, 2021). QF-PITCH compose *philo-factual* inquiries of multiple and differentiated scientific facts, cultural notions, meanings and practices. In their flow of encounter, they connect, disrupt, interact, interrupt, rupture or cause breakdowns, or, if possible, produce a philo-factual provisional and situated narrative of a speculative real of the infant-toddler-child – as a parallel to the wordplay of the five-letter word pitch above.

## Posthuman infant methodology

Karin Murris
University of Oulu

What counts as a child or infant differs historically and geographically. Philosophical attempts to define child tend to use the adult human as the norm. The etymology of *infantia* – in-fans, 'not speaking' – implies an adultocentrism (Kennedy, 2020), because it measures the young child against what she does *not* have, compared with a fully adult human. An infant is regarded as a human who cannot speak as well as an adult. Speech is used to measure intelligence. *Infant as concept* signifies absence or deficit of linguistic competence.

The Reggio Emilia approach disrupts this adultocentrism, especially in higher education contexts (cf. Murris, 2016). The educational philosophy[3] troubles an epistemology that focuses solely on the 'one' (adult)human language that represents the world. Posthumanists Karen Barad and Daniela Gandorfer (Barad & Gandorfer, 2021, p. 63, footnote 26) argue that, like all material objects, words and concepts are not detached from the world they represent because this would already imply a Nature/Culture binary. Reggio Emilia's notion of the 'hundred languages' of children (as well as the environment) offers ontological natureculture opportunities by including nonhuman bodies, such as sound, clay, fabric, light, water, sand, paper, pen, word and

technology. A good example of *posthuman infant as methodology*, it involves a radical paradigm shift that is not only epistemological, but also ontological and ethical.

In challenging Western notions of unilinear progress and temporalities, something of any age is not an individual body *in* space and time, but part of an intra-connected network of socio↔political, material↔discursive, nature↔culture and human↔nonhuman relations.

Jacques Derrida derides how his methodology of deconstruction sometimes passes as a 'kind of linguisticist mania'. And indeed, I see a rich diffractive potential in his notion of *childlike deconstruction*. In an interview, Derrida explains that:

> deconstruction began by *suspecting the authority of language*, of verbal language, and even the trace, which is not yet, which is not language, which is not verbality, which is not human, so, the child, *infans*, is not man. *Infans* is what is not yet man. Hence the question of the animal which is everywhere, no? Between the child and the animal, there are obviously all the links you imagine. Deconstruction is animal from this point of view. It is childlike and animal-like. (Cixous & Derrida, 2019, p.158)

A childlike deconstruction of concepts has little to do with age, although adults can learn a lot about how to philosophise from infants who are in the process of acquiring language (Murris, 2000). As Barad (in Barad & Gandorfer, 2021) puts it poetically: "You can walk around in concepts… I walk around in a sentence, I walk around in a word. A word, or even a letter, entails stories, different stories" (p. 31).

Response-able science and philosophy enable the other to respond and to make a difference. By disrupting the temporality of progress and disrupting humanist binaries (e.g., Adult/Child, Nature/Culture), posthuman infant methodology embraces childlike deconstruction by coming to concepts as if we are thinking about them for the very first time, including the concept infant.

## Childhood and the time of a childlike questioning pedagogy

Walter Omar Kohan
State University of Rio De Janeiro

We relate to childhood as we relate to time. If we experience time as a clock, numbering movement, childhood will also be quantified by numbers. If we consider time as chronological, with two parts, past and future, being present just a limit between them, for chronological adults childhood will only be part of their past. If we represent time with a line then childhood will be a part of that line, the first one (Kohan & Kennedy, 2008).

Fortunately, there are many other ways of experiencing, considering and representing time. Indigenous communities of South America, like the Aymaras, represent the past in front of us – because it is what we know and see it – and the future in the back, because we do not see/ know it, being the present over us, passing from the back to the front. If we represent time of human life with a circle, things turn interesting because in a circle any point can be its beginning and end (and if it is the beginning of the circle it will also be the end of it). So, where does a circular human life begin? Where is childhood in a circle? It could be anywhere, everywhere and nowhere.

A question that emerges is: is there a time of childhood? Is there a specific childlike experience of time? Heraclitus seems to be answering positively this question in his fragment 52: this time is aion, a time of a child playing (Marcovich, 1987). If adult time is composed by past and future, childlike time is a durative present: no future, no past. Childlike time is not only the time of the child playing but also the time of artistic creation, of loving, of curious thinking (Kohan, 2021).

How are these considerations about childhood and time related to education? In a very strong way. In the dominant tradition of what is called Western thought, education has been considered dominantly as the formation of the child. Consequently, childhood is understood

as a lack, an imperfection, a possibility or a potentiality. And if life moves according to a line, we need to be prepared for the future movements in a line. But if childhood is understood as playing, curious, loving and inquieted life, then education might be approached as the caring, remembering and nurturing of childhood. If childhood can be born anytime, then education might be felt as what sets the conditions for the emergence of a childlike life at any age.

This is what Paulo Freire suggested, the childlike question is the core of education (Freire & Faundez, 1989). In fact, he was not all that interested in the education of chronological children, but in a childhood of education, in recovering (the time of) childhood for those adults who haven't been able, even at a very advanced age, to live a childlike life: people with their childhood robbed. Then, who knows, (revolutionary) education itself might be considered as a form of childhood if after all we are always at the beginning (Horton & Freire, 1990). even when, like now, it seems we are in the end.

## Infantmethodologies: an open review

Andrew Gibbons

Auckland University of Technology

> Alphas are so conditioned that they do not *have* to be infantile in their emotional behaviour. But that is all the more reason for their making a special effort to conform. It is their duty to be infantile, even against their inclination. And so, Mr Marx, I give you fair warning.' The Director's voice vibrated with an indignation that had now become wholly righteous and impersonal - was the expression of the disapproval of Society itself. 'If ever I hear again of any lapse of a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Centre - preferably to Iceland. Good morning. (Huxley, 1958, pp. 83-84).

The Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning lectures Bernard Marx on his duty to be infantile even though his clinical hatching as an Alpha in Huxley's *Brave New World* (1958, first published in 1932) has 'intelligently' designed him with the faculties to be something other than infantile. Bernard Marx, being other than infantile, *has been observed* to not participate in all the carefully designed play, nor vigorously consume happy drugs, and be generally reluctant to 'get around' in efforts of sexual intercourse, whilst entertaining ideas of his being a something of an … in-di-vid-ual (shush). Being infantile, then appears to mean being drugged up, promiscuous (although that's an old-fashioned word that the Director probably would not approve of), and generally engage in a lot of carefully designed and pointless play (of course it's not pointless because the point is to be pointless - 'you see what you want to see, and you hear what you want to hear, dig?' [Nilsson, 1970]). The Director, and Society, has this particular socio-political and techno-biological construct of the infant. That construct is, in this brave new world, unironically, almost perfectly constructed.

Through infantmethodologies the complexities (although why complexities, why not simplicities?) of the perfection of the infant construct can be explored. Here that exploration takes the form of a series of questions:

What is the apparent genealogy of the word infant? How does the language of infancy appear in different places and times with different agendas? What words are obstructed by the word infant: unsaid, invisible? What saying, and what seeing, does infancy make possible? Speak infant, and enter?

In what ways does being infantile produce a relationship to a new body, a new reflex, in what ways is this relationship understood as a 'shared labour', in what ways is this labour governed by a policing of bodies, and how can the mapping of these relationships muddle traditions in linearity and causality? And when and how often and producing what temporal experiences? And who took notice of the time it took to work together to be infantile?

What devices come and go in the measuring of the infantile? Who appears to be controlling those measures, how might those measures measure the measurers, and how might they be understood as never really measuring what it says on the packaging? How might these devices be remediated to reveal that which was not intended to be revealed in the design of the device? Can it be assumed that the totality of surveillance made possible by the abundance of old and new and soon to be devised devices are always less than the infinite infant, and that an impossibility of a complete knowledge (a knowledge summit) may cause melancholia and anxiety for some mainly Modern onto-epistemologies, and maybe there's a pill for that 'know-it-all' condition?

If the presence of infants was measured to have some benefit for other beings in the presence of the infant, what might happen to the socio-technical arrangements structured for, in political newspeak, education and care?

How do the senses of infancy map out in the blueprints of a thousand days? And who blows the whistle when the best intentions of the blueprint don't actually seem to relate to anyone or thing? If the average is no-one, then what?

In what ways is the infant indebted to human recognition and human sensibility, to the ordering of social and political relationships, to the configuration of things in spaces, and to place; and vice versa? What habits are revealed in the act of redistributing the debt? How might those debts be invested and/or exploited and/or realised?

These questions vibrate from this collection. In the vibrations are many senses of the idea of infant and method and methodology and infantmethodologies. As early childhood teacher educator, I am excited by the opportunity to share the collection with teachers who are engaged in the study of teaching. There's a whole wonderful semester of reflection, discussion, research and practice vibrating out of the text. These vibrations may even engineer a certain way of thinking for student teachers, something along the lines of, as an early childhood teacher, you don't *have* to be an adult…

Acknowledgement: The questions concerning blueprints and averages was inspired by the forthcoming Master of Education thesis *Implicit gender bias in music technology education*, by Daryl Tapsell.

## Infantmethodologies: an open review

Sonja Arndt
University of Melbourne

This paper is revolutionary. It is simultaneously connecting and disruptive, it interrupts and interacts, ruptures and relates. It highlights fragilities in knowledge, challenges singular, narrow exceptionalisms and dethrones dominant (Western) conceptions of what 'infant' can be and how that can be determined. Following this lead, it breaks down the (predominantly Western) human inclination to want to know. It also highlights a way of being as reflected in Indigenous ways of thinking, as Kohan outlines, by seeing the end through the lens of the beginning, and the future through the lens of the past. In its disruption of disjointed, mono-focused conceptions of childhood doings/doing childhoods, it compellingly and seductively traverses linguistic, cultural, methodological, human and other-than-human embodiments of infancies and methodologies for studying infancies. Evoking a literal shiver, the paper uses the opportunity to playfully engage with infantmethodologies as a blatant disregard of conventional methods and ways of knowing not only infancy and methodologies, but also common conceptions of knowledge itself, and the common processes and procedures of its extraction and production, through various forms of research and its dominant and marginalized positionings. While unsettling, these disruptions offer glimmers of hope, suggesting that a whole-sale upheaval of conceptions of infants + methodologies create new thought-ful spaces for reorientations towards the thinking and doing of being, of research, of infancy, of humanity and of knowledge.

Further rupturing human inclinations to want to know, the paper turns upside-down how knowledge is acquired and how methods of knowledge acquisition are learnt. It re-places and re-turns, as Ulmer says, research and its processes into a methodological infancy. Unsettling infancy – human and non-human – thus not only pushes beyond certainty and beyond the intimate sense of knowing and connection, but in doing so it evokes a very distinct humility, placing us as researchers into an infant-like relation with-in the multiplicities of beings in the world/s in which we research. It foregrounds our relational response-abilities as humans-beings-things co-existing in ways that we perhaps don't and perhaps never will know but have to learn and re-learn as we go. And, in re-reminding us of this humility, the paper calls forth the strength for revolutionary thought, as our relational inter-species end-goal in itself.

## Infant-*method*-ologies – a diffractive caring open(ing) review

Karen Malone
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Thinking with infant-*method*-ologies is to be thinking with matters of care.
De la Bellacasa ([2017](#)), with matter of care thinking, acknowledges a closeness of relations, as providing possibilities for encouraging awareness, a means for creating knowledge.

'Thinking with care as living-with' (de la Bellcasa, 2017, p. 92).
Babies nor kin are surrogates for theory making (de la Bellcasa, 2017). Infant-*method*-ologies like Haraway's dogs 'are not just here to think with, they are here to live with' (Haraway, [2003](#), p. 5).

*injustices within and across species*[4]
*which shoves humanity towards the edge of an abyss*

nurturing, yearning
bringing into being
is caring sustenance?

Caring effects our thinking of babies.
Care, "those layers of labour that get us *through the day*, a material space in which many are trapped" (de la Bellcasa, 2017, p. 87).

*'being birthed' hints at the labour*
*'birthed being' indicates that birth is shared labour*
*staying with the babies whatever is seemingly going on*

Care, "moves relational webs, even by creating critical cuts, those who are involved in the caring are bound to be moved" (de la Bellcasa, 2017, p. 83). Yearnings are possibilities of proximity, caring involves moments, edging-in to the theory making, cutting apart.

*babies' momentary movements*
*made soft by the birthing canal of a series of nows*
*partially unknown and unrecognizable*
*with yet-unrealized potential*

Paused, misplaced concern
Being attentive, to the unknown, a misplaced stranger with a knock at the door.
"Body sensing as entangled matter" (Malone & Moore, [2019](#), p. 14)
Body encounters have unexpected outcomes

*these bodies in movement become sensuous*
*carrying the environment with them*

inviting
sensing

702 Touch lends itself easily to memory.
703 Its traces remain on the surface of an infant body, ready to be rekindled (Le Breton, 2017)
704 Yearnings to touch, for being touched. A permanent in-touch-ness.

705 *this is the seduction of an extracted new beginning*
706 *a not-yet that remains on the precipice of being claimed*

707
708 Touch, thinking, living and care, immanence transcending infant-*method*-ologies
709

## Notes

1. https://www.gallery.ca/magazine/exhibitions/imitation-and-illusion-ron-mueck-at-the-wag Retrieved 4 May 2021
2. Follow this link to access the tryptic: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1S030_Ks86IKdyRAkJtIVdPJwENsy74y5/view?usp=sharing
3. See https://www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/
4. *italicised words are the authors

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