Untimely Research

Making time as existential post-qualitative research practice.

by

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Abstract

This thesis presents six exemplars of posthuman theorizing that enact qualitative research in untimely ways. In order to move through the text in an untimely way, each chapter will act as an exemplar (Massumi, 2002). The connectivity of each chapter hinges on the details that each chapter activates. As a unity of self-relation, each new detail introduces the possibility of the chapter falling apart, shifting the course of the writing. The text moves through these sites of vulnerability of connectivity, providing the writing a space to “pass,” entering into new blocs of experience where and when time matters. Writing in this way, the thesis responds to the paradoxes and contradictions of adhering to chronological representations of qualitative research. In accounting for the paradoxes and contradictions of academic writing, the aim of this thesis is
to interfere with the normativities of thinking and doing that renders research “recognizable” and “examinable” in order to move beyond a “system of acculturation and anticreativity” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 27), while at the same time write within and about this gridlocking system. Each chapter wrestles with these tensions in their own peculiar way, developing untimely methodologies for reviewing, reflecting, translating, mediating and researching. Concerned with experiences of posthuman anguish, the thesis emphasizes an affirmative potential of the humanities facing the “post.” Tracing the immediacy of lived experience, the thesis draws from critical moments of theorizing in the humanities, and reads them through a posthuman framework of memory. Posthuman memory is a creative and affirmative process of anchoring the self in the midst of anguish. As a process that is capable of “transmuting negative passions into productive and sustainable praxis” (Braidotti 2013, p. 122), the thesis demonstrates the untimely potential of this framework for pedagogical events of remembering where we slide on the precipice of time towards generational ethics of relating. As such, normative and traditional notions of audience and implications are disrupted in unexpected ways in order to make space for untimely research practices, when and where who we are when and where we meet cannot be known in advance.
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To my family: because of you I write.

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In my first year of undergraduate studies, not yet certain of my major direction towards some kind of form of ‘specialization,’ I filled my roster with introductory courses to history, art history, studio, and philosophy. As a freshman, it is generally understood that time is on your side: when else in your life will you be allowed to take the time to explore your interests and discover your aptitudes? Freshman year is about taking the time to feel your way around, when you are expected to make mistakes, afforded lower grades, and able to fall behind—you have all of the time in the world to catch up! Instead, I found myself being at odds with time, aware of its looming presence everywhere I turned. Time was something that I was always running out of, constantly racing to catch up with it, desiring to get ahead of it, to hoard it. Time was always on my mind, and not just my own relationship with time. I became fascinated with how others managed and performed time, how things came quicker to some more than others. In remembering my unusual obsession with time, there is one event that sticks out more than others.
It was during one of our first studio critiques. A colleague presented to us her hand drawing. Reflecting on the drawing today, I cannot remember the contents of the drawing or what it was ‘of.’ I can only remember the exquisiteness of the details and the mastery of the composition. Most of all, I remember feeling fascinated with the amount of labour that went into it. It was shaped by fruitful mornings and sleepless nights, filled with enduring focus and sustained patience. I was not the only one reacting to this time piece. My fellow colleagues asked about the process, wanting to discern how many hours went into the project. It became clear that the artist either had more time on her hands than most, or was more skilled than most, allowing her to cheat time.

Moving forward with the semester, the drawing was at the epicenter of the seminar’s creative activity, setting the bar for what it means to produce serious and diligent work. It screamed—at least to me—the hours of effort that goes into making something valuable. For someone whose relationship with time was trying, I simply snapped at a rather opportune time. Our final studio project was approaching. Fuelled by an impeding deadline and the sudden urge to rebel against the drawing’s insistent agency over me, I wondered what other modality of practice was possible. This wondering led me to conceiving a piece of art work without the work—without the components of time and labour often viewed as being essential to the production of art. After some negotiation, I purchased the hand drawing from my colleague for $200 dollars. While I did not tell her my plan for her piece that I had just acquired, she seemed pleased with the exchange. On the day of our final crits, she learned along with our classmates what had become of her hard work and its subsequent acquisition. I showed a video of applying layers of gesso over the drawing. Gesso, a white paint mixture used to prepare materials such as wood panels and canvases for the application of paint, has a unique and artful application process in itself. Because the mixture is rather brittle and thus susceptible to cracking, gesso is usually
applied in ten or more extremely thin layers and works best over rigid surfaces. Using it repetitively to coat the smooth surface of the drawing’s sketching paper, applying the mixture over the labouring lines and countless arduous hours, the gesso erased the drawing’s economy while building a different sense of time. Filming the process of applying the thin layers of gesso, capturing the drawing disappearing between the accumulation of coats, what the piece aimed to do was to materialize a temporality that could not have been achieved without an affective attachment to the drawing’s authoritative position that it took up in the course of the semester. Put differently, in reappropriating the drawing’s productivity and the value is accumulated within the studio, the gesture was successful in creating and revealing a relationship to and desire for time.

Time is a funny thing. It sneaks up on you, runs out on you, and presses up on you. Time flies, heals, and gets lost. It is a mechanism of measure, but it is also an expression of change. It thus comes as no surprise that time is an essential component to the age-old quest of understanding and reimagining life. For centuries, artists and philosophers have been inquiring into and engaging with the medium of time in order to gain some kind of reconciliation with its fleeting nature and to grasp an understanding of the taken for granted forces that make up a life and move it along. Time, as a longstanding medium of inquiry, is inevitably subjected to a canonization process where it is categorized in a hierarchical and progressive manner. Put differently, the question of time and how best to conceptualize it is a discursive practice that is always already tied to a particular generation of thinking and philosophical tradition. Thus, inquiries into, and analyses of time are immersed in temporality—they build on time through time.
Responding to the limitations of a linear and representationalist understanding of time, the objective of this dissertation is to return to *the matter of time* within the social sciences and humanities, excavating the timeliness of this return in order to develop an untimely research methodology. This would be a methodology out of its time that responds to and moves out of the methodological dilemmas introduced by *postqualitative* research (St. Pierre, 2011; Lather, 2013; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). An untimely methodology begins with an understanding of the different layers that make up the methodological dilemmas of the sudden turn to post in qualitative inquiry. Lather and St. Pierre (2013) situate the dilemma between working within and working against humanist qualitative methodology. If we destabilize or give up the systems of measure that invented qualitative research and therefore the descriptors that guarantee the value and rigour of our practice, how do we engage in meaningful research practices? The dilemma of how to practice in the post of qualitative research opened up the field to more experimental practices that worked to show the limits of humanist qualitative inquiry, to question our attachments to systems of measure, and to create new concepts that open up practices of representation. The experimental and affirmative modes of inquiry that responded to the dilemma of the post in qualitative research practices laid out a new plane in the field of qualitative inquiry, resulting in a proliferation of special issues, conference proceedings and methods textbooks.

This rush to publication, or what St. Pierre (2016a) calls a rush to application, created a new dilemma within postqualitative research. The speed at which postqualitative practices are moving does not give scholars the time needed to study the history, philosophy, and politics of the various empiricisms that they are taking in responding to the posts. This rush to application within postqualitative research created a crisis of scholarship that returned the field back to its original dilemma of placing the human subject at the beginning or center of inquiry. Put
differently, if we do not take the time to study the old empiricism that make up the new, we fail to recognize and therefore respond to the dilemma of our humanist positioning. In order to account for the dilemma of the humanist subject in postqualitative research, St. Pierre (2016a) urges us to “read and read and read” (p. 122) the theories that we desire to apply, to read them deeply until “its concepts overtake us and help us lay out a plane that enables lines of flight to what we have not yet been able to think and live” (p. 122). Destabilizing humanist and normative categories of research involves thinking the unthought (St. Pierre, 2016b). To think the unthought is to wrestle with notions of agency, which consequently involves making sense of the paradoxical nature of capturing, describing and experiencing what is unintelligible. The dilemma is thus methodological in that it complicates and troubles ethics, ontology and epistemology.

Research becomes a matter of learning, figuring out and working through experiences of uncertainty in ways that resist reinscribing the very humanist dominant categories that it attempts to move away from.

Slowing down the rush to application involves deep readings of the theories we employ so that they can decenter our humanist subjectivity and help us to “forget our training” (St. Pierre, 2016a, p. 122). If postqualitative research is about reading and returning to theory, and about forgetting about methods-driven research practices, then the dilemma of the how-to of postqualitative research remains. If reading philosophy offers qualitative research a way out of conventional humanist qualitative research, then what exactly makes this return post (Rocha, 2017) and what is the post of the (pre)post? This positioning of the “post” against the “pre” and vice versa (re)situates the field in yet another dilemma of how to “proceed” against these disciplinary tensions. The overarching dilemma of the series of crises is the ongoing repetition of stuck places, of problematic positioning within dominant understanding of time. What seems to
be missing in the debates around the post of qualitative research is a different understanding of time.

This dissertation extends the exploration of what is ‘new’ about postqualitative research and other interrelated terms and currents such as new materialisms, new empiricisms and posthumanism, by looking into the matter of time. Re-considering time as a mechanism of measure that is tied to a particular metaphysics of presence, a dominant tradition of thought which grounds knowledge in what is present to a knowing subject, this dissertation will work towards exposing this understanding of time as a major (illusive) component that qualifies humanism (what it means to be human, what it means to think about thinking about being human). This move to reconsider is simultaneously a move that re-attends to time in the context of the paradoxical and experimental work happening in postqualitative research. Returning to the matter of time and exploring how time matters can navigate our rethinking of the human in ways that opens us up to difference, to being in difference, towards refusing who we are so that we can imagine alternative forms of existence (Foucault, 1988). This return to a matter of time is a highly reflexive practice that engages critically with “experience” and “narrative,” taking these components that make up the qualitative notion of subjectivity out of their time. This involves thinking about how research lives on the edge of what it can become but can never quite be. It involves thinking about the conjunctive moment when research becomes an artful combination and when artful combinations become research. This conjunctive moment is at the heart of research-creation (Manning, 2014; Zaliwska & Springgay, 2015; Rotas & Springgay, 2014), a Canadian research category of academic funding that brings the process of artistic activity with social science methodologies. Unlike most models of art-based research that tend to separate matter from perception, positing the conditions of terms of research before the experimentation, research-creation moves against this procedural logic in order to think about the ways in which
the *event* of research challenges the very idea of form. Turning to research-creation practices, an untimely methodology seeks to open up time in ways that (post)qualitative research cannot. Experimenting with what a dissertation can do to dominant notions of time involves an undoing of procedural logic and thus challenging the humanist desire for intentionality, meaning, origin and destination.¹ This means challenging the humanist assumptions that a qualitative dissertation will gather up data from empirical projects with human subjects and use them to ground the theory. An untimely methodology highlights the need to think about research participants in different ways. My doctoral research engaged with human others and other things. This included research with my grandmother, cameras, students, my dogs and other research ephemera. They will all show in this dissertation, but in untimely ways.

What kind of questioning is required to begin the reflexive practice of returning time to mattering? What kind of theoretical orientation is necessary to sustain such a practice in a way that does not fall back to flattening notions of time? What kind of relationship to temporality must be learned in order to activate a difference in the present? This dissertation will explore these overarching questions that deal with returning time to the untimely. This means that this dissertation will write itself in unconventional ways, ways that resist the gravitational pull of humanism. To that end, while I raise overarching questions around time and methodology, the chapters are not meant to answer them, but rather, each chapter will pose their own questions concerning time and the untimely in educational research. Performing time in this way raises a number of dilemmas, mainly, struggling with the paradox of performing an untimely methodology against habitual ways of writing in chronological time.

¹ I put this dissertation to work so that it operates like a work of art. This conceptual understanding of what an artwork can do redefines the traditional value of a work of art by stressing thought processes and methods of production as opposed to producing a finished object.
Responding to the dilemma of being stuck and not knowing where, when and how to turn, this dissertation will ask about the untimeliness of this dilemma and thus the methodological potential of sustaining and being in duration with the unthought. More specifically, I ask how the concept of the untimely impacts qualitative methodologies often referred to as new materialist: How does the concept of the untimely help us to read the methodological dilemmas inspired by new materialist research affirmatively? What is the relationship between untimeliness and a new materialist ontology and what does this relationship reveal about our desires to rethink foundational and habitual systems of thought? How can a new materialist reading of the concept of the untimely reveal the concept’s methodological implications, and how can a temporal analysis of new materialist methodologies help us to reimagine the growing pains of becoming unintelligible generatively, as pedagogical pivot points that both map out and force us towards further experiences of unthought.

The dual objectives of excavating the untimeliness of post qualitative research and developing an untimely methodology are intimately tied. Through an affirmative reading of the concept of untimeliness, the objective to excavate and materialize the concept’s vitality, the concept’s prephilosophical plane of immanence, lends itself to the objective of developing an untimely methodology. Put differently, the objective will be to analyze the concept of the untimely in a way that opens up the concept to untimely relations with post qualitative discourse. The way of the analysis will not be hierarchical, privileging one theory over an other, but vital, reading the concept for its patterns of difference over time.

According to Elizabeth Grosz (2004) this temporality is imperceptible and therefore difficult to think or conceptualize, and for this reason, very few theorists are able to dislocate their analysis of time from the dominant tendencies and forces of the material-discursive present.
In other words, to conceptualize time temporally, to conceive of time as having the capacity to disrupt the continuity of the present, to think of it virtually, we have to rework the past so that the present is different from itself, opening up “a nick or crack, the untimely, the unexpected, that welcomes the new, whether a new organism, organ, or function, a new strategy, a new sensation, or a new technological invention” (Grosz 2004, p. 252). To think about time in this way is a highly abstract reflective activity that has concrete implications for discursive practices around the post as well as cultural and political consequences. Grosz offers the radical politics of feminism as an example of a reflective emergent practice that rearranges and restructures the past in order to unravel what is not yet actualized in the present. Such a practice enacts a radical politics that reveals conditions of privilege in order to shift them. In other words, following Grosz (2004), such a reflective practice “must be latent in and a product of the very systems or structures it challenges…feminism is the virtual effect of patriarchy as much as male privilege itself, the mark of the dual or simultaneous contingency of all political regimes and orders and their historical force or effect” (p. 253). In other words, a reflective emergent practice such as feminism is a virtual effect of the very subject that it challenges. Virtual effect in this context is intimately and radically tied to a notion of temporality. To become a virtual effect of something is to become temporally entangled with “the persistence of the past in the present, and the ongoing revision of the past in the light of its changing relevance to the present” (Grosz 2004, p. 254). A virtual effect of something can thus propagate and affirm problematic systems of power and domination but it can also produce forces of resistance where the persistence of the past in the present can set up the conditions of a possible future. A virtual effect activates the past in whatever form the present may enable so that it can provide resources for potentially infinitely future forms. A reflective emergent practice is therefore a highly ethical endeavour that requires a particular ethos and attunement to the contingent dominant systems and structures that enable a
virtual effect. It is highly ethical because it is a practice of rewriting the future, which as mentioned above, can go both ways.

Following Grosz, this might mean thinking about the past not only as an index of our present, but more radically, thinking about the past as being as rich as our future allows. A reflective emergent practice that enacts an ethically responsible virtual effect requires a methodology that puts us out of time, putting us in touch with the imperceptible, with that which remains outside of but is always in relationship with dominant discourse and other structures of domination. A reflective emergent practice is therefore tied to an untimely relationship to the present, to an unexpected shift, leap or rupture in time. Following Eve Sedgwick’s (2003) critical preposition of *beside*, a reflective emergent practice is a nondualistic relationality which resists narratives of origin and telos in favour a temporality that “comprises a wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivalling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations” (p. 8). To be beside something is to become a vital effect of something. To practice within this middle range—to read, to write, to analyze—is tied to texture, to be able to perceive texture, “to be immersed in a field of active narrative hypothesizing, testing, and reunderstanding of how physical properties act and are acted upon over time” (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 13). In this context, time is understood as more than a form of inquiry into the nature of the past and the present while being radically directed towards a future, but rather, is understood as a force, as the vital effect of the present and milieu of practice. The untimely is thus a virtual effect of time, to perceive its texture we must practice positioning ourselves beside time.

More recently, Grosz’s analysis of a reflective emergent practice involves a more direct analysis of temporality. In her highly cited essay “The Untimeliness of Feminist Theory,” Grosz
(2010) offers a new approach for feminist theorizing that returns to the earlier days of feminist studies when the abstract and non-determinable was valued in the analysis of patriarchal relations. She places emphasis on the conceptual not because the empirical has no place, but because “without a conceptual frame, the empirical has no value, no context, no power, it simply is” (p. 49). Without the conceptual, she contends, the empirical cannot hold the potential to become otherwise. To that end, she urges feminism to direct itself to change, “to changing itself as much as to changing the world,” which involves becoming “untimely and abstract of all domains—the future, and those forces which can bring it into existence” (p. 49). Grosz offers two ways of thinking about the untimely: 1) as something that has not been used up in its pastness, and thus its vitality has potential for the present and the future; 2) as something that leaps into the future and therefore is not recognizable in the present. While she clarifies that feminist theory has always directed its inquiries to the nature of the past and present while being radically directed towards a future, she contends that it has not directly analyzed the force of temporality which is the very object and milieu of feminist theory. Considering the overarching questions raised in this introduction as conceptual frameworks, the chapters will perform empirical possibilities.

0.1 Mapping planar relations: An untimely overview of chapters to come

Echoing the dilemma of performing an untimely methodology alongside qualitative research and its tendency to write chronologically, to write with an outcome in mind, I turn to Massumi’s (2002) notion of exemplification as a way to conceptualize a beginning, middle and end of this dissertation as not knowing where it is going. Massumi (2002) conceptualizes the method of exemplification to allow him to think about where the potential for change within ideological accounts of subject formation has gone. Change, Massumi asserts, is gridlocked by its
definitional framework and therefore cannot perform its way out of its very construction of predetermined terms including countersignification. Change is boxed-in. In order to regain movement in change, we must conceive of movement as more than a normative progression from one position to the next, and to think experimentally about change as the gaps between positions where change “falls into a theoretical no-body’s land” (p. 4). Thinking about change in this way implicates radical notions of subjectivity and experience: bodies do not simply code through causal mediation, but more, “a body is in an immediate, unfolding relation to its own nonpresent potential to vary” (p. 4). So where do we locate a theoretical starting point? When do we begin to pick up speed? How does a map figure with this kind of thinking?

One way to offer an introductory map of the untimely is to accept the paradox of writing chronologically about being out of time in order to consider the chapters to come as materializing out of their temporal gridlock. Subjectivities, or perhaps more astutely, meaning-making agents, do not come before or after each chapter: they are contemporary to the chapter’s every move, “fellow-travelling dimension of the same reality” (p. 5). This means that the chapters will not answer or stand in as a part of the of whole of the dissertation in the traditional sense, but rather, will act as exemplars (Massumi, 2002), as one singularity that belongs to itself while simultaneously extending itself to everything else with which it might be connected, or might not. The connectivity of each chapter hinges on the details that each chapter activates. Every detail matters as it embeds another chapter in it. As a unity of self-relation, each new detail introduces the possibility of the chapter falling apart, shifting the course of the writing. It is this site of vulnerability of connectivity where and when time matters. With this method, the chapters will perform and conceptualize the untimely as a qualitative difference (Massumi, 2002), where and when “the slightest, most literal displacement…beckons a feeling, and feelings
have a way of folding into each other, mutually intensifying, all in unquantifiable ways apt to unfold again in action, often unpredictably…felt and unforeseen” (p. 1).

Each chapter sits on its own, and in some ways, each chapter works frictionally against one another with concepts slipping into each other like uninvited guests. One chapter might make some concepts about time that will be done in a very different way in a different chapter. Some concepts developed in one chapter will repeat themselves in another, constantly remapping their appearance throughout the dissertation. Attending to the paradox of writing chronologically, of adhering to a system of pagination for example, the chapters will work with the details of time in varying combinations, inventing a network that moves out of the definitional timelock of conventional qualitative research. Therefore, I encourage the reader to start with any chapter they would like. The chapters are not meant to be read chronologically, but can be. With that said, if you find yourself desiring an introduction to concepts, or if you are looking to for a framework to ground your reading, earlier reviewers have suggested starting with Chapter three. Chapter one sets the stage by working an untimely methodology. Unlike a conventional literature review, I will put time to work and will put concepts to work in an untimely way, opening up the terms of interpretation to intensities and imperceptible becomings (Braidotti, 2006). It is in the concluding chapter that this untimely methodology will perform conjectures out of the intervening chapters and their self-relating details, conjectures which may or may not offer tools and techniques for structural resistance and an untimely methodology.

The intervening chapters are placed beside each other, and will be read chronologically. The linearity of their positioning acts as a load-bearing base for experimental and innovative theorizing, work that builds out of the temporal details that thread through and shape-up the chapters’ temporary positions. Each intervening chapter has its own particular temporal structure
and thus contributes something exemplary, something that relates to its own scaffolding that also cross-sections outside of itself. Chapter three leaps into avant-garde notions of temporality, reading together the temporal elements of Fluxus event scores, propositions (Filliou, 1970; Manning & Massumi, 2014), and the pedagogical slippage of teaching time: how do you enter the untimely? Chapter two moves along the narrow footbridge of storying subjectivity, balancing on untimely notions of autobiographical reflection (Pinar, 1975; Grumet & Pinar, 1976), existential vertigo (Sartre, 1943/1984), and anomalous places of learning (Ellsworth, 2005): what does time do to the critical notions of the public? Chapter four sites the untimely mattering of the precipice through a multispecies reading (Haraway, 2008) of generational feminism (van der Tuin, 2014a), and necessarily maintains temporal instability with the theoretical handrails of the inhuman (Spivak, 1988; Grosz, 2008): what does it mean to speak from and to speak of the untimely?

At first blush, the interconnecting details between the intervening components of an untimely methodology include notions of a public, narrative inquiry, existential crises and methodological dilemmas. However, the conceptual detailing in and of each chapter is worked and stretched in such a way as to encourage a bending of thought, language and time, potentially building new axioms that infect the chapters’ temporary positioning with the untimely. Writing on the untimely means facing the relentless paradox made up of the tension between method and representation, between theorizing the untimely and writing and reading chronologically. This paradox, as I will outline in Chapter one, holds an important place in the genealogy of discursive and methodological debates in the social sciences and humanities. Paradoxes have an untimely potential for sustaining theoretical experimentation and for inventing technologies of description. This potential, as this dissertation will put to work, is intimately tied to radical practices of self-reflexivity, practices that put agents of knowledge out
of their time where the call to respond becomes a matter of accountability—of mapping our planar relationship to the discursive formations of the unknown, the unmarked and the virtual. An emergent self-reflexive practice provokes complicated emotions often described as discomforting (Boler, 1999), difficult (Britzman, 1998), strange (Pitt & Britzman, 2003) and detached (Million, 2009; Tarc, 2013). To be moved out of time is to feel the power of time. Not only are these emotions starting points of critique, they are also our entry points to learning to repair emotional memory (Sedgwick, 1997), and to live affirmatively within paradoxes, contradictions, and boundary making practices. This might mean hanging up our academic hat of critical self-seriousness so that we can learn to enjoy the philosophical turning of our disciplines (Ruitenberg, 2009). With Massumi (2002) on repeat, this dissertation will move out of its time, constantly reminding itself:

If you don't enjoy concepts and writing and don't feel that when you write you are adding something to the world, if only the enjoyment itself, and that by adding that ounce of positive experience to the world you are affirming it, celebrating its potential, tending its growth, in however small a way, however really abstractly—well, just hang it up (p. 13)

0.2 Untimely implications and an audience-to-come

The main argument of this thesis is in many ways abstract, activating the intangible qualities of the chapters, subsections, concepts and analyses. The structure of this thesis responds to and accounts for these qualities and materializes their transitive nature in unprecedented ways. In other words, theorizing untimeliness for (post) qualitative research practices puts to work
writing, research presentation and voice *differently* and *with difference*. The etymology of the word abstract may be of some use here in thinking about the impetus of writing in this way. Originating from the Latin *abstrahere*, meaning “to drag away, detach, pull away, move, divert” (abstract, 2017, n.p.), the adjective was taken up by philosophical discourse as a concept that connotes a transitive quality to something that is withdrawn or separated from material objects or practical matter. Understood in opposition to *concrete, abstract* developed into a descriptive term for something that cannot be applied or is not practical. An abstract idea is thus something that is difficult to understand because it is apart from “concrete realities” and “specific objects.” This *difficulty* tied to the *something* of the abstract, is tied to an impetus of expression, to an affirmative desire for grasping the intangible. As a mode of expression, the abstract it not only something that pulls away, but something that pulls towards. In other words, the abstract is not simply something in transition (moving from one point to another), but is something transient that forces expression and eventually makes itself concrete. In this context, the abstract cannot simply be defined by lack or absence, but must be considered as productive in its process of materialization.

The philosophical concept of the abstract has a long and complex genealogy that has contributed to dominant understandings of epistemology, a genealogy that exceeds the theorizing space of this thesis, let alone this section. The goal of introducing the etymology of the word in relation to both the thesis’ form and mode of expression is to account for the impetus of writing against the privileging of “concrete” and “practical” modes of representation that prevent projects of thinking otherwise from the very outset. This means writing against chronological modes of presentation in favour of a more abstract and out-of-sync structure that creates spaces of difference and radical connectibility where and when new modes of expression are possible. This method of writing puts traditional conjoiners, traffic signs, and other signalling devices at
stake, rendering the aim, implications and intended audience of and for the thesis unclear and unstable. At stake are the qualities that make concepts and ideas graspable. The writing therefore finds itself in a vulnerable position of losing its grip and falling into the abyss of inapplicability. Simultaneously, the vulnerability of writing against preconceived systems and structures provokes a particular epistemological angst that has the potential to generate the desire to write, read and connect in radical ways. Choosing to act in the face of the abstract characterizes and puts to work an untimely methodology that implicates the writer and the reader in the creative work of interrupting expectations and destabilizing the categories and terms that define and evaluate scholarly work. An untimely methodology as both an abstract concept and an abstract mode of expression forces a mode of writing that is out of sync and therefore demands a “collective assemblage of enunciation that makes possible the invention of a people to come” (Bogue, 2010, p. 171). An untimely methodology is a project of making time in the vulnerable event of withdrawing from chronological reasoning and epistemic certainty. The implications of the thesis is tied to the connectibility and grasp-ability of the writing, and as a result, depends on the willingness of the reader to work the vulnerable details of reviewing, reflecting, translating, mediating and researching. Therefore, normative and traditional notions of audience and implications are disrupted in unexpected ways in order to make space for untimely research practices, when and where who we are when and where we meet cannot be known in advance. In other words, the implications of an untimely methodology is inseparable from an audience that is “yet to come” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), an audience that transforms the angst of untimeliness and epistemological uncertainty into a pedagogical event, an event that transforms the reader into an untimely thinker who is able to act “counter to our time, and thereby act on our time, and let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 112). The possibility of an untimely methodology, the possibility of this thesis, depends on an
ahistorical understanding of *implications* and *audience*, where “the future” is not a historical or utopian future, but is the now of its becoming.

Thus, what is at stake in theorizing an untimely methodology is the connectibility that momentarily grounds a pedagogical event between the text and the audience/reader. The ability to connect is both an event that holds together different time zones and an event that forces and moves along a different kind of thinking. While these moments are different with each encounter and therefore cannot be predicted, formed or presented from the outset, I will provide the reader with some structural guardrails to support the impetus for radical expression—wherever and whenever that may be. To this end, each section in each chapter will offer a subsection that will attempt to weave together the intangible qualities of an untimely methodology. Acting as resting zones for the reader, the subsections will work the details of each section, materializing the details for further resonation and repetition. This does not mean seeking out, and in many ways forcing, similarities between the different exemplars and components of the thesis, but rather, reflecting on their intra-actions, where the meeting places force a generative difference where language falls apart and forces us to think about discourse in different ways. To think differently and in difference, to become explorers of the impossible, to think the unthinkable, is personal and thus inescapable. An untimely methodology summons up and critically confronts forgotten possibilities. While it is an endeavour that is experienced privately and in solitude, it is an untimely solitude which is “already intertwined with a people to come, one that invokes and awaits that people” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1981/1987, p. 377). An untimely methodology summons these “philosopher-comets of the past” (Deleuze, 1962/1983, p. 106-107) into a series of relay points across time and space, creating a community of private thinkers with different histories, sensibilities and possibilities.
What can a literature review do?: The “posts”, feminist temporality and putting new materialism to work

Conventionally, a qualitative literature review serves to support the originality of a doctoral dissertation. In order to situate the originality of a doctoral thesis, a traditional review consults past literature to understand what has already been done, in order to argue for the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies, with a view to advance future understandings of the field. In most cases, the purpose of a qualitative literature review “is to show how the particular questions or issues that the inquiry addresses partly emerge from the research literature” (Kilbourn, 2006, p. 557). The literature review therefore has a particular understanding of time in relation to research and inquiry. As a cumulative process, the review builds on prior research and scholarship into one coherent whole that provides a new perspective and grounds for moving forward (Boote & Beile, 2005). These common textbook approaches to writing a review contribute to a dominant understanding of a review as being a secondary document that situates
the thesis historically and methodologically. As a document that performs a cumulative method of analysis, its particular research process also serves as a gatekeeping and policing device for the field that it reviews (Lather, 1999). In this way, literature reviews often hold the potential to affirm and propagate problematic systems of power and domination. Following Grosz (2004), this potential also holds a virtual effect where the persistence of the past in the present can set up the conditions of a possible future. In other words, the way the process of reviewing is understood in its relationship to time can determine whether a review will serve as a tool that repeats and propagates unquestioned and therefore problematic systems of power and domination for the purpose of securing a field’s identity, or whether a review will experiment with a field’s gatekeeping and policing devices in ways that invents and opens up the conditions of a field’s possible future. To perform a review that is out of sync from dominant understandings of past, present and future is not about rejecting traditional modes of scholarly writing, but rather, it is about creating a virtual effect out of these taken for granted modes that “are necessary while at the same time necessarily limiting” (Koro-Ljungberg & Mazzei, 2012, p. 728). An out of sync review experiments beside what is expected so that the material can vibrate with a new intensity, bringing that which is under review to life.

The current move to decenter conventional humanist research practices in the social sciences and humanities offers early career researchers permission to enter into a review more experimentally, allowing the researcher to become an active participant in the field of inquiry. Examples include renewed engagements with the matter of analysis, from interrogating the nature of “data” such as “survey responses, numbers, interview transcripts, artefacts, texts, observations, notes, images, and so on” (Koro-Ljungberg & MacLure, 2013, p. 219), through to the methods of conducting research (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). With attention turned towards decentering human agency and causal understanding of relations through an engagement with the
physical and life sciences (Barad, 2007; Hird, 2004; Coole and Frost, 2010) and affect theory (Ahmed, 2004; Berlant, 2011, Connolly, 2013; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Massumi, 2002, Sedgwick, 2003), researchers are challenged to critically rethink their role in terms that are no longer based upon the human being as a model. This challenge has produced creative and experimental entry points into the different stages and categories of qualitative research, problematizing traditional and humanist frameworks that code and compartmentalize research processes. The human-centered designation of the “beginning,” “middle,” and “final” stages that traditionally structure qualitative research processes are disrupted in favour of “phenomenologies of everyday life” (Coole & Frost, 2010, p. 28), “our co-existence with the world” (Hultman & Taguchi, 2010, p. 534), “surfing…on the metaphysical surface” of language “on which the very distinction between words and things is played out” (MacLure, 2013, p. 663), and mapping “patterns of movement such that the multiple relations between figure and ground, object and subject become visible as matters of concern” Hughes & Lury, 2013, p. 795).

Drawing heavily on Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of assemblage and schizoanalysis, qualitative research practices are reshaping the limits of discourse in order to accommodate and understand the shifting, and complex ontologies from which entities emerge. Thus, qualitative research practices are increasingly turning away from humanist “fetishizations” of texts and discourses (Coole & Frost, 2010; Hekman, 2010; Kirby, 2008) towards self-reflexive attempts of affirming various materialities that make up the ontological, epistemological and ethical endeavours of research. This can mean attending to matters of research that exceed representationalist discourses (Breu, 2014; Thrift, 2008; Vannini, 2015), paying attention to the forgotten or ignored materialities that make possible representationalist discourses, and/or returning to the major thinkers and philosophers who “were far more attentive to matter than their readers” (Snaza et al., 2016, xviii). A return to matter, also commonly referred to as an
ontological turn in research practices, involves a temporal reorientation and particular attunement towards being-with the research event. In other words, charting and accounting for the ways in which we are entangled with the phenomenon of our study requires a different pace, a spatial nearness, and experimentation with the “present.” The present in the ontological turn is considered as something more than a historical present, as a process of coming about, “the new, the remarkable, the interesting” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 111). Thus, the linearity and hierarchy of time is flattened out, where past, present and future are mutually implicated in the unfolding emergence of the phenomenon at stake. Time as such is suspended. It cannot achieve distance and exteriority, and thus cannot be represented with traditional discourse.

The heightened curiosity and accompanying experimentation (St. Pierre, Jackson & Mazzei, 2016) that is increasingly characterizing qualitative research practices has the potential to disrupt linear and cumulative modes of reviewing and therefore understanding the possibilities of a particular field. However, this allowance to disrupt normative research practices and to focus on the eventfulness of research risks flattening out a vibrant historicity. While leaping or cutting into analysis is part of troubling a cumulative method that carries with it dominant and unquestioned discourse, it must be accompanied with a particular methodology that accounts for the materiality of this sudden turn away from foundational assumptions of research practices. Without this double movement of creating and explaining, we face the dangerous consequences of “erasing” dominant boundaries and making them past, consequences which are far more troubling than the cumulative repetition of dominant discourse.

In this chapter I attempt a double movement by performing a literature review that puts new materialist concepts to work in an untimely way, which puts time to work. I begin by setting the scene of the ontological turn in the social sciences and humanities by focusing on what drives
this turn towards the ontological and the increasing intensifications of such theorizing. Out of
this scene, I perform a quantum leap that reworks the entire set of possibilities made available by
new materialist concepts. In putting three short passages from three different feminist scientists
to work, the goal of this chapter is to enact an untimely methodology out of the changing nature
of their intra-actions. Marking their entanglement can offer a more ethical response to the
ontological turn in the social sciences and humanities, a response that is accountable “not only
for what we know, how we know, and what we do but, in part, for what exists” (Barad, 2007, p.
243). An untimely review accounts for a mattering of time, and considers the scholarly task of
marking relations between ideas, concepts and thinkers as an ethical task of making time
(matter). The following section will place the three threads of anthropology, qualitative inquiry
and posthumanism together in order to trace the intensities of the ontological turn in a way that
moves that which is under review outwards, “in webs of ideas, others, texts” (Braidotti, 2013, p.
166). Tracing these intensities and desires to “turn,” can offer an untimely approach to reviewing
the terms and concepts that new materialism takes up. Put differently, I will put to work new
materialist concepts in such a way that might allow the concepts to resonate and have a life. An
untimely review therefore works against time so that it can materialize the intensities captured by
new materialist concepts.

1.1 Tracing the intensities of the ontological turn: A working Baradian lexicon

The social sciences and humanities are increasingly reconceiving and taking seriously matter, the
material and materialization. Often referred to as the material, empirical and ontological turn,
social and cultural theorists alike are exploring the consequences and possibilities of this
discursive shift for theoretical inquiry. According to these scholars, unlike previous theories of materialism tied to Marxism and Marxist critical theory, matter does not precede knowing, it is not simply “there” waiting to be known, but rather, the emerging field of “new” materialism is more interested in engagements with matter (Hird, 2009). Considering the spirit of new materialism as a process of engagement, of relating and becoming with, in this section I enter into the midst of this turn, resisting a linear definition of the intellectual current running through the social sciences and humanities, and instead, I will situate the phenomenon beside disciplinary desires and intensities. Invoking Sedgwick’s (2003) preposition of *beside*, I will perform a review that resists the chronological descriptors of *beneath* and *beyond* in order to allow an ecological approach to reviewing the ontological turn, reading the phenomenon through a “wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivalling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations” (p. 8). An ecological reading of the desire to turn holds a temporal emphasis and is made up of what Bulter (1990) calls “stylized repetition of acts” and “social temporality.” (Re)tracing the relational intensities of the ontological turn marks up a particular temporality that runs the risk of reifying regulatory norms. Reading Barad’s conceptualization beside this ecological field of intensities, I will put a planar reading out of its time, throwing it off of its temporal grid, if only for a moment.

One way to enter into this current trend is through an anthropological trajectory, considering the “ontological turn” as a return to the field’s central project of redeeming otherness and being in difference. Considered as a methodological device that turns away from (or replaces!) culture towards (or with) ontology, this paradigm re-engages with the binary divide of nature-culture while at the same time sketching the limits of the discursive engagement. According to the anthropologist Vassos Argyrou, the “ontological turn” is a move made in the
hope of doing a better job at upholding unity in the face of empirical difference, and that this
move, like previous moves, is hopelessly paradoxical, stuck in the very ethnocentrism it wishes
to eliminate. This paradox is not only what characterizes the turn to the ontological, but further,
pushes anthropologists’ understanding of ontology as something that does not appear in the
empirical world (it is without substance, materiality, a body) and instead should be approached
as something liminal (neither here nor there; absent nor present). Argyrou (2016) extends this
discursive paradox to think about the ontological as “the return of the repressed that disturbs and
spooks the living” (p. 53); pushing social scientists to seriously consider “that perhaps the
world…has no genuine order at all…that life is absurd and the attempt to make moral,
intellectual, or emotional sense out of experience is bootless” (Geertz in Argyrou, 2016, p. 63).
That is not to say that this paradox does not hold empirical value, or that the goal of wrestling
with paradoxes is to reach a place where we are forced to throw our hands up. Rather, in thinking
about paradox as a place that is impossible to explain yet continuously occurs, we should
consider it as a ghostly matter, as an epistemic uncertainty that builds the conditions for thinking
otherwise. In other words, paradox is empirical evidence of time being out of joint, of futures
that failed to happen. As a conjunctive moment of possibility/impossibility, future/past, paradox
is the composition of felt events, and it is what keeps anthropology turning.

The ontological turn is perhaps best understood in this context as a theoretically reflexive
project, as a technology of description whose ambition “is to devise a new analytical method
from which classic ethnographic questions may be posed afresh…in new and experimental
ways” (Pedersen, 2012, online). Critiques abound that the ontological turn is a heuristic
analytical device (Holbraad, 2012) that posits new worlds as opposed to taking seriously other
worlds (Heywood 2012), Pedersen (2012) builds his analysis of the ontological turn by pointing
to the weaknesses of these critiques, that they are built out of the failure to recognize the
conditions of possibility that mark up their understanding of ontology. Signalling to the slippage between describing the ontological turn and performing the ontological turn, Pedersen (2012) explains this paradox as being one of the greatest methodological advantages of the ontological turn:

The ontological turn amounts to a sustained theoretical experiment, which involves a strategic decision to treat all ethnographic realities as if they were “relationally” composed, and, in keeping with its “recursive” ambitions, seeks to conduct this experiment in a manner that is equally “intensive” itself (n.p., online).

The ontological turn is therefore a shifting conceptual assemblage, and as a result of its movement is able to adopt a self-reflexivity that is capable of undoing its own assemblage. Undoing in this context is understood as a double move of creating and describing realities and cultures, which prompts a different stance toward ethnographic data, of what it might be, “what concepts they might do to common senses of what reality is” (Pedersen, 2012, n.p. online).

Beside the anthropological debates of the ontological turn, the field of qualitative inquiry is provoked to reflect on theoretical presuppositions, sharing a similar desire to become undone. What has come to be known as postqualitative research (St. Pierre, 2011; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013), the post signals a movement in qualitative inquiry that decenters humanist ontology in order to experiment and think what comes after humanist qualitative methodology. It is a movement driven by multiple ethical dilemmas, mainly around the politics of representation: where, when and how does the posthuman figure in the representation of knowledge? In their introduction to the special issue of International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education on postqualitative research, Patti Lather and Elizabeth St. Pierre (2013) draw our attention to the timeliness of re-thinking research categories, gesturing that we have reached a cultural moment
where researchers are finally able to ask “out from under the neo-positivist upsurge” (p. 629) what comes next for qualitative research. Their responses lead to the poignant and overarching question whether qualitative inquiry is even possible outside of humanist ontology: “how do we determine the ‘object of our knowledge’—the ‘problem’ we want to study in assemblage? Can we disconnect ourselves from the mangle somehow (Self) and then carefully disconnect some other small piece of the mangle (Other) long enough to study it” (p. 630)? Borne out of the representational logic of neoliberal reforms, postqualitative research positions knowledge, the known and the knower within a generative paradox that presents us with the questions of whether or not we are “willing to take on this question that is so hard to think but that might enable different lives” (p. 631). It seems as though the conditions that compel such a turn boils down to an ethical imperative, to a drive to imagine forward in more affirmative and experimental ways. Philosophy and the pre-philosophical image of thought that conditions it is where postqualitative research begins the self-reflexive move of thought bearing on itself, and from here, moves towards inventing a new social science that can produce new concepts and a new existence (St. Pierre, Jackson & Mazzei, 2016). Social scientists, postqualitative researchers contest, must read philosophy in order to situate themselves in the paradox of an ethical imperative, where and when the work of the new begins.

Beside the ethical imperative to turn qualitative inquiry, Braidotti (2013) offers a different impulse for understanding the ontological turn, one that focuses on the institutional practices of the (European) humanities and asks about the function of theory in posthuman times. According to Braidotti (2013), the current turn away from genealogies of critical thought towards neo-empiricism, the methodological norm in Humanities research, is often nothing more than data-mining, “a repetition without difference and lingering melancholia,” and for the political
left, it is a full on rejection of theory resulting in “negative thought against the previous intellectual generation” (p. 5). Responding to this generally negative social climate and “gloomy connotations to the posthuman condition,” Braidotti approaches the anti-theory shift of posthumanism “as both a genealogical and a navigational tool” that explores ways “of engaging affirmatively with the present, accounting for some of its features in a manner that is empirically grounded without being reductive and remains critical while avoiding negativity” (p. 5). For Braidotti, the impulse to breathe life and creativity back into theorizing is about reading and charting the historical moment of the anthropocene, and thus involves methodological innovations for thinking with the contradictions and complexities that make up our posthuman historical condition. The urgency for such methodological innovations helps Braidotti to define a vision of posthuman humanity and her vision of a university “that serves the world today, not as the epistemological site of scientific production, but also as the epistemophilic yearning for the empowerment that comes with knowledge and sustains our subjectivity” (p. 11). Such a yearning is more than being nostalgic for the cultural and theoretical revolutions of the past, as such nostalgic sentiments restore the disciplines that were changed from within, in order to rescue the same disciplines from institutional decline. Following Braidotti, a posthuman yearning is non-theological, it is an affirmative force that embraces “creatively the challenge of our historicity without giving in to cognitive pain” (p. 159), that awakens the “task of self-transformation through humble experimentation” (p. 151), and aspires “to freedom through the understanding of the specific conditions and relations of power that are imminent to our historical locations” (p. 11-12). The ethical orientation of the posthuman is not an anti-humanism, although it is an important source for posthuman ethics. Rather, Braidotti’s (2013) version of posthumanism “marks the end of the opposition between Humanism and anti-humanism and traces a different discursive framework, looking more affirmatively towards new alternatives” (p. 37). Put
differently, Braidotti’s notion of the posthuman is not an “after” of the humanities, but rather, is an exploration of what needs to change for the human. A posthuman ethics if what keeps the ontological turn turning, simultaneously opening up and locating the subject “in the flow of relations with multiple others” (p. 50). It is an affirmative understanding of the human’s role in the world. This version of posthumanism signals the end of classical Humanism, however, it does not qualify its ending in terms of a crises, but understand its ending as entailing positive consequences.

Placing the three threads of anthropology, qualitative inquiry and posthumanism together to trace the intensities of the ontological turn is not a matter of “bringing them in” to a review and thus having the texts and citations act as “truth”, but rather, moves them outwards, “in webs of ideas, others, texts” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 166). The current ontological turn pulsating through the social sciences and humanities cannot be captured in a linear way. It is too multiple, too intense, both past and future. In transcribing the intensity and the affective charges of each thread into sustainable planar portions, the purpose of the threads is to fracture institutional time and practices while also synchronizing the virtual intensity of the ontological turn. With this transversal introduction to the current condition of the social sciences and humanities in mind, I would like to further web these encounters with Barad’s conceptualization of agential realism, recomposing her concepts in order to account for what a review can do. Cutting into Barad’s critique of traditional representationalist ontology and epistemology, a network responsible for granting language too much power and agency in determining our understanding of the world, this chapter continues the move to relay different moments in space and time.

Following Barad (2003), representationalism is a habit of mind that takes for granted the effects of language and other forms of representation, limiting epistemological possibilities and
propagating dominant systems of power that control our onto-epistemological experiences and flatten out our possibilities of being in the world otherwise. For these reasons, representationalism has received significant challenges from feminists, poststructuralists, postcolonial critics and queer theorists who generate questions about the ontological gap between representations, entities to be represented, and someone who does the representing in order to formulate the possibilities for political intervention that go beyond the framework and common sense appeal of representationalism. Performativity and performative approaches to discourse analysis is an example of an alternative to representationalism. Barad (2003) references Judith Butler as the name most often associated with the term in feminist and queer theory. She also includes science studies theorist such as Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour and Joseph Rouse in her reformulation of performativity that “calls into question the giveness of the differential categories of ‘human’ and ‘nonhuman,’ examining the practices through which these differential boundaries are stabilized and destabilized” (p. 808). Performativity opens up an exploration of how discourse is material and how it materializes. According to Barad (2003), a posthumanist notion of performativity problematizes the passivity of matter in post-representationalist accounts (such as Foucault’s analysis of power, and as a result, Butler’s performative elaboration of Foucault’s analysis). Posthumanist performativity offers an interference pattern that breaks away from generational representationalism and builds towards a robust account of materialization “and the material-discursive practices by which their differential constitutions are marked” (p. 810). In order to begin grasping the mechanisms of this method, it is important to layout Barad’s conjunctive term that she calls intra-action.

Arguably one of the more popular concepts from Barad’s oeuvre, intra-action is tied to Barad’s philosophical account of what she has been calling agential realism, a relational ontology that advocates “a causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied
as specific material configurations of the world (i.e., discursive practices / (con)figurations rather than ‘words’) and specific material phenomenon (i.e., relations rather than ‘thing’)” (Barad, 2003, p. 814, original emphasis). In other words, agential realism challenges the representationalist fixation on “words” and “things” by acknowledging the taken for granted ontology that happens (or put differently, that materializes) between “knowledge”, “the known” and the “knower.” The relational ontology of agential realism is a specific material phenomenon that understands bodies and other entities as emerging from the particularity of their relations to other bodies and entities. This specificity denies representational categorizations, and instead, reminds us that these categories (i.e. things, words) are always in relation. Accounting for this relational ontology makes it possible to once again attend to and

...acknowledge nature, the body, and materiality in the fullness of their becoming without resorting to the optics of transparency or opacity, the geometrics of absolute exteriority or interiority, and the theorization of the human as either pure cause or pure effect while at the same time remaining resolutely accountable for the role ‘we’ play in the intertwined practices of knowing and becoming (Barad, 2003, p. 812).

To account for and to acknowledge the relational ontology of our discursive practices means that we need to account for the ways in which we use categories of representation, and that the way we use them further naturalizes and takes for granted both things and modes of representation. In other words, accounting for relational ontology is not about moving in opposition from discursive practices, but about paying attention to the inevitable ways that we exclude others, thoughts and ideas in the processes of representing phenomena. This mode of attention is what moves us towards new possibilities that are more ethical and open up space for that which is excluded to respond. To account for this, we need to begin with the knowing agent, the “I” and
“we” who performs discursive practices. This situates “us,” as particular agents of knowledge, within a paradox of representation, where we need to account ourselves out of normative and representationalist ways of being. Barad offers a way out of the infinitely repetitive trap of representationalism by shifting the focus to physical optics, from reflection to diffraction. Diffraction can move us out of the paradox of discursive practices by “reading the insights of feminist and queer theory and science studies approaches through one another […] illuminating the infinite nature of boundaries […] that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability” (p. 803). As a method of reading, diffraction holds us accountable to constitutive exclusions, to the ontological relationality of words, concepts and other categorizations. Accounting for what is excluded from representation is where difference begins to matter. Accounting for this difference coming to matter is a conjunctive event where agency is not an act that presumes the prior existence of independent entities, but rather, it is an intra-active component that is always already entangled with the boundaries of phenomena. That is, the observer and the observed, the known and the knower, are co-constitutive. Not only does this shift our traditional and habitual understanding of agency, but furthermore (an as a result), it presents us with a profound conceptual shift. What does accounting for look like in this conjunctive event?

The conjunctive term intra-action puts emphasis on being-in-relation and therefore always already flattens out the hierarchy between the knower, the known and knowledge. As such, a relational emphasis disenfranchises the knower as the only actor in this onto-epistemological relationship, the only agent who has the capacity to act and make meaning. Following Barad (2003), knowledge, the known and the knower are apparatuses that intra-act, and that the intra-action of multiple apparatuses produce phenomena. Elaborating on Niels Bohr’s quantum physics, Barad explains apparatuses as
…neither neutral probes of the natural world nor structures that deterministically impose some particular outcome […] but rather, apparatuses are dynamic (re)configurings of the world, specific agential practices/intra-actions/performances through which specific exclusionary boundaries are enacted (p. 816, original emphasis).

An apparatus is not an instrument that exists before an action and therefore is presumed to have the capacity to capture it. It does not have an outside boundary, but rather, it is an open-ended practice, and thus, is phenomenal. Because their boundaries are indeterminant, apparatuses engage in ongoing intra-activity. Apparatuses are porous and co-constituted. That does not mean that they are passive, but on the contrary, through their intra-action with other apparatuses, they create phenomena. In their intra-action, they enact what Barad calls agential cuts, creating an interference pattern that events a separation between “subject” and “object.” That is, “the agential cut enacts a local resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy” (Barad, 2003, p. 815). Put differently, an agential cut produced out of intra-actions further produces intra-actions. Agency in this context is the event of cutting together-apart, enacting a “local condition of exteriority-within-phenomenon” (p. 815).

When two or more apparatuses intra-act, they engage in generative boundary work that threads the exterior into the local condition of the event of intra-action. Each apparatus (which is always intra-acting with other apparatuses) has unique local “material resolutions of the inherent ontological indeterminacy” (p. 816), which is why their differences that materialize through the cuts they enact do not conflict, but rather, create new intra-actions and local conditions—ad infinitum. The conjunctive term intra-action thus reworks “the classical ontological condition of exteriority between the observer and the observed […] the traditional notion of causality” (p. 815). Ontological relations create boundaries that germinate further events of relating. If
accounted for, they create interference patterns within the reflective trap of representationalism, patterns and/or cuts where phenomena come to matter. This ongoing flow of agency

\[\ldots\text{through which ‘part’ of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another ‘part’ of the world and through which local causal structures, boundaries and properties are stabilized and destabilized does not take place in space and time but in the making of spacetime itself (Barad, 2003, p. 817).}\]

I quote this passage at length because not only does it capture the cartography of her term intra-action as a differential ontology where matter comes to matter, both in the sense of materialization and ethics, but also because it is at this point of her essay where Barad introduces temporality into the mix of her conceptualizations. Temporality and spatiality, which materialize through intra-actions, offer new ways of thinking about time and space and thus offer the realization of different agential possibilities. Or put differently, temporality and the making of spacetime emerges in the “processual historicity” of agential realism where and when “relations of exteriority, connectivity, and exclusion are reconfigured” (Barad, 2003, p. 818). Within the conjunctive moment of intra-action, the topologies of the world change. This shift in phenomena entails “an ongoing reworking of the very nature of dynamics” (p. 818).

In this 2003 article, where Barad puts her agential realism to work in her elaboration of performativity within discursive practices, the dynamics of time is not fully addressed. While she briefly introduces temporality in her build-up of a performative metaphysics, she does not return to and rework the dynamics of temporality. Her focus in this article is to build a posthumanist account of discursive practices through her conceptualization of agential intra-activity, which concordantly reworks the notion of materiality in relation to discursive practices. Putting to work the conceptual shift that agential realism evokes, Barad asks us to think about discourse as “that
which constrains and enables what can be said” (Barad, 2003, p. 819). To think of discourse in this way, as more than merely spoken or written words, not only resists the habitual trap of representationalist thinking, but perhaps more importantly, asks us to think about signifying systems as merging from a field of possibilities: “this field of possibilities is not static or singular but rather is a dynamic and contingent multiplicity” (p. 819). Discourse and discursive practices are apparatuses:

1) “...particular physical arrangements that give meaning to certain concepts to the exclusion of others” (p. 819)

2) “...they are the local physical conditions that enable and constrain knowledge practices such as conceptualizing and measuring” (p. 819)

3) “... they are productive of (and part of) the phenomena produced” (p. 819)

4) “...they enact a local cut that produces ‘objects’ of particular knowledge practices within the particular phenomena produced” (p. 819).

Discourse as an apparatus, thus introduces a profound epistemological framework that understands knowledge practices as “exclusionary practices of mattering through which intelligibility and materiality are constituted” (p. 820). Discursive practices have no finality; they are causal; ongoing; differential articulations. According to Barad, this demands an analysis that accounts for the intra-action of material-discursive constraints and exclusions. Such an analysis is always entangled with processes of conceptualization that takes difference into account in such a way that it invents with the phenomenon “under analysis” without reinscribing traditional empiricist assumptions concerning the transparent or immediate given-ness of the world and without falling into the analytical stalemate that simply calls
for a recognition of our mediated access to the world and then rests its case” (Barad, 2003, p. 823).

An agential realist analysis is thus tied to an indefinite causality, which according to Barad, demands a differential engagement with and an accountability for the cuts that we make. Therefore, agential realism is an analysis in the making, or put differently, the making of an analysis. It is at this point of the article where the notion of temporality makes another brief appearance.

An agential ontology opens up a much larger space “that is more appropriately thought of as a changing topology” (Barad, 2003, p. 825) where the dynamics of intra-actions enfolds the spacetime manifold upon itself. In other words, the conceptual shift that happens with an intra-active approach to relationality provides the condition of an open future, a futurity that opens up a much larger space for material-discursive forms of agency. Barad’s conceptualization of the future as being radically open at every turn is a constrained freedom as it is conditioned by particular exclusions. An agential realist approach to the future is always already tied to the intimate intra-actions that are always already happening. The future in this sense is not deterministic, it is not a looming event that is bound to the effect of the past and the present. Rather, it is understood on a micro scale, or on a quantum physics scale, as being inherent in the nature of intra-activity. Each intra-action which enacts unique cuts is tied to a momentum that opens up a future. This futurity is mutually exclusive to the particular intra-action. What makes this notion of the future radical is that it moves away from the determinist sense of causality and cuts agency loose from its traditional orbit. The future is a matter of agency; agency is a matter of intra-acting. A future tied to agential realism is not something that someone or something has, it is enacted through the dynamics of intra-activity. The future is everywhere and all the time,
which is why it entails “a responsibility to intervene in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (p. 827). Following Barad in this particular essay, agency and futurity are conceived as intra-acting and thus are configured as “specific local parts of the world’s ongoing reconfiguration” (p. 829). They are practices of knowing that are also practices of being. Feminist science studies scholars have made the point that our epistemologies must take account of our situatedness, that we are part of that nature we seek to understand. Barad expands on this observation through a posthumanist account of agential realism, challenging the humanist understanding of “we,” “our” and the “knower” of knowledge projects in order to come to terms with how specific intra-actions matter.

Barad’s 2003 article reworks what she has been calling agential realism through a posthumanist approach in order to shift and reconfigure representationalist habits within humanist discursive practices, making room for and taking into account the epistemic importance of other material agents. Barad maps out her conceptualization of a posthumanist performativity, enacting the boundaries between the “social” and the “scientific,” which puts to work what an agential intra-active approach to methodology can do for disciplinary fields. Rouse (2004), a philosopher of science whose critique of representationalism is taken up by Barad throughout the article, highlights the feminist features of Barad’s agential realism in order to flesh out her conception of objectivity as an agential responsibility to explicate. The agential responsibility to explicate is to be accountable for the consequences of participating in the configuration of phenomenon. Rouse (2004) notes that part of Barad’s central contribution to feminist science studies “is that she shows not just how feminist politics are integral to responsible science but also how science integrally contributes to an adequate feminist analysis and criticism of power and domination” (p. 155).
Haraway (2008), another feminist science studies scholar whom Barad elaborates on for her diffractive reading method, also makes note of Barad’s theory of agential realism as helping her to think about companion species as the smallest unit of being and of analysis where “partners do not pre-exist their relating; the partners are precisely what come out of the inter- and intra-relating of fleshly, significant, semiotic-material beings” (p. 165). While Barad’s influence on the social sciences and humanities is unquestionable, as I will draw out later in this section, it is important to extend her theorizing towards notions of epistemology and how that relates to her concept of *spacetime* and an agential ethics. Her 2003 article lays out the tools necessary to shift the way we conceive of being in the world, however, it stops at a point where her theorizing around the study of practices of knowing and being picks up speed. It is at this point where I am left wondering about the human’s place within an *onto-epistem-ology* (Barad, 2003, p. 829). This is perhaps where Barad’s notion of temporality, so briefly touched upon in this article is most needed to flesh out a posthuman epistemology that transforms the humanities through a processual historicity.

In her book *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Barad (2007) spends more time and space conceptualizing her concept of *spacetime*, which as we have learned from her 2003 article, is an enactment of differences, an intra-action, and a way of making and marking here and now. Situating the concept once again within an agential realist ontology, Barad re-applies spacetime to decenter humanist objectivity and its understanding of time as something that marches along and is external to phenomena. According to Barad (2007), an agential realist temporality reconfigures time as a succession of moments. This reading of time is relational when and where “becoming is not an unfolding in time but the inexhaustible dynamism of the enfolding of mattering” (p. 180). Time, in this framework, is produced out of the iterative dynamics of intra-action. Put differently, time is what happens in relational ontology. As something that happens
in intra-actions, time is an apparatus, and thus is capable of marking the differential patterns of mattering that constitutes its becoming. Time becomes, and thus has history. Barad (2007) explains, time “carries within itself the sedimented historialities of the practices through which it is produced as part of its ongoing becoming—it is engrained and enriched in its becoming” (p. 180).

An agential realist understanding of time is simultaneously tied to a reconfiguration of the concept of space, where space is not a pre-existing container for matter to inhabit, but rather, is an opening ‘for the agential reconfiguring of boundaries’ (p. 181). Like temporality, spatiality is intra-actively produced through “an ongoing process of the material (re)configuring of boundaries—an iterative (re)structuring of spatial relations” (p. 181). Spacetime is thus a changing topology where space, time and matter are mutually constituted. As a changing topology, it is an ongoing process of differential mattering that queers our assumptions of continuity. The past is never left behind (though it makes marks) and the future is not what will come to be based on a present moment, but rather, “the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter’s iterative becoming” (p. 181). Spacetime is unpredictable, we cannot know in advance where and when it happens. For this reason, spacetime is a matter of ethics, where and when we are called to respond and be responsible for “the world’s becoming and different reconfigurings of what may yet be possible” (p. 182).

1.1.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “A working Baradian lexicon”
The “new” current traversing the humanities and social sciences cannot be captured in the form of an overview or preliminary sketch—at least not one that we are accustomed to and are trained to write and read. To be in proximity to this current requires a different method of putting concepts in relation to one another, one that problematizes the hierarchy of “knowledge,” “the known,” and “the knower.” Traditionally, an overview generalizes and simplifies a subject of inquiry, packaging concepts into more consumable pedagogical encounters. At stake in such traditional overviews is a vital historicity and materiality that sustains a concept and moves it along. Put differently, to place a discursive turn in category systems that “represent” it simply reifies a hierarchy of knowledge production where researchers stand over the materiality of the subject of inquiry. The distancing mechanism of an overview puts the new of new materialism at risk. The new in the context of the current impulse to turn (material turn, ontological turn, empirical turn) is a generative force that both examines how matter comes to matter, and that materializes dynamic alternatives for knowledge production. Therefore, a different approach and mode of attention is required in order to take care of the generative potential of this discursive event. In this short interlude, I would like to return to the method of putting new materialist concepts to work in the hopes of (re)orienting the reader with the new current traversing the social sciences and humanities.

I entered into a working review of the current material, ontological and empirical turn byforegrounding Sedgwick’s (2003) prepositional method of reading beside, which allowed me to move the review against the chronological descriptors of beneath and beyond in order to allow an ecological approach to reviewing the discursive turns through a “wide range of desiring, identifying, representing, repelling, paralleling, differentiating, rivalling, leaning, twisting, mimicking, withdrawing, attracting, aggressing, warping, and other relations” (p. 8). Reading interdisciplinary impulses to turn beside one another necessarily disrupts a representational logic.
and hierarchical system of knowledge production, creating a method that can hold the capacity of this intellectual current. By placing three disciplinary perspectives of “turning towards the new” beside on another, the quality of the new in the different instances comes to matter. Considering the current impulse to turn as hopelessly paradoxical, as a self-reflexive move of thought bearing on itself, and as thinking affirmatively with the contradictions and complexities that make up our posthuman historical condition, the yearning for the new comes to matter.

Exploring the planar relations of the new current traversing the social sciences and humanities sets up a framework for a new materialist reading of new materialist concepts. In other words, the aim of setting up a planar field and tracing the intensities that make up the force of the new is to make space for an experimental review of Barad’s inventive lexicon that substantiates new materialist work. A planar method of reading and writing can perhaps re-attune us to the intensities of the new that breathe life into discursive practices. These intensities materialize through a web of relations that put concepts to work in unexpected ways. The connectability of new materialist concepts is what drives new modes of expression and thus should be considered as a central ethical imperative in new materialist work. Because the connectability between concepts is what is at stake in reviewing the generative intensity of the new traversing the social sciences and humanities, I would like to revisit and retrace the Baradian lexicon in the (necessarily) limiting space of this interlude. The aim of revisiting the section above is to offer the reader a summary of the untimely landscape that Barad’s concepts produce in their intra-actions. May this serve as an aide for past explorations and for the discursive events-to-come in the thesis.

Perhaps one of the more accessible entry points into a Baradian lexicon is through her critique of representationalism, a privileging of language that has and relentlessly continues to
be a dominate framework for determining our understanding of **ontology and epistemology**.

Under the umbrella of representationalism lies **social constructivist** and **traditional realist** beliefs which understand language and other forms of representation as mirroring pre-existing phenomena. Thus, our understanding of our relationship to the world is limited to habitual thinking that unquestionably grants representations too much power and agency in the construction of our ideas and conscious experiences. At stake in a representationalist logic is the ability to account for that which fails to come to life. The inability to account for other agencies in the process of knowledge production is beginning to cost us more than we can/ever could afford.

Taking inspiration from the early twentieth-century physicist Niels Bohr, Barad attends to and accounts for the ontological, epistemological and ethical gaps in representational logic through the framework of **agential realism**. Tied to the field of quantum physics, agential realism attends to the phenomenon of being in multiple states at the same time. By using this framework against representational logic, Barad moves into a radical analysis of the causal relationship between “knowledge,” “the knower, “and the known,” where she explores the ways in which knowledge/phenomena/object emerge out of their entanglements as opposed to thinking about them categorically and thus assuming that one category precedes the other. At the heart of an agential realist framework is the neologism **intra-action** used to challenge the classical causality of interactions. Intra-action, the emergence of knowledge-knower-known, cancels out a hierarchical understanding of knowledge production, understanding the components within each intra-action not as separate categories, but as **apparatuses** that enact specific **exclusionary boundaries**. An apparatus is therefore not a separate entity or instrument that exists before an action, and therefore does not have the presumed capacity to capture the phenomenon of that
action. The traditional categories of “knowledge,” “the knower,” and “the known” are radically reframed as:

- “particular physical arrangements that give meaning to certain concepts to the exclusion of others” (Barad, 2003, p. 819).
- “local physical conditions that enable and constrain knowledge practices” (p. 819).
- “productive of (and part of) the phenomenon produced” (p. 819).

Each apparatus enacts **agential cuts** that materialize the intra-action. Because each apparatus is unique in its arrangements and local physical conditions, its intra-action with other apparatuses creates exclusionary boundaries. The emergence of exclusionary boundaries is when and where meaning making emerges in relation to the apparatus making the cut. Because one apparatus cuts into another, what makes the cut agential is the apparatus’ ability to account for the particular intra-action. An agential cut is a temporary enactment of exploring what is included and what is excluded in knowledge production. It is temporary in that it lasts until the exploration gains knowledge about what the act of cutting is producing. Barad re-introduces **diffraction** as a method that accounts for agential cuts. Accounting for cuts is not about mapping where difference appears, but about mapping the effects of difference. A diffractive analysis accounts for the enactment of boundaries, the coming-together and coming-apart of multiple apparatuses.

Barad puts the concept of agential cuts to work in relation to the looming representational logic in discursive practices. Through her radical framework, she sharpens the theoretical tool of **performativity** for discursive practices, breathing new life into the search for alternatives to the “common sense” appeal of representationalism. Accounting for nonhuman agency that poststructuralist invocations of performativity fail to explore, Barad reveals an important discursive dimension overshadowed by the “given-ness” of the differential categories of
“human” and “nonhuman.” This dimension is where and when discursive materialization happens, it is the “howness” of discursive practices. This howness is crucial if we want to understand more deeply exactly how discursive practices produces material bodies, and to continue to spook representationalism from discursive practices. Barad’s agential cut generates a posthuman reformulation of performativity, offering a conceptual shift and thus a different starting point of inquiry into/out of our captivity within language. The conceptual shift that agential realism generates radically rethinks time and space. Spacetime is an agential reconfiguring of boundaries. In reformulating classical causality in favour of intra-action, the notion of time and space can no longer be understood as being at-a-distance, as giving volume in which an event occurs or as a parameter that advances on its own in a linear fashion. Time and space is reconsidered as an apparatus, as “local physical conditions that enable and constrain knowledge practices” (p. 819), and as such, are productive phenomena of the knowledge produced. Agential realism asks us to pay attention to our relationship to time and space, to account for the material effects of the past and future so that they can be reworked and reconfigured, entangling who we are with (im)possibilities.

While it is inevitable that the concepts that I am retracing follow one another in a sequence (I cannot detach the thesis from the chronological mechanism of reading and writing), it is important that I point out that agential realist concepts relate to one another in ways that do not require a particular logic where concepts build on each other towards a particular conclusion. Agential concepts are not cumulative, they are not made up of accumulated parts, nor are they successive additions to a particular framework. Similar to apparatuses, the concepts intra-act with one another in untimely ways. In other words, there is no particular sequence in which these concepts should be read. Each concept embeds another concept within it. What comes to matter and what is at stake is thus the concepts’ ability to become entangled with one another. Reading
Barad is thus a methodological practice that teaches the reader the importance of connectibility and accountability in the relational process of conceptualizing. It can therefore teach us to think against chronological time in ways that can re-organize the research process out of cumulative stages and timely categories, refocusing our attention towards what kinds of mattering we include and as a result exclude in our scholarly projects.

1.2 Putting a new materialist ontology to work: Quantum leaps and untimely feats

Reading and writing with Barad’s conceptualization, a specific philosophical taste materializes: a taste for concepts. Her concepts and frameworks are self-referential in that each of her concepts are made up of components that are inseparable from each other. *Intra-action, agential realism, diffraction, apparatus, exclusionary boundaries, agential cuts, constitutive exclusions, spacetime, processual historicity, onto-epistem-ology, sedimented historicities* are all concepts which have their inseparable components. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994), the inseparability of the components is what gives each concept its consistency, and it is the consistency of each concept that resonates with other concepts. Resonate in this context is nondiscursive, it is not about coherence and correspondence to a discursive whole, rather, it is about being held together only along divergent lines: concepts are movable bridges. Barad’s concepts are “centers of vibrations, each in itself and everyone in relation to all others” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 23), and their resonance speaks to the agential realist event that Barad is enacting. Her concepts “are dynamic (re)configurings of the world, specific agential practices/intr-actions/performances through which specific exclusionary boundaries are enacted” Barad, 2003, p. 816, original emphasis). Her concepts materialize the components in
their intra-activity, in their exclusionary practices. These specific exclusionary practices, these “local condition of *exteriority-within-phenomenon*” (p. 815), these resonances “through which ‘part’ of the world makes itself differentially intelligible to another ‘part’ of the world” (p. 817) does not take place in chronological time. These resonances, the “processual historicity of agential realism” (p. 818) make spacetime. Barad, both philosopher and the researcher, requires a practice of accountability in the materialization of spacetime. The ability to account for a concept’s resonance gives that concept a new event: “space, time, matter, thought, the possible as events” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 33).

So what then are the implications of making time for discursive practices? Considering time as a differential enactment, how is it implicated in the dynamics of material-discursive practices? How does an agential realist temporality contribute to the understanding of power relations, subjectivities and identities? Following Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s suggestion that we replace politics of location with a politics of possibility, Barad (2007) uses an alternative framework to shake loose the container model of space and the spatialization of time in order to

…open up a space of agency in which the dynamic intra-play of indeterminacy and determinacy reconfigures the possibilities and impossibilities of the world’s becoming such that indeterminacies, contingencies, and ambiguities coexist with causality” (p. 225).

In other words, Barad (2007) sets out to conceptually shift our normative understanding of time and space in order to provide a deeper analysis of discourses, an analysis which simultaneously provides a politics of possibility, an ethics that materializes forces that have for far too long been unaccounted for.
Once again, Barad uses a diffractive reading method in order to enact the conceptual shift by marking and making patterns of difference. In reading Leela Fernande’s work on the structural-discursive relations of power through an agential realist understanding of material-discursive relations (and vice versa), Barad (2007) focuses on the dynamics of Fernande’s analysis of the structural relations of the shop floor. To grasp an understanding of this dynamic, Barad (2007) contends that we must rethink “the nature of causality and the role of exclusions in creating the conditions of possibility for contesting and iteratively remaking apparatuses” (p. 230). Through agential realism, this rethinking entails reworking the very notions of agency, space, time and matter. These notions are all interconnected. For example, to rework a notion of time, we must analyze the intra-action between agency, space and matter. One way to understand it is to think about this analysis in terms of an algebraic expression. Time becomes the variable that is isolated by reworking the combination of space, agency and matter. In this understanding, time is not outside of relations, but rather, is about the possibilities for changing the configurations of the relations between space, agency and matter. Barad (2007) does this with the notion of agency, rethinking it as a subjective intentionality by analyzing the ways in which agency is a possibility for changing the configurations of spacetimematter relations. In creating a variable, in isolating one apparatus from its intra-action, the configuration performs a quantum leap, “a tiny disjuncture in the underlying continuum” where and when “causality becomes another matter entirely” (p. 233). This quantum leap, also referred to as a quantum discontinuity, “reworks the entire set of possibilities made available” (p. 234). Existing in neither time nor space, this tiny disjuncture, this cut,

…torques the very nature of the relation between continuity and discontinuity to such a degree that the nature of change changes from a rolling unraveling stasis into a dynamism that operates at an entirely different level of ‘existence,’ where ‘existence’ is not simply a
manifold of being that evolves in space and time, but an iterative becoming of spacetime mattering (Barad, 2007, p. 234).

This quantum understanding of causality it intimately entangled with questions around the nature of difference, the force of relations, and thus consequently, questions of justice. What is needed then is a genealogical analysis of quantum leaps, of the changing nature of dynamics of and between apparatuses, an analysis that can open up a much needed “ethics of responsibility and accountability not only for what we know, how we know, and what we do but, in part, for what exists” (p. 243). Such a reconceptualization makes it possible to take the empirical world seriously again in the conceptualization of theories and frameworks, “but this time with the understanding that the objective referent is phenomena, not the seeming ‘immediate giveness’ of the world” (p. 244). Such a genealogical analysis marks and makes time, and thus has a topological concern for patterns of difference that generate questions of boundary, connectivity, interiority and exteriority.

Barad subsequently elaborates on an agential realist conceptualization of time and the ethical implications that are tied to such a radical spacetime epistemology in her 2010 article “Quantum Entanglements and Hauntological Relations of Inheritance: Dis/continuities, Spacetime Enfoldings, and Justice-To-Come,” and her 2012 article “On touching—The Inhuman that Therefore I Am.” In both publications, Barad experiments with her writing in order to create a disorienting and disjointed experience for the reader, an experience that simultaneously disrupts conventional historical narratives and creates a diffractive scene “akin to how electrons experience the world” (Barad, 2010, p. 244), where and when theory lives and breathes. Her thought experiments and theorizing diffract various temporalities, “making here and there from
leaps, shifting familiarly patterned practices, testing the waters of what might yet be/have been/could still have been” (Barad, 2012, p. 208). The reader, Barad (2010) explains should feel free to jump from any scene to another and still have a sense of connectivity through the traces of variously entangled threads and of he (re)workings of mutual constitution and unending iterative reconfigurings (of sections, reader, writer, ideas,…) (p. 245).

In other words, in creating dis/joined scenes in her text, in cutting theories together-apart, Barad hopes to enact a felt sense of intra-activity where space and time are marked through the ruptures of continuity. These ruptures do not have a given place or time, but rather, they help “constitute the here’s and now’s, and not once and for all” (Barad, 2010, p. 247). This quantum understanding of temporality, this rupture of time that has no time but instead makes time, is a matter of indeterminacy in the nature of being/becoming. According to Barad, indeterminacy matters, it is encountered in the flesh, as quantum entanglements that are “irreducible relation of responsibility” (p. 265) where “there is no fixed dividing line between ‘self’ and ‘other’, ‘past’ and ‘present’ and ‘future’, ‘here’ and ‘now’, ‘cause’ and ‘effect’” (p. 265). Quantum entanglements are relations of responsibility because they are a matter of engaging and at the same time holding together difference. Responsibility in this quantum context is not an obligation that one chooses, but rather, “an incarnate relation that precedes the intentionality of consciousness” (p. 265). Responsibility here is reconfigured as an event that enables responsiveness.

Responding to indeterminacy, to the destabilizing and dizzying effects of the differentiating nature of existence, is a kind of thought experiment in being and time where we encounter the infinite alterity of the self. Responding to indeterminacy entails “touching the
strangers within” (Barad, 2012, p. 214). Touch here is reconfigured, once again, through quantum field theory, allowing a more radical understanding of relationality than the frameworks offered by classical phenomenology. Quantum field theory does not separate particles, fields, and the void, but rather, understands these elements as always in relation; constitutively entangled together. What is radical about this understanding of relations is that the void is made up of virtual particles that do not traffic in a metaphysics of presence (they do not exist in time and space), but rather, “they are ghostly non/existences that teeter on the edge of the infinitely fine blade between being and nonbeing” (p. 210).

Touch becomes radically queered through this framework and opens up the possibility of “touch touching itself” (Barad, 2012, p. 212), calling into question “the very nature of the ‘self,’ and in terms of not just being but also time” (p. 213). The self is continuously diffracted, continuously touches touch. The risk of self-touching, Barad explains, is that its incalculability gets “renormalized.” Mathematically speaking, renormalization is the idea that infinities cancel one another out. Conceptually, self-touching as the encounter with indeterminacy is a theorist’s playground, where theorizing is a game of massive overlaying that is always at risk of losing its bearings. Touching as ontological indeterminacy becomes less about proximity and more a matter of temporality. As an infinite openness of possibility, indeterminacy and the event of touching touch serves as “the condition for the possibility of all structures in their dynamically reconfiguring in/stabilities” (p. 214). Touching intra-actively is a matter of response where time as we know it is unmoored, and when our response can create a moment of force that pivots the relation between continuity and discontinuity “to such a degree that that nature of change changes with each intra-action” (Barad, 2010, p. 248). Quantum touching operates on a different level of existence as we know it; it comes to be and is immediately reconfigured. Quantum touching makes time and being leap.
Quantum touch and quantum entanglements offer a radical ethics for the humanities and social sciences to consider: what would it mean to understand the past as always already open to change, as an event where we reconfigure its materiality into the flesh of the world? Barad’s radical relationality asks us about our responsiveness and obligation to the indeterminacies that we encounter when reconfiguring theories, data and the materiality of our re/search. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Barad’s agential ontology offers a methodology that engages the materiality of the past and reconfigures research as a differentiating act, as an event that is not about separating research activities into categories, “but on the contrary, about making connections and commitments” (Barad, 2010, p. 266). In reconfiguring philosophies of relations, Barad calls us to a new sensibility that opens up the possibility to live within the liminality of indeterminacy where difference comes to matter. This new sensibility that arises in touching indeterminacy, that arises between continuity and discontinuity where we touch the conditions of im/possibility, is where an ethics committed to the rupture of indifference can arise. The concluding paragraphs to this section will map out the perpetual curl of Barad’s theory of relationality, materializing coordinates where-when her theorizing meets others’ and where-when they are reconfigured, dispersed and threaded through one another.

Following Haraway (1997), diffraction is an optical metaphor for rethinking relationality and difference, which offers a more critical method for analysis that would in turn “require methods for systematically examining all of the social values shaping a particular research process” (p. 36). Unlike reflexivity, diffraction is a different kind of labour, which could “reconstitute the relationships we call gender, race, nation, species, and class in unpredictable ways” (p. 36). Diffraction as a critical research method is about making and accounting for difference, which means that we must be “in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean” (p. 36). It’s about “crafting subject positions and ways of inhabiting such positions” (p.
36), and perhaps more ethically and importantly, it is about making these new positions and ways of being visible and open to further critical interventions and diffractions. Put differently, Haraway calls for a critical awareness when situated in a field of study, an awareness that troubles normative relational practices and thus the process of categorizing and conceptualizing the experience of a research event. Key to this practice is a critical understanding of location, place and being a witness. To place oneself within a relational field is to locate the objects and subjects of knowledge-making. Location in the context of a diffractive practice is not transparent nor is it self-evident. Location “is the always partial, always finite, always fraught play of foreground and background, text and context, that constitutes critical inquiry” (Haraway, 1997, p. 37). To be what Haraway (1997) calls a modest witness, one must produce self-visibility that attests and stands “publicly accountable for, and physically vulnerable to, one’s visions and representations” (p. 267). To witness in this way queers “the self-evidence of witnessing, of experience, of the conventionally upheld and invested perceptions of clear distinctions between subject and object…living and dead, machine and organisms, human and nonhuman, self and other…” (p. 267). Becoming a modest witness, much like Barad’s agential realism, is about crafting patterns of difference in our partial and situated positions. The point of locating our partial positions is to recognize and therefore to make possible situated knowledges “in order to be able to make consequential claims about the world and on each other” (p. 267).

Locating self-visibility is an epistemological intervention that problematizes discursive practices and storytelling in order to narrate critical genealogies and new ways forward. The virtual community of feminist science studies does this in order to challenge humanist and colonizing notions of subjectivity that are produced through disciplinary research and teaching. Harding (2006), like Barad and Haraway, stimulates discussion of how better to harness modern Western sciences and the systematic empirical knowledge and frameworks that it produces for
social justice projects and democratic transformations. Science in this context is a term that is used to mean “any systematic empirical study of ourselves and the world around us” (Harding, 2006, p. 10).

Again, similar to Barad’s and Haraway’s methodology, Harding harnesses knowledge systems through an exploration of how those systems relate to the economic, political, social and cultural projects in our societies. Similar to Barad’s diffractive reading, Harding (2006) juxtaposes literatures that are usually kept apart in order to provide more resources to imagine how knowledge systems can be different than they are. In her volume *Science and Social Inequality: Feminist and Postcolonial Issues*, Harding (2006) returns to and reworks her feminist and postcolonialist inquiries and critiques of Western sciences. Arguably, the most valuable example of a diffractive analysis in this collection can be found in chapter five, “Discriminatory Epistemologies and Philosophies of Science”, where Harding (2006) returns to feminist standpoint theory in light of its more recent applications in order to locate her position along the continuum of feminist science studies. Here, she reminds us of her commitment to standpoint theory through her significant contribution of the term *strong objectivity* that she developed in her 1991 publication *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge: Thinking from Women’s Lives*. Extending feminist standpoint epistemologies, strong objectivity recognizes the social situatedness of all knowledges, but also requires “a critical evaluation to determine which social situations tend to generate the most objective knowledge claims” (Harding, 1991, p. 142). Put differently, strong objectivity requires a radical reflexivity that “conceptualizes the value of putting the subject or agent of knowledge in the same critical, causal plane as the object of her or his inquiry” (p. 161). Strong objectivity, or strong reflexivity, is possible only from the perspectives of those whose lives have been marginalized by the agent of knowledge and scientific community. Strong objectivity thus transforms the conventional and value-neutral
notion of objectivity through the logic of standpoint epistemologies, making its political and intellectual histories visible while recharting more ethical and emancipatory research agendas that “think about the gap that should exist between how any individual or group wants the world to be and how in fact it is…that locate the assumed difference between subject and object of knowledge in social history” (Harding, 1991, p. 72, 73).

Strong objectivity (Harding, 1991, 2006), modest witness (Haraway, 1997), and agential realism (Barad, 2003) are concepts developed out of critical engagements with masculinist discourse of science and its definition of truth and method. Also, they are concepts used to theorize difference that always already requires the researcher as the agent of knowledge production to account for, respond to, and develop out of his or her partial being in relation to the object and phenomenon of their study. While these concepts are born out of a community of feminist science studies dedicated to epistemological interventions and discursive (re)formations, it is important to chart the patterns of difference that are formed through their intra-actions, as it is in this discursive space where the concepts come to matter. It is through a diffractive reading of these feminist standpoint theories that a potential feminist practice of difference in difference can crystallize, allowing us to better situate ourselves within and respond to the current landslide that is eventing in the social sciences and humanities. As I will argue in the last section, it is through such a diffractive method of reading and analysis that we can touch upon the temporality of theory and subjectivity. But first, I will craft the quantum coordinates of the aforementioned feminist science studies scholars, charting an affected cartography that will serve as a framework for grappling with the ontological turn in the social sciences and humanities, as well as a ground from which to leap towards an untimely methodology.
Let us consider the following three passages taken from each of the feminist science scholars who were discussed up to this point, in order to begin to scratch the surface of what a diffractive reading could produce. It is important to keep in mind that this particular macro approach to a diffractive reading is a distancing act that cannot do justice to the intricacy of both the surface and the depth of the methodology. Furthermore, while most diffractive readings are done with two texts and take generational leaps, using three passages from a community of scholars who share a relatively contemporaneous school of thought can perhaps better detail the effects of difference while simultaneously capturing a snapshot of the method’s spontaneity and transgression of representationalism:

…On an agential realist account of technoscientific practices, the “knower” does not stand in relation of absolute externality to the natural world being investigated—there is no such exterior observational point. It is therefore not absolute exteriority that is the condition of possibility for objectivity but rather agential separability—exteriority within phenomena (Barad, 2003, p. 828).

…My modest witness cannot ever be simply oppositional. Rather, s/he is suspicious, implicated, knowing, ignorant, worried, and hopeful. Inside the net of stories, agencies, and instruments that constitute technoscience, s/he is committed to learning how to avoid both the narratives and the realities of the Net that threaten her world at the end of the Second Christian Millenium. S/he is seeking to learn and practice the mixed literacies and differential consciousness that are more faithful to the way the world, including the world of technoscience, actually works (Haraway, 1997, p. 2).
...the socially situated grounds and subjects of standpoint epistemologies require and generate stronger standards for objectivity than do those that turn away from providing systematic methods for locating knowledge in history. The problem with the conventional conception of objectivity is not that it is too rigorous or too “objectifying,” as some have argued, but that it is *not rigorous or objectifying enough*; it is too weak to accomplish even the goals for which it has been designed, let alone the more difficult projects called for by feminisms and other new social movements (Harding, 1991, p. 50-51).

Agential realism, modest witness and strong objectivity are concepts that chart out inventive ways to reconceptualize the discursive practices that ultimately limit research methods and methodologies. As I fleshed out prior to the passages above, each concept is materialized through radically reflexive engagements with heterogenous accounts of knowledge production. At the heart of these engagements and interventions is a call for a radical ethics of accountability for agents of knowledge production, which the three passages above voice. Accountability, responsibility and objectivity are repurposed to both accommodate and to further push our entangled relationships with our environments, environments made up of the exponential transformations lived in daily life. With this in mind, the starting point for a diffractive analysis of the three passages begins by taking accountability for the cuts that are produced in selecting the passages because these cuts constitute the entanglements that are effected. Echoing Barad, accountability is not aligned with intentionality or subjectivity, but rather, about making cuts *matter*, about accounting for the “boundary articulations and exclusions that are marked by those practices in the enactment of a causal structure” (Barad, 2003, p. 827). In other words, in
selecting the passages for a diffractive analysis, I am accountable for the boundaries that are materializing out of the relationship between what is being included and what is being excluded. Intentionality and subjectivity is not part of the analysis of the selection of passages, but rather, mark making is. This notion of accountability destabilizes the subject position of the human agent, enabling an analysis of difference differing in the material. A prior notion of the human is not assumed. This does not mean that the relationship between the subject (me) and the object (the text) is erased or blurred or distorted. Rather, the starting point of analysis is to take up the materializing effects of boundary-making practices that differentially constitute the “human” and the “non human.”

So how do these passages communicate to one another? What kind of causality is effected here? How do we account for an exchange that has neither sender nor recipient until the coming together has already occurred? How do we frame these passages in a way that allows for the texts to respond to each other? Troubling the notion of starting “from the beginning,” I take the first cut by reading Harding’s concept of strong objectivity with Barad’s concept of agential realism as outlined by first and last passages above. In Barad’s passage, objectivity is not attained through an exterior observational point because for Barad there is no such thing as an exterior observational point. Objectivity is not something out there to configure. The “observer” is not outside nor inside the world, but rather, is being reconfigured with the world it seeks to know. Thus, objectivity is an event, a condition of possibility that is causal, that expresses itself through what Barad calls agential separability, through the making and marking of cuts. Objectivity, as a condition of possibility, depends on accountability for its tangibility. Harding (1991) on the other hand calls for a “stronger” objectivity, an objectivity that provides “a systemic method for locating knowledge in history” (p.50). Similar to Barad’s notion of objectivity as a condition of possibility co-constituted by accountability, Harding’s concept of
strong objectivity is related to a similar ontology (standpoint epistemology). However, unlike Barad’s intra-active understanding of objectivity, Harding understands strong objectivity as a priori and/or a posteriori to the event of being entangled with the world we are observing: it is “required” for and also “generated” from “the socially situated grounds and subjects of standpoint epistemologies” (Harding, 1991, p. 51). Where Barad and Harding differ in their reconfigurations of objectivity through feminist standpoint theory is in their approach to destabilizing epistemological privilege. Harding argues that if agents of knowledge production start their research with strong objectivity, in the case of Harding’s research that would be starting with the “reality” of women’s lives (more specifically the lives of women who are also oppressed by race and class), that that would lead to more objective accounts of social reality. Barad on the other hand understands objectivity as a socially constructed discursive formation that needs to consider accountability (the making and marking of cuts) in order for it to be “strong.” Reading the two accounts together, we can begin to mark the moment when the two conceptualizations part ways, a moment that also accounts for a place where they need each other, where and when they account for one another. Bringing in Haraway’s modest witness is one way we can *intravene* and detail an encounter with Barad’s and Harding’s interference patterns.

Following the selected passage above, Haraway (1997) explains the subjectivity of the modest witness entangled in the net of technoscience (another way of saying the material-semiotic world, a time-space modality that disrupts a historical narrative) is not simply oppositional. The modest witness is not about resistance or a methodic intervention, but rather, is about learning and responding to the rapidly changing conditions of technoscience. It is a subjectivity that learns and practices a “differential consciousness,” a term that she borrows from Sandoval.
According to Sandoval (1991), differential consciousness is a new subjectivity that developed out of third wave feminism as a strategic method of identity politics among nonwhite women who are multiply oppressed. Under the conditions of multiple oppression, nonwhite women had to learn to highlight as well as obscure different aspects of themselves in order to respond to and work effectively in different configurations of power. This flexibility to self-consciously transform one’s identity and thus break and reform ties to ideology, to move with the changing conditions of oppression and power structures, has generated a “common speech and theoretical structure” (Sandoval, 1991, p. 1) that can be applied to the majority of citizens caught in the net of late capitalist conditions. A modest witness learns and practices this differential consciousness, and it is this subjectivity and oppositional activity that builds the conditions of objectivity. Reading it together-apart with-from Barad and Harding, we can begin to form a pattern of difference that their coming together and coming apart create. Certainly, the three scholars have been in conversation with one another before we met. In accounting for the location of this particular cut, a diffractive reading encourages collaborative lines to open up discursive possibilities that are not bound by representational analysis. Put differently, in reading the passages for places of differences, the texts open up to one another, opening up possibilities for the texts to refer beyond themselves and thus materializing concepts anew.

Reading these particular passages diffractively, what crystallizes is a moment of interruption that offers a reinvention of the term objectivity, a reinvention made up of multiple intra-actions. Objectivity is read as differing, as coming into difference through difference. Objectivity becomes more than a representational concept that gets plugged into repetitive mechanisms of say citational practices, it becomes a concept that is made up of the marks of difference and that generates new patterns out of the local cuts. Put differently, a diffractive reading of the three passages entangles the concept of objectivity. Objectivity as an entangled
conceptual intervention makes the passages take quantum leaps, and as a result temporalizes the phenomenon of the cut. The concept intra-acts with the method of reading, attuning us to the ways in which the relating components of the concept makes leaps. Considering the passages as apparatuses, as “particular physical arrangements that give meaning to certain concepts to the exclusion of others” (Barad, 2003, p. 819), their intra-actions and differential articulations (the marking of one passage by another) enact local causal structures, in this case, the conceptual entanglement of objectivity. The reinvention of objectivity as a local causal structure not only materializes the temporal patterns in each passage, but further, it is implicated and reconfigured through the temporal patterns that it seeks to materialize. In other words, in reading the passages through one another, the physical arrangements of the concept of objectivity in each passage are practiced and thus felted out in such a way that it informs the arrangements of the other passages. The arrangements - how the concept is conceptualized and made locatable - are bound by a temporality, a dynamics that renders the concept capable of being iterated. For example, reading Barad’s passage with Harding’s, temporal patterns begin to make marks through the difference in the way objectivity is conceptualized. Not only can a difference be located in the when-ness of objectivity (for Barad it’s an event of accountability; for Harding it’s a priori and a posteriori), the difference differs and creates an experimental referent that rethinks objectivity and dynamics. This disjuncture reworks the set of possibilities that is made available when reading the passages alone and as one. The concept becomes a condition of possibility inherited from the cut, locating and opening up a radical experimentation that repeats the concept in such a way that returns the past (for the first time) to a call from elsewhere, enacting new patterns of engagement where “time is out of joint, off its hinges, spooked” (Barad, 2010, p. 243).

We spent the last few paragraphs reading three passages diffractively which began with acknowledging the first cut, which was reading Harding’s strong objectivity with Barad’s
agential realism. Disrupting the notion of “the beginning” of analysis, I enter into a different relationship with the material, one that is about an accountability that does not epistemologically or ontologically privilege the text over the subject and vice versa. I enter in a relationship of accountability, a relationship that accounts for the boundaries that differentially constitute subjectivity (the human) and the object (the text, non-human). A diffractive analysis (which at the same time is method) begins with taking up the materializing effects of boundary-making practices, it begins with locating the boundaries between the passages, which as we move deeper, materializes an entanglement made up of subjectivity and the object. In bringing together-apart the three passages, the reading does not privilege one passage/concept over the other, rather, it experiments through interruptions, accounts for the patterns of difference and thus reconfigures both the texts and the subjects. With this particular reading, the concept of objectivity becomes a conceptual entanglement constituted by articulations of difference. This conceptual entanglement becomes an experimental referent with its own physical arrangements that crystallize the diffraction while at the same time generate further readings from an elsewhere. A diffractive reading generates conceptual entanglements that make marks and produce temporality and spatiality, possibilities that are constrained but not determined by the boundaries of the newly generated concept: the possibilities are inherent in the topology of the concept’s intra-activity and are enacted through an ethical obligation to marking its becoming.

There is a dynamism implicated here which Barad (2007) likens to “marking the sedimenting historiality” of tree rings (p. 180). The metaphor of tree rings is useful in evoking (not representing) the temporality of matter and that time has a history, that it is marked by matter being re(con)figured. Perhaps more evocative is Barad’s explanation of the limits of this metaphor, because in locating the limits she is able to materialize a conceptual shift with which we can think with. She explains the first limitation to be in its inability to capture sedimentation
as an enfolding process. The sedimentation that makes up a tree ring is not simply time leaving its mark (past) and moving on (future):

…the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter’s iterative becoming” (Barad, 2007, p. 181).

In other words, sedimentation has to be rethought in terms of temporality where the past is not something “there” to begin with and the future is not simply what will unfold (time is not an external parameter): the past and the future are all one phenomenon (time is an integral aspect of phenomena)! Another important limitation of this metaphor, explains Barad, is that it propagates “the persistent assumption that change is a continuous process through or in time” (p. 182), and thus misrecognizes the role of disruption as something more than the opposite of continuity or as being continuous. In other words, the metaphor is limited in its normative understanding of continuity and thus fails to imagine and experiment with disruption as being indeterminate and without a knowable trajectory. The concentric rings of a tree can do more than simply represent the growth of a tree over time. In considering the limits of this map, what is excluded in order to be included, we can begin to imagine the rings as evoking quantum coordinates that mark a temporal entanglement where sedimentation becomes out of its time. Trees do not simply mark time, they make time. What could that do to the ways we measure, study and chart time? Or perhaps more provocatively, what kind of time could such diffractive readings make?
1.2.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “Quantum leaps and untimely feats”

Barad’s agential realist reworking of classical ontology reopens and refuges foundational notions of causality, origin, relationality and change. According to Barad, causal understandings of time and space have kept us from opening up to unpredictable and indeterminate materializations, and thus from the ability to account for the growing uncertainties and inhumanities that are increasingly characterizing our era. Put differently, we can no longer afford to take for granted the given-ness of time and space that has dominated our unquestionable understanding of the world and that has relinquished us from the responsibility to account for our exclusionary practices. Accounting for our exclusionary practices begins with a reorientation towards a (“given”) starting point of analysis. A given or unquestioned starting point of analysis presumes that the relationship between “the knower,” “the known,” and “knowing” is given and equivalent, and thus starts an analysis after these boundaries are in place. Beginning analysis from this presumed position always already (no matter how political we are in our intentions) devalues one side of the equation at the expense of the other, perpetuating our forgetfulness, negligence and disavowal of relational ethics. In order to learn to respond to the forces and movements that are becoming impossible to ignore, we must begin our knowledge project differently and with difference. Such a reorientation involves directly taking up the matter that produces distinctions between taken for granted categories. Put differently, what is needed is a starting point of analysis that begins with accountability.

Accountability, in the context of reorienting the given-ness and taken for granted starting points of analysis, is not aligned with intentionality or subjectivity, but rather, has to do with the ability to respond to and take account of the ways in which our discursive practices constitute
exclusions. Being accountable for our constitutive exclusions means being attuned to the matterings that are excluded. Starting analysis with accountability means starting with a framework that understands knowledge production as an inevitable exclusion of other kinds of mattering. Starting with accountability sets up an ethical obligation for the act of analysis. Ethics is not something that analysis builds towards, and most often ends up in the concluding remarks, designating ethics towards a summary of research implications, significance and/or outcomes. Starting with accountability means starting with an ethical obligation towards the course of the analysis. It means being attuned to our entanglement with the event of analysis, setting up a relationship to research that is at once epistemological, ontological and ethical. Barad calls this practice of accountability an ethico-onto-epistem-ology, a practice that explores the ethical consequences of knowing in being. Knowing in being is a process of becoming accountable for what is excluded in our constituting practices. It is a deeply ethical matter because it is tied to the possibilities of what the world may become. Beginning with accountability moves us towards ethico-onto-epistem-ological practices where our entanglements produce space and time.

**Spacetimemattering**, the making of space and time, leaps out of chronological time where and when we get ahead of ourselves, as it were. Practicing accountability necessarily entangles epistemology, ontology and ethics, re-positioning our human agency in the processes of knowing and being. Spacetimemattering is the event of making tangible the leap that throws us off our humanist circuit of meaning making. This event cannot be predicted and there is no one apparatus through which the event can be read. This event leaps differently with every intra-action. Faced with this uncertainty of landing on a different level of existence, we begin once again the practice of accounting for what we know, how we know and what we do on this new level of existence. Responding to indeterminacy, spacetimemattering, is likened to the sensation of touch touching itself where we “teeter on the edge of the infinitely fine blade between being
and non-being” (Barad, 2012, p. 210). Teetering, responding, accounting and spacetimemattering call into question the very nature of the “self.” At stake in this event of self-touching is the return to the same. Faced with the unbearable incalculability of being out of time risks “renormalization” where infinites cancel each other out. Our untimely task within an ethico-onto-epistem-ology practice is to make these untimely feats resonate with other concepts, some of which are still to come. The ethico-onto-epistemological event of spacetimemattering is therefore a risky but creative act of building moveable bridges, or what Deleuze and Guattari call “centers of vibrations” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994, p. 23) that provide connections and opportunities for that which is excluded from the mattering to respond.

Starting with accountability does not mean that it dwindles away, looses its framework, or becomes less important as the analysis moves towards “an end.” Starting with accountability begins again with every cut we make in our methodological explorations. Barad does this by using the method of diffraction, by reading what appear to be separate entities or separate matters of concern (reading the “social” and “scientific”) through one another. Reading the insights of feminist and queer theory and science approaches through one another begins the analysis with the intention of accounting for the patterns of difference that are enacted throughout the process of reading and marking. For the most part, a diffractive reading/analysis flows through the text chronologically and generally follows a conventional mode of academic writing. In later experimentations with academic writing, Barad starts with accountability by reconfiguring the linear narration of rhetorical forms of theorizing in favour of dis/continuity, dis/orientation and dis/jointedness, performing the text in ways “more akin to how electrons experience the world” (Barad. 2010, p. 244). Divided into different scenes, with different spatial scales and various temporalities, Barad creates an intra-active experience for the reader through form. The reader, Barad (2010) explains
should feel free to jump from any scene to another and still have a sense of connectivity through the traces of variously entangled threads and of the (re)workings of mutual constitution and unending iterative reconfigurings (of sections, reader, writer, ideas,…) (p. 245).

In this particular experimentation, accountability is performed in order to create an aesthetic representation of spacetimemattering for the reader. Offering scale shifts throughout the text, Barad creates an experience of the various ways in which matter comes to matter, and in doing so, changes what the textual apparatus can produce.

Inspired by the current intensities traversing the social sciences and humanities while also being concerned with the return of the same that the new inevitably falls back into, I attempt an untimely revision of the concepts that make up, connect and trace the impulse to (re)turn towards matter. Entangling Barad’s diffractive reading method with her experimental performance of spacetimemattering, I entered into a reading/revision/analysis of three different accounts of the relationship between objectivity and reflexivity by three different feminist science studies scholars. What makes this diffractive reading unusual is the proximity of their relations in terms of a temporal and spatial scale. A diffractive reading is a method of reading what appears to be separate entities or separate matters of concern (ex. reading the “social” and “scientific”) through one another. The three passages that I have selected to practice accountability and spacetimemattering do not appear as separate entities, but rather, as entities that share similar discourses, matters of concern and generational thinking. Playing with scale (this time with proximity as opposed to dis/jointedness), the three passages intra-act in ways that put to work the subject of their inquiry (the relationship between reflexivity and objectivity) in untimely ways. Reading the passages beside one another demands an analysis that is untimely, and analysis that
moves out of normative and normalizing understandings of chronological time towards an ethico-onto-epistem-ology practice of making time. Reviewing in this way moves our thinking towards the uncertainties and indeterminacies that force us to face and make meaning out of what has, for far too long, been excluded from mattering.

1.3 Performing out of time: Conceptual Persona and an untimely methodology

Diffraction as a method of reading texts for the effects of difference is increasingly being taken up in the social sciences and humanities as a much needed entry point into the complex and emergent research practices that respond to the sudden urge to rethink our ontological relationship to matter. The texts and concepts that are read together in this way tend to have obvious (qualitative) differences between their chronological time or cultural specificity. For example, reading C.P. Snow’s transcript of his 1959 lecture with Whitehead’s 1920 publication (van der Tuin, 2014b), Bergson’s 1934 text with Barad’s 2007 text (van der Tuin, 2011), Deleuze and Guattari with Barad (Mazzei, 2014), Bechdel’s 2012 memoir Are You My Mother with Virginia Wolf’s 1927 novel To the Lighthouse (Belia, 2015), Stacy Alaimo’s 2010 theorisation of the transcorporeal with Deleuze and Guattari’s 1987 theorisation of becoming minor (Taguchi, 2012). These examples demonstrate that before the diffractive reading, particular texts were selected, and the distance between the two locations tend to greatly differ from one another—from the very beginning. Why is this deep space so appealing for these readings?

One explanation for this could be the gravitational pull of the conventional humanist orbit is not that easy to shake off. While there is an attempt to leap out of the linear causality of
reading and disrupt normative understandings of origin and destination, there is a persistent reliance on the mechanisms of deep time to support leaping. Another explanation could be the impulse to use diffraction as a device for bridging generational cracks and mending the deteriorating foundations of a particular discipline. van der Tuin (2009) assigns these leaps to what she terms jumping generations, a new materialist methodology that offers a generative way for third generation feminists to read second generation feminists. More recently, van der Tuin (2014a) explains this methodology in terms of generational feminism as a way “to bring to the fore the aliveness and liveliness of second-wave feminism and today’s feminisms’ conversations with the feminist past as virtual past (Bergson)” (n.p.). Her ethical imperative to affirmatively bridge generations of feminist epistemology can be understood as a response to the challenge of the speed of the contemporary university, a speed that “leads to sometimes-judgemental forms of feminist theorizing” (n.p.). In many ways, a feminist diffractive reading responds out of and responds to a particular historicity, and in the case of generational feminism, it is responsive to a particular European humanist tradition, with its own particular measurement of time. The deep time of generational leaps urges the question of resonance. Does the bridging of generations resonate? How are past feminisms responding to second and third generation feminists?

This tendency of deep time is curious, urging questions around a diffractive methodology: Do we rely on deep time and space to read diffractively? Can generational leaps happen in contemporaneous relations? How does time measure in the productivity of diffraction? How do these measurements create particular stylistic features and attitudes? Can a diffractive reading be done on a more intimate scale of relations? Experimenting with these questions with a diffractive reading of three contemporaneous feminist scientists suggests that the institutional mechanism of time is a resonating component of the concept of diffraction, and perhaps even our understanding of quantum leaps. Diffractively reading the three passages on an intimate level
allows for an experimentation of time: it puts time to work. In no way does this mean that a
diffractive reading is more successful or more generative on a more intimate scale. It does
however slow down and lengthen quantum leaps, allowing a workability of time to materialize.
Such workability can perhaps offer more nuanced, more untimely methods for a diffractive
methodology, methods that can put to work the pedagogical task of analyzing concepts, texts,
and other apparatuses through their conditions of creation, conditions which are made up of

To perform out of time, to put concepts to work in an untimely way acknowledges that
the mechanism of time is an intra-active component to the inventive methods being produced out
of the ontological turn. Time is not something that can be resisted, it is something that constitutes
our ability to become exterior-within-phenomenon. An untimely methodology thus befriends
time, it becomes intrinsic to its thinking, it becomes its condition of possibility, its
transcendental lived reality. What then happens to time when it becomes a condition for the
exercise of the untimely? Surely, like in any living relationship, their workability is
unpredictable, they work blow by blow, modulating their living material with every affective
charge.
I’ll Meet you on the Precipice: Joyful discontinuity and untimely publics

“…I am on a narrow path—without a guard-rail—which goes along a precipice. The precipice presents itself to me as to be avoided; it represents a danger of death” (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 121).

“Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing, there is a field. I’ll meet you there. When the soul lies down in that grass, the world is too full to talk about. Ideas, language, even the phrase ‘each other’ doesn’t make sense” (Rumi)

As the impulse to turn continues to traverse the social sciences and humanities, the need to experiment with critical self-reflection is pivotal for building an ethics of inquiry for the post-humanities to come. There are no set methods available for such a practice, as self-reflection in the context of the posts involves a new vision of subjectivity, one that is emergent, entangled, and intensive. So where can we locate a methodological starting point for such an untimely inquiry? Following Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994), if thinking is a component of the concept that has the ability to enter modes of relation, and that the entering into such relations is at the same time a marking and synchronizing of qualitative shifts, shifts that make up the event of relating, then the critical theorist has a major role to play. Perhaps her biggest role becomes accounting for an enabling cut—starting a beginning, so to speak. As a way to answer this call for accountability, I present
this chapter as the first of three exemplars that will perform an untimely methodology. It’s firstness is made up of early experimentations with autoethnography, a reworking of those experimentations and a theorizing of untimely implications of those reworkings. Cutting into a particular tradition of critical qualitative inquiry that takes up personal reflections for the purpose of critically understanding cultural experiences, I will work through what it means to start with the self in the post of qualitative inquiry in order to perform out of the logo-centric gravitational force of remembering. In putting affect and memory to work, I will theorize a method of remembering for the posthumanities.

Considering the growing scrutiny of the status of theory and the persisting questions around whether or not theory is capable of providing adequate representations of our situated historical location, the task of critical theorists working in the social sciences and humanities becomes an untimely one, which requires radical reconceptualizations of historicity and its traditional emphasis on linear progress and the repetition or modulation of past events. This chapter works towards a theorizing of posthuman memory, where untimely publics and affirmative alternatives for subjectivity are at stake.

2.1 Turning the autoethnographic voice: Currere, public pedagogy and existential vertigo

As a critical approach to research and writing, autoethnography has its own historicity and trajectory that is worth exploring in relation to the current impulse to turn in the social sciences and humanities. Inspired by the postmodern turn in anthropology and the crisis of representation that it presented ethnographers with, there developed an increasing urgency to address social science’s ontological and epistemological
limitations. These limitations were now being recognized within discursive practices and were understood as a key cause of perpetuating unethical and socially unjust representations of their subject/object of inquiry. As a double move to respond to these limitations and to generate alternative methods for doing research, ethnographers turned to more creative methods that represented both the research process as well as the product of that process. Considering that the crisis of representation involved a turn away from visualism (Clifford, 1986), from the truth of vision in Western cultures, social scientists moved away from master narratives in favor of ethnographic allegory. Clifford (1986) explains allegory as “a representation that ‘interprets’ itself,” and in relation to ethnographic practices of representation, it can be a useful methodological device for recognizing not only multiple ways of knowing, but also how the interpretations that we make are products of the how we perceive ourselves. Autoethnography took on this allegorical role to highlight the complex phenomena of storytelling, and how this complexity opens up ways to resist colonialist and authoritative interpretations. Moreover, combining evocative techniques of story telling with the thick description (Geertz, 1973) of writing ethnographies, autoethnography had a greater potential to reach a wider and more diverse audience, inviting more inclusive spaces of interrogation, for multivocality and dissonance, and the potential for an ethnography that is written not just by and for academics (hooks, 1990).

As a methodology that crafts a balance between science and art, between empirical studies and narrative, autoethnography is often criticized as either not being rigorous enough or not being sufficiently artful. Of course, such critiques do not always consider the method’s radical project of artful combinations, an oversight which produces
a flat rhetoric that only reifies the problematic binary of art/science. Autoethnography demands from the reader the same reflexive rigor as it does from the writer. This includes recognizing the difference between autoethnography and autobiography. As an interpretive biographical method (Denzin, 1989), autobiography is a narrative expression of the author’s life experiences. These life stories are conventionalized, meaning that their methods of inquiry into the self are predetermined and presupposed by particular frameworks “that change and take different form depending on the writer, the place of writing, and the historical moment” (Denzin, 1989, p. 5). Autobiography is a genre of writing where the author reflects on past experiences, but as a method of remembering, an autobiography can also serve as a critical inquiry into process of remembering and self-claimed phenomena. Autoethnography combines autobiography and ethnography, a combination that pushes both methods towards a self-reflexive analysis of their modes of representation. In that sense, it is a technology of description which holds major pedagogical implications. Keeping in mind the complex historicity and the varied practices of this reflexive methodology, I move into an exploration of reflexive practices in educational theorizing. Similar to anthropology’s turn towards storytelling and the exploration of personal experience, educational theorizing faced with its own particular crisis of representation turned to the method of autobiography as a way to reconceptualize its field. Like the inventive method of autoethnography, the field of education repurposed autobiography in order to redefine the educational experience. With a focus on the curricular method of currere (Pinar, 1975, 2004; Grumet & Pinar, 1976), this section will explore the relationship between humanist notions of time and phenomenological understanding of memory. In recounting the four moments that make
up this “autobiographical method” of educational inquiry, I remember currere as my first theoretical entry point into the field of curriculum studies, and as my first experimental attempt at performing memory.

Born out of the discursive shift from traditional curriculum development towards a more politically inspired scholarship, currere became an inaugural method for the new field of curriculum studies, a field whose newness is marked by an increasing concern with methodological and ethical issues within the field of education. In the introduction to Understanding Curriculum, the editors Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery and Taubman (1995) write:

…the main concepts today are quite different from those which grew out of the era in which school buildings and populations were growing exponentially, and when keeping the curriculum ordered and organized were the main motives of professional activity. That was a time of curriculum development. Curriculum Development: Born 1918. Died: 1969 (p. 161).

According to the authors, the death of curriculum development, the move away from the early 20th century origins of the field (of the Tyler rationale, of the post-Sputnik National Science Foundation curriculum projects, and of Kuhn’s concept of paradigmatic change) was signalled by a turn towards an interest in understanding curriculum. Pinar et al.(1995) identified two developments in educational reform that signalled the demise of the traditional curriculum field and consequently opened it up for new directions: 1) the exclusion of curriculum specialists from leadership of the national reforms during the 1960’s, and 2) the economic recession during the 1970’s which cut vital resources for
school-based curriculum development. These two developments “sent the curriculum field into crisis,” (p. 189) establishing conditions for a shift in focus from curriculum development to curriculum understanding. This shift came to be known as the *reconceptualization* of curriculum, a paradigm shift that resulted not only in the change of the professional identity of curriculum scholars, “but the research they conducted, the character of the courses they taught, and the very concepts scholars employed to speak about curriculum changed dramatically and in a relatively short period of time” (Pinar, 2010, p. 736).

One of the key concepts that characterized this inward turn of self-critique and self-understanding was the currere method developed by Pinar and Grumet. According to Pinar (1975), the concept of currere refers to an existential experience of institutional structures, and as a method, it is meant to examine this experience “so that we may see more of it and see more clearly” (Pinar & Grumet, 1976, p. vii), an examination that takes the movement of “a reflexive cycle in which thought bends back upon itself and thus recovers its volition” (Grumet, 1976, p. 130-131). Pinar outlines four steps or moments that depict this movement in the study of educational experience: *the regressive, the progressive, the analytical*, and *the synthetical* (Pinar et al., 1995, p. 520).

Based on the psychoanalytical technique of free-association, regression requires one to return to the past, “to recapture it as it was and as it hovers over the present” (ibid). The progressive moment requires one to look toward possible futures. In the analytic moment, one distances oneself from the past and asks: “How is the future present in the past, the past in the future, and the present in both?” (p. 520). The synthetical moment synthesizes the temporal and reflective movements and interrogates the meaning of the
lived present. Grumet (1981) expands on these steps and implies a more relational engagement of currere by suggesting that through the telling of our stories of educational experience, we can “reveal the ways that histories (both collective and individual) and hope suffuse our moments” (p. 118). Through storytelling, the reflexive cycle of currere experiences its own turning inside-out, exposing itself to a public that can potentially engage with and contribute to analysis and synthesis.

Belenky et al. (1986) link the notions of experience and reflection to collaborative dialogue, an interchange of experiences that “lead to ways of knowing that enable individuals to enter into the social and intellectual life of their community” (p. 26). Britzman (1986) adds to this discussion around dialoguing as a form of critical reflection by addressing the affective experience of disequilibrium of this public self-examination, which is a “necessary condition for transformation” (p. 221). The experience of disequilibrium between the private and public forces a struggle for voice, and attempt “to communicate meaning to someone else…finding the words, speaking for oneself, and feeling heard by others are all part of this process” (Britzman cited in Connelly & Cladnin, 1990, p. 4). Key to this idea of dialoguing and experiencing the disequilibrium of private becoming public is affect, feeling discomfort (Boler, 1999), a shock to thought (Massumi in Simon, 2011). Affect signals that we have opened up and arrived at a liminal space of living pedagogy (Aoki, 2003) where we struggle to make meaning together. It is this struggle that sustains the moment of thought bending back upon itself in order to discover its volition. According to Miller (2005), a reconceptualist autobiography can function to “make theory, practice, curriculum and the self
unfamiliar” and to compel us to “consider ‘tangles of implications’…contradictory and conflicting discursive constructions” (p. 223).

When I was introduced to currere in the first year of my PhD program, I was drawn to the temporal and conceptual nature of this method. With a Master’s thesis on existentialism newly minted, currere offered a new foray into the temporal and conceptual evolution of subjectivity. Notably, I was drawn to the particular movement of time that related the four moments to one another. Recursive in its patterning, the four moments move through one another in the charting of a present moment, or in the context of Pinar’s theorizing, moving through these moments traces the evolution of intellectual interests, and in accessing an understanding of past educational experiences, we can reveal our present educational experience. To engage in currere involves taking “myself and my existential experience as a data source” (Pinar, 1975, p. 2), and in biographically moving through the four moments we are able to bracket ourselves out of our “current perspective” and move to another “vantage point” (p. 2). To move into this new vantage point results in viewing past educational experiences differently, which moves the new understanding of the old through another recursive cycle, bracketing off of the new current perspective, etc.

Using Sartre’s language, Pinar (1975) calls the phenomenon of bracketing oneself out of one’s current perspective by becoming data the totalizing of a situation:

…if I write about my biographic situation as I see it then it is as if I have escaped from it. It is there on the paper in a way, and I am still here, at the typewriter, looking at the print and the conceptualization of the perspective that was mine, and
so the place is new, and I have, in Sartre’s language, totalized my situation, and the new sum is where I conceptually and ontologically am now (Pinar, 1975, p. 2).

In reading Pinar’s reference to the typewriter along with a nod to Sartre’s totalizing situation, I am left with wanting more. There is so much potential in the passage above to really capture the spirit of currere, to capture its affective potential that could help us to think about subjectivity more radically. Specifically, I want him to take Sartre further, especially where he is ascribing this new place as an escape from an old place. If the change in perspective is what makes this place new, when do we know we’ve arrived? How do we know we are escaping? Pinar’s reference to the relational experience between the self and the text reminds me of a moment in Sartre’s novel *Nausea* when the protagonist Roquentin experiences yet another bout of sickness:

…something happened to me, I can’t doubt it anymore. It came as an illness does, not like an ordinary certainty, not like anything evident…for instance, there is something new about my hands, a certain way of picking up my pipe or fork. Or else it’s the fork which now has a certain way of having itself picked up, I don’t know (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 4).

Roquentin suffers with these bouts of sickness throughout the novel, and as we read, we learn that his symptoms of nausea are related to *change taking place*, a moment of sudden transformation that forces him to choose whether it is him who has changed or if it is the world around him that has changed. The nature of the change is felt as a relational crisis between the subject and the object:
objects should not touch because they are not alive. You use them, put them back in place, you live among them: they are useful, nothing more. But they touch me, it is unbearable…I recall better what I felt the other day at the seashore when I held the pebble. It was a sort of sweetish sickness. How unpleasant it was! It came from the stone, I’m sure of it, it passed from the stone to my hand. Yes, that’s it, that’s just it—a sort of nausea in the hands (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 10-11).

Like Pinar, Roquentin desires to understand his “biographic situation” and the nature of change. And like Pinar, Roquentin keeps a journal. However, Pinar argues that journaling allows him to become a data source, which allows him to escape from his current perspective to a new one, whereas Roquentin’s journaling practice is meant to monitor the changes taking place, healing the symptoms of a new perspective. He needs to keep a diary to “see clearly,” to classify nuances and small happenings, to assure himself that “those are the things which have changed” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p.1), and to forestall their metamorphosis.

Pinar’s existential exploration of his biographical situation is tethered to a particular phenomenology of time, memory and the evolution of subjectivity, and as a result, makes it difficult for him to explore the past, present and future as being out of synch. That is not to say that he does not address the multi-dimensionality of moving biographically. He does, but only to return to a tidy representation of time, where the new self is unquestionably embraced as the product of bracketing the old and current self, ready to be harnessed and understood through a continued recursive movement. Existentialism is more than a mining of the self. In fact, it is this more than that gives existentialism its particular style and taste for subjectivity as a process of becoming.
out of its time. Roquentin fears the new, he is filled with angst when it comes to the new. It is his desire to hinge himself in the present and his desire to access the past (Roquentin is a historian!) that makes the experience of change so unbearable. With that said, I am not suggesting that Pinar is misreading existentialism or that he fails to recognize his rather linear understanding of time, evolution and the subject. In fact, he takes care throughout the text to account for “the small nuances or small happenings” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 1) that interfere with his conceptualization. Interestingly, these tidbits can be located between parentheses:

…I am taking as hypothesis that I am in a biographic situation, and while in certain ways I have chose it (and hence must bear the responsibility for it), in other ways I can see that it follows in causal ways from previous situations (Pinar, 1975, p. 1)

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...(That is, one thinks through one’s life, one’s life is determined by one’s thoughts, rather than living through one’s life and thinking about that life. Obviously I have dichotomized what is probably more dialectical) (Pinar, 1975, p. 3)

This signals to me a pedagogical slippage, an attempt at articulating being thrown out of time, a bracketing out of language through language. While as a reader of currere I desire more complexity, it seems as though Pinar made an artful decision to abandon complexity in favour of pedagogy. Through his parenthetical tidbits however, Pinar is
able to move out of time and momentarily rest on the slippery boundaries of language, between what he calls the concrete present (the literal present, of holding Pinar’s paper in a particular room seated in a particular chair) and the conceptual present (the abstract present that lives subjectively and privately in our thoughts). It is this slippage that moved my exploration of currere towards notions of public pedagogy, and it is this slippage that moves this section forward towards remembering that exploration.

My first academic presentation as a doctoral student explored this slippage in the currere method through a mangle of autobiographical narratives, public pedagogy, and Sartre’s concept of vertigo. The theoretical construct of public pedagogy and the ways it was being take up by educational scholars offered me new ways of conceptualizing the existential temporality in relation to pedagogy. In their ground-breaking literature review of the term public pedagogy, Sandlin, O’Malley, and Burdick (2011) lay out the multiple ways that public pedagogy is being taken up, contending that many of the scholars who cite the term do so without “adequately explicating its meaning, its context, or its location within differing and contested articulations of the construct” (p. 339). Concerned that this inadequacy “prevents distinct theorizations from informing, extending, or challenging one another” (p. 339), the authors are inspired to craft a rigorous touchstone for educational scholars. This touchstone consists of “a brief historical review of the earliest usages of public pedagogy in educational literature,” different sites of learning “through which public pedagogy is enacted,” and “the nature of the public intellectual as a pedagogical agent” (p. 339).

For my presentation, I largely pulled out of their section “Public Spaces as Sites of Public Pedagogy,” which according to the authors, makes up 15% of their literature
review. The authors identify the work of Ellsworth (2005) as largely contributing to this category. While Ellsworth does not specifically use the term public pedagogy, her 2005 publication *Places of Learning* is widely cited in public pedagogy literature, and thus is considered as a foundational text by the authors. Ellsworth’s contribution to the category of informal public spaces as sites of public pedagogy lies in her reframing “of both pedagogy and learning to account for the multitude of ‘anomalous’ places and ways in which they occur” (p. 349). Using Winnicott’s theory of transitional objects, Ellsworth (2005) theorizes places of learning as events, where the time of the learning self is marked. Space and place are not predefined containers that bodies enter into, but rather, they are “holding environments” that hold, without imposition, “our capacities to sense and creatively use our own processes of self-complication” (p. 32). Pedagogy as a holding environment addresses “a self who is in the process of withdrawing from that self” (p. 34). The process of withdrawing is simultaneously a process of emergence. Pedagogy and time are intimately linked: “the time of that emergence, and pedagogy’s involvement in it, is a time where the past and the future ‘smudge’” (p. 34). This smudge is what holds places of learning.

Ellsworth’s theorizing of places of learning problematizes more conventional uses of public pedagogy, encouraging educational scholars to focus on the process of public pedagogy and the experience of the learner (Burdick et al., 2014, p.3). Along with the work of other notable curriculum scholars such as Stephanie Springgay (2013), Ted Aoki (2003) and Roger Simon (2011), the binary notion of public pedagogy is challenged through explorations of and interventions in between borders of schooling and life. For these theorists, public pedagogy is not a space outside of school, but rather, it is a space
that constantly and simultaneously moves inside and outside, and as a result of its movement, constantly challenges prescribed and seemingly closed systems of learning. Between these borders there is an openness where we can have personal interventions and mutual displacements (Springgay, p. 352, 2010), a world of floating discourses where language participates and performs to constitute effects (Aoki, 2003, p. 428), and a space of difficult encounters where we are forced to thought (Simon, 2011, p. 435). The notion of public is thus reconceptualized as a between-the-borders, a space of potential, a situation or event where we are forced to mingle with uncertainty and play with meaning.

Exploring time as a device that smudges together public and pedagogy, and exploring the materiality of pedagogy as being held together by time, extends these practices of problematizing public pedagogy, including the method of currere. Anchoring the pedagogical slippage of becoming biographical in a holding environment forces us to account for sensations that are often times unbearable. The assemblage of time-pedagogy-place-subjectivity is always in the making and never the same twice. It is, to echo Pinar’s reference to Sartre, a totalized situation. However, this totalization is not a model of capture and is without resemblance to anything outside of itself. As an experience of change taking place, it appears as sensation, where we are called upon to respond. Responding, following Ellsworth (2005), is a pedagogical pivot point that “sets interior self-experience in motion to encounter the outside ‘not me’” (p. 38). To hinge oneself within a holding environment marks another movement, creates another dimension of time. To help me to explore this pedagogical pivot point within the smudging of time, making time through untime, my presentation turned to Sartre’s notion...
of vertigo and the precipice. This turn allowed me to explore the different time zones and different affects that materialize out of pivoting on the emergence of self.

Sartre’s monumental treatise Being and Nothingness (1943/1984) is historically situated in philosophy’s own moment of crisis which repositioned phenomenology as the foundation of all philosophy. Sartre (1943/1984) acknowledges that “modern thought has realized considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it” (p. 3). Such progress includes overcoming certain number of dualisms “which have embarrassed philosophy” (p. 3). With this nod to the new movement in philosophy, he questions if phenomenology has indeed overcome the dualism of the subject (existent, being) and object (noumena, appearance), or if it has reinforced it by suggesting that appearing is the measure of the being of an existent. He furthers his observation by asking about the being of this appearing, or put differently, the being of being. He goes on to suggest that the being of appearing discloses itself “by some kind of immediate access—boredom, nausea, etc” and that “ontology will be the description of the phenomenon of being as it manifests itself” (p. 7). It is at this point where he makes an important move towards developing the foundation of modern existentialism by asking about the relationship between the phenomenon of the manifestation of being and the phenomenon of describing the manifestation of being: “is the phenomenon of being thus achieved identical with the being of phenomena” (p. 7)? Through this question, Sartre distinguishes between two modes of phenomena: there is the phenomenon of being where “the existent is a phenomenon…this means that it designates itself as an organized totality of qualities…it is being-for-revealing” (p. 8), and the being of phenomenon, “the condition of all revelation…revealed being…not resolved in phenomenon of being” (p.8).
These two modes, while distinct from one another, relate to one another. There is therefore a third relation which unites the two phenomena, which Sartre calls transphenomenal. This third relation is where Sartre develops his ontology of phenomenology, where and when we perceive ourselves perceiving, where and when we witness consciousness, and where and when the primacy of knowledge is abandoned. It is in this space where metaphors of the precipice and the vertigo of “perceived-perception” (p. 10) take shape.

Not unlike the smudging of past and future as explored by Ellsworth, the transphenomenal has a temporal element that constitutes the existent in relation to its past. The past appears to the existent by a *nothingness*, by a suspension of being; through an experience of the self “as the nihilation of its past being” (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 64). The transphenomenal is where Sartre locates freedom, a moment where “the human being *is* his own past (as also his own future) in the form of nihilation” (p. 65). The consciousness of freedom positions the existent within a certain mode of standing opposite his past and his future. To be aware of this position of freedom is to be in anguish. Thus, “it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself” (p. 65). Anguish is not fear in that fear is “fear of beings in the world” whereas anguish “is anguish before myself” (p. 65). Vertigo is anguish “to the extent that I am afraid not of falling over the precipice, but of throwing myself over” (p. 65). Where fear is provoked by a situation, “my being provokes anguish to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation” (p. 65). Vertigo is a fear of fear, it is “a reflective comprehension of the self”
(p. 66). The precipice is the temporal boundary of nothingness, the transphenomenal space of freedom, the blurring of past and future. The precipice is a frightful situation, it “presents itself to me as to be avoided” (p. 66), it causes me to fear my response to it. This notion of vertigo as a fear of myself informs Ellsworth’s theorizing of the pedagogical pivot point within “holding environments,” and further extends currere’s notion of a biographical situation. In facing the nothingness of my being, in facing the apprehension of the self as depending on the self which I am not yet, the sensation of vertigo forces me to choose on the precipice of change taking place. The choice is between regaining one’s bearings through “bad faith,” or becoming completely undone by the permanent state of its affectivity.

Or perhaps there’s another choice possible, another possibility of making choices in the face of vertigo. Herein lies the potential of the biographical situation, the holding environment, and marking change taking place. Walking the precipice involves moments of anchoring where I can productively bear the angst of becoming undone. This anchoring is the perception of myself coming undone, it places me on the plane of reflection. Such anchoring can include many events. For Roquentin it's his journaling practice, for Pinar it’s becoming data, for Ellsworth it's the designers of the anomalous places of learning, for Sartre it’s the process of theorizing this anguish:

…anguish implies the apprehension of the work as such as my possibility. I must place myself directly opposite it and realize my relation to it…in order for my freedom to be anguished in connection with the book which I am writing…I must discover my essence as ‘wanting to write this book’…as I have been ‘wanting to write,’ but nothing, not even what I have been, can compel me to write it…I must
discover that the permanent possibility of abandoning the book is the very condition of the possibility of writing it and the very meaning of my freedom ((Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 75).

Theorizing places me on the plane of reflection, and thus, theorizing is marked through a projection of myself “which stands as my choice of myself in the world” (p. 77). Theorizing is full of anguish on one hand, and on the other, it structures a reflective consciousness that prevents us from becoming permanently undone. In my presentation I experimented with this notion of theorizing as the precipice of a holding environment and biographical situation. More specifically, responding to critical practices of autobiography (Miller, 2005; Springgay & Freedman, 2010; Ng-A-Fook, 2012), I experimented with autobiographical narratives of my father, hoping to extend curricular reflexive theorizing towards an untimely relationship to memory.

According to Ng-A-Fook’s (2012) reconceptualization of mother-son plots, in order to mend the severance of othering, we have to rethink our imagined and idealized relationship with the m/other (p. 163). He explores the ways in which we can begin to disrupt our capacities to wonder about otherness by placing his mother’s narrative voice within his theorizing. In migrating autobiographically through his mother’s life narratives, he troubles his imagined relationship, which, he argues, opens up a space for a new interconnection to emerge, “opening our capacities to conceive a perpetual birthing of otherness” (p. 182). Similarly, Stephanie Springgay and Debra Freedman (2010) use collaborative writing/narrative as a way to dislodge the autonomous and othering voice of autobiography. This act of dislodging opens up the text, where reading and writing become moments of affects through which we can become collectively (p. 352).
Including my father’s voice in this autobiographical project is in many ways different from incorporating collected “living” interviews of his voice (Ng-A-Fook, 2012) or from collaboratively writing with his “living” self (Springgay & Freedman, 2010). The desire to document his voice in this project came too late. I cannot situate my living father in my project, I cannot ask him to share with me his own autobiographical narrative—he cannot physically take part in mending our relationship of otherness. Instead, in imagining what my father was thinking as I entered his room at the Intensive Care Unit, I am “opening up the text” through a process of creating what Aoki (2003) would call a *metonymic moment*. In asking about the “where” of the “what,” Aoki locates living pedagogy, a discursive site where language flows to and fro, through five metonymic moments (p. 425):

1) Living pedagogy midst curriculum-as-plan/Curriculum-as-live(d)

2) Indwelling midst presence/absence

3) Interplay midst representational discourse/non-representational discourse

4) Midst self/other

5) Double reading of a zen parable

Although Aoki does not explain the meaning of *metonymy* explicitly, he directs us to its understanding through a brief excursion into sign theory. He points us to Lacan’s analysis of the space of signification, a space between the signifier and the signified, and explains that for Lacan, “signification is enacted in the spaces of differences between signifiers” (p. 428). According to Aoki’s reading of Lacan, signification is not arbitrary, but rather, is performative. Thus, Aoki suggests that metonymy is a happening between
representational and non-representational discourses, where meaning is performed—it is a moment.

Both as a strategy and as a transformative site of meaning making, metonymic moments are moments of writing at the edges of language, challenging the metaphysics of presence that has (for far too long) been and continues to be privileged by discourse and the ways in which we conceive of our selves. So, I asked, what does this mean in terms of creating my father’s autobiographical narrative? Imagining the story that my father would tell performs a metonymic moment, it creates a moment of affect that happens between the borders of presence and absence, between the familiar and the unfamiliar, between the self that others and the otherness of self. In imagining the incomprehensible, the experience of dying and being outside of myself, I was able to perform my father’s otherness as a conference presentation. Certainly, imagining such a narrative can never even begin to understand the suffering and fear that my father experienced on that day and the days leading up to it. But how can we ever really know the experiences of others? Is there such a thing as experiencing another’s holding environment?

Brian Massumi (2011) would answer by asking us to think about what makes experience singular in the first place, suggesting that such a singularity connotes “a state of precultural grace unsullied by language…a prelinguistic Eden uncomplicated by learning” (p. 10). Perhaps the closest we can ever get to understanding what it’s like to be someone else’s precipice is by performing a place where differences collide, a place of relational non-relations (Massumi, 2011, p. 20). It is on this precipice where my father exists as a form of semblance, “the form in which what does not appear effectively
expresses itself.” Taking advantage of a live format, I experimented with this semblance, fleshing out the gaps of memory in ways that text-based narratives cannot accomplish. Moving the theorization from a paper format—where the precipice of remembering my father lived in the textual gaps between theory and narrative—to a different time and space, re-membered the precipice in unpredictable ways. While the method of cutting in and out of theory and narrative added a necessary texture that held my father’s semblance, the same technique would fall flat in the context of the presentation. Simply reading the paper in its original form would not do. To maintain the semblance of my father, the presentation needed to repeat the theorizing/narrative differently. Specifically, the difference needed to appear in the repetition, it needed to be shown differing. Using the medium of space and time that the presentation offered, I mediated the theorizing through an assemblage of my live voice reading theory, my recorded voice reading my father’s narrative, and my polish handwriting projected on the wall behind me. With the three mediums cutting into and overlapping each other, the aim was not to represent the precipice, but rather, to evoke the precipice as a place that complicates memory. Re-membering my father, again, transforms time and enacts a more profound form of memory, where memory as repetition produces something new. Together with strands of theory, memory and the assemblage of voices, the aim of the conference presentation was to perform its own holding environment and to experiment with the untimely components of public pedagogy as becoming biographical.

Hinged by anguish, it mattered that my experimentation was put in relation to a live audience. The performance, on many levels, was designed for a relationality that is “perpetually in the making and laden with the potential to reconfigure established
boundaries and meaning…that reforms both the self and the other, the self and its lived relations with others” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 46, 48). It mattered that it was my first doctoral academic presentation, it mattered who populated the room, it mattered that it took place at the Curriculum Theory Conference in Bergamo. Its firstness materialized the precipice on which I performed, it made the volatile space between my self and strangers palpable and therefore addressable. It mattered that the authors whose work assembled the precipice were there. It mattered that I performed currere’s pedagogical slippages at Bergamo².

Given that this assemblage of time-pedagogy-place-subjectivity can never appear twice, I re-member this event anew. Considering pedagogy as a detour “through memory, forgetting, desire, fear, pleasure, surprise, rewriting” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 55), re-membering the precipice is about enduring sensations of vertigo anew. Re-membering memories is what Sartre calls pure reflections, where “the reflected-on is profoundly altered by reflection” (p. 214), and the reflection that reflects is a mode of witnessing the alteration of the reflected-on. While the two modes of reflection are codependent, they have distinct processes. What happens when the reflective is the reflected-on is central to Sartre’s philosophical methodology for disclosing the being of consciousness and for his future work on existentialism and ethics. The following section revisits Sartre’s (1947/2007) Existentialism is a Humanism in relation to posthumanism, and re-membering memory as an untimely reflection.

² The Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theorizing and Classroom Practice has served as a meeting place for theorists and practitioners since 1969. As an inaugural site for the field of Curriculum Studies, Bergamo is remembered by curriculum scholars as a place of theory building for the reconceptualization movement (Pinar 2004; Miller 1999), and continues to be the site of innovative styles of presenting intellectual work. In many ways, it is a place of beginnings, returnings and firstness.
2.1.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “Currere, public pedagogy and existential vertigo”

I cut into my first experimentations of the enactment of boundaries between curriculum studies and existentialism by taking account of autoethnography. While my readings and explorations of this qualitative research practice came after initial experimentations with the two systems of thought, experimentations that were performed during the early stages of being a PhD student and transitioning into a new field of inquiry, I throw the history of the research event out of sequence in order to test the ability of theory to dis-identify from century-old habits of humanist remembering. Starting with autoethnography, I re-member and relay between different moments in space and time in order to start with an analysis of accountability, where different configuration of the process of thinking come to matter.

Starting with the crisis of representation in ethnography, I recount some of the key conditions of possibility for the inauguration of autoethnography as a critical tool for qualitative research practices. One of the key contributing factors that threw ethnographers against the ontological and epistemological limits of their particular field was the postmodern turn in anthropology, a self-reflexive moment in anthropology characterized by postmodern trends in epistemology and literary criticism that put emphasis on language, text, and the nature of representation. As a double move to respond to these limitations and to generate alternative methods for doing research, ethnographers turned to more creative methods that represented both the research process
as well as the product of that process. Considering that the crisis of representation involved a turn away from visualism (Clifford, 1986), from the truth of vision in Western cultures, social scientists moved away from master narratives in favor of ethnographic allegory. Clifford (1986) explains allegory as “a representation that ‘interprets’ itself,” and in relation to ethnographic practices of representation, it can be a useful methodological device for recognizing not only multiple ways of knowing, but also how the interpretations that we make are products of the how we perceive ourselves. Developing out of this profoundly self-reflexive moment in anthropology, autoethnography became a methodological tool in the enactment of ethnographic allegory, and became one of the most powerful tools in ethnography’s turn away from a language of expertise towards a more accessible language that could resonate with a wider and more diverse audience. The claim made by anthropologists was that this new type of experimental ethnographic writing akin to storytelling can address the crisis of representation through its ability to invite inclusive spaces of interrogation, which in turn decenters ethnocentric representations and redeems otherness.

At this point, it is important to make a distinction between autoethnography and autobiography. As an interpretive biographical method (Denzin, 1989), autobiography is a narrative expression of the author’s life experiences. These life stories are conventionalized, meaning that their methods of inquiry into the self are predetermined and presupposed by particular frameworks “that change and take different form depending on the writer, the place of writing, and the historical moment” (Denzin, 1989, p. 5). Autobiography is a genre of writing where the author reflects on past experiences, but as a method of remembering, an autobiography can also serve as a critical inquiry
into process of remembering and self-claimed phenomena. Autoethnography combines autobiography and ethnography, a combination that pushes both methods towards critical discourse analysis. The two terms are often used interchangeably in qualitative research practices, and therefore often times are not enacted in ways that account for the term’s technology of description. Their differences matter because their practices and their specific exclusionary boundaries hold different ethical and pedagogical implications. These differences come to matter when reading curriculum studies through existential philosophy.

Cutting into an exploration of reflexive practices in educational theorizing, I begin with a similar, yet particular, moment of crisis in the field of education. Marked by an increasingly postmodern concern with methodological and ethical matters within education theorizing, the field of curriculum development and its professionalizing motives started moving towards the understanding of curriculum as an active force of human experience, eventually creating the field know to us today as Curriculum Studies. Part of this field’s inauguration was the development of a new curricular method able to engage with and make meaning out of personal educational experiences. In the same way that the field of anthropology needed autoethnography in the turning of its discourse, curriculum studies needed an inventive method that entangled self-reflexive practices with curricular theorizing. That method came to be known as currere. Playing with the past, present and future participles of the transitive verb of curro, meaning “to run,” the etymology of the word captures the present infinitive movement, the running of a race. Developed by the key scholars responsible for the reconceptualization of the field,
William Pinar and Madeleine Grumet, currere became a method for exploring the existential experiences of institutional structures.

Key to the development of this autobiographical method for curricular inquiry is the outlining of four consecutive moments that make possible an analysis out of movement: the regressive, the progressive, the analytical, and the synthetical. What is at stake in this self-reflexive method of accounting for one’s educational experience is the disequilibrium between the private and the public, the private becoming public and the public informing the private. This place of disequilibrium that the method of currere has the potential to throw us into has been taken up by educational scholars as an entry point for exploring affect, difference, and relationality of pedagogical encounters. Considering that the method of currere takes up a particular understanding of time tied to a particular understanding of phenomenology that frames memory and the representation of memory in a particular way, the conditions of possibility in theorizing pedagogical encounters are at stake. For this reason, curriculum scholars and educational theorists have taken the currere method to task, complicating the method’s formula for retrieving experiences so that we can shock ourselves into new pedagogical encounters and attend to the discomfort (Boler, 1999), liminalities (Aoki, 2003) and the tangles of contradictory and conflicting discursive construction (Miller, 2005, p. 223).

Contributing to the debates that currere generates, I re-member the method by putting it to work in an untimely way. In order to do that, I start by reading Pinar’s reference to Sartre’s work through Sartre’s work. By reading Pinar’s theorizing of currere with Sartre’s philosophical fiction, specifically, Pinar’s reference to Sartre’s totalizing situation with Sartre’s notion of nausea, I read the texts together-apart in order
to account for difference. Moving with the direction of accountability, their difference is not predicted at the beginning of the reading. Signalled by Pinar’s reference to Sartre in his explanation of the phenomenon of bracketing oneself out of one’s biographical situation, I return to Sartre’s *Nausea*, this time with difference. Accounting for the difference between Pinar’s phenomenological framework in theorizing currere and Sartre’s phenomenology of change taking place in describing Roquetin’s nausea, I put this difference to work. Different accounts of the nature of change begin to materialize, pushing both Pinar’s and Sartre’s theorizing further, out of their time, revealing their constituting exclusions. Other possible readings started to materialize, for example reading Pinar’s appositions he places between parantheses as a way to monitor “the changes taking place” (as a Sartrean/Roquetean method). Currere begins to slip, materializing a surface that allowed me to leap towards a new understanding and possibilities of becoming public in relation to memory work.

As a way to sustain the leap, I cut into Ellsworth’s notion of pedagogy as a holding environment that smudges the past with the future, along with other curriculum scholars who problematize public pedagogy, assembling an apparatus of time-pedagogy-place-subjectivity. This apparatus is always in the making and never the same twice, perpetually open to rearrangements. Its mobility and untimeliness resists capture, retrieval and the possibility of sedimenting into memory. This is what makes the assemblage and its re-membering difficult to explain in a humanist framework as it always escapes language and is remade with every iterative attempt to capture it. Drawing on Sartre’s notion of *vertigo* in his own reworking of phenomenology, I theorize an untimely public as a place that complicates and creatively re-works memory.
2.2 Posthuman memory: Posthumanism is an existentialism

Following Braidotti (2013), the posthuman method “amounts to higher degrees of disciplinary hybridization and relies on intense de-familiarization of our habits of thought through encounters that shatter the flat repetition of the protocols of institutional reason” (p. 169). De-familiarization as a strategy for becoming estranged and radically repositioned is experimental. Similar to Sartre’s precipice, de-familiarization “consists in trying to think to infinity, against the horror of the void, in the wilderness of non-human mental landscapes, with the shadow of death dangling in front of our eyes” (p. 134). To further understand de-familiarization as a strategy for killing the humanist subject, it is important to first consider the notion of death in the context of posthumanism.

Considering that one’s view on death depends on one’s assumptions about life, Braidotti theorizes a posthuman subject through a posthuman theory on death. Death is both something unthinkable yet it produces intensities and perpetual becomings. So in order to make sense of death we need an unconventional approach that can differentiate between personal death (the suppression of the individualized ego) and impersonal death (death that is beyond the ego and thus marks my powers to become). A posthuman approach recognizes the difference and dependence of the personal and the impersonal, and therefore offers a method to think about death as “written on our core” (p. 131). Death structures our time-lines and therefore is ever-present as the event “that has always already happened” (Blanchot in Braidotti, 2013, p. 132). Death in this way constitutes the materiality of our life, and therefore “does not lie ahead but is already behind us; it has been” (p. 132). The realization that death, the source of our anguish, is no longer ahead of us, but rather, it is a past that is forever present, causes a new kind of anguish. This new
relationship to anguish has the potential to affirmatively move us towards re-locating “compassion and care of both human and non-human others” (p. 111). This proximity to death calls for an ethics of endurance, where we can “make friends with the impersonal necessity of death” in order to install “oneself in life as transient, slightly wounded visitor” (p. 132). Thinking-in endurance can transform the negative charge of de-familiarization into affirmative self-perpetuation, “propelling new social conditions and relations into being, out of injury and pain” (p. 129). Approaching life as something that we do not own but inhabit and death as freeing us into this notion of life, encourages the stretching of the boundaries of endurance and further experimentation with de-familiarization.

De-familiarization introduces a critical distance from habits of living and thinking. But what introduces de-familiarization to the scene? Can the subject will such a distance? What comes first: de-familiarization or anguish? Self-reflection has a key role to play cutting into this process of witnessing this distance and the alterations that this distancing enacts. What is needed is a more nuanced understanding of reflection in relation to the posthuman. According to Braidotti (2013), remembering is the process of “accounting for the affective impact of various items or data upon oneself” (p. 167). To account for these affective charges, one must endure the self as a threshold of these affective forces. Endurance is a creative act of reworking retrievable experiences.

Considering the posthuman subject as a self-perpetuating force on the death and life continuum, memory can no longer be understood as living in the past and as retrievable, but rather, as an active reinvention of the self in the midst of de-familiarization. Further, memory as a creative process of anchoring the self in the midst of anguish, is affirmative
and therefore is capable of “transmuting negative passions into productive and sustainable praxis” (p. 122).

Thinking about memory, remembering and reflection through posthuman temporality begs the question of how the posthuman remembers the Humanities. How does posthuman memory transmute the negative passions of the humanities? Or perhaps put more evocatively: “how could the Humanities fail to be affected by the posthuman condition” (Braidotti, 2014, p. 142)? This question echoes a new materialist impulse to jump generations, to read for difference, and to account for the affective charges and epistemic fractures in this de-familiarized ontological field. In other words, this question that echoes the affective charge traversing the social sciences and humanities puts into practice an untimely methodology for reading and writing. Returning, remembering and rewriting from the fractures within the Humanities positions the researcher in a holding environment where the work of reshaping the identity of humanistic practices happens. One entry point into an untimely methodology is to read posthuman memory from a position made possible by Sartre’s own work of re-writing the Humanities. In his 1945 lecture “Existentialism is a Humanism,” just a couple months after the end of the Second World War, Sartre sought out to defend the humanistic nature of his groundbreaking doctrine. The critical responses to his novels Nausea (1938/2007), The Age of Reason (1945/1947) and The Reprieve (1945/1947), novels which echoed and where echoed by the philosophical quest of Being and Nothingness (1943/1984), varied on a wide spectrum between the general public and intellectuals. The media took expressions out of context, expressions such as “Hell is other people,” “Existence precedes essence,” or “man is a useless passion” (Elkaïm-Sartre, 1996/2007); Christians chastised him for his
atheism; Communists (with whom he wished to establish a closer relationship) reproached him for his “bourgeois philosophy.” Considering that the post-war nation was looking for ways to make meaning out of and to overcome their current crisis, Sartre’s work was not only met with great resistance, but violent expression which Sartre experienced as anger. In many people’s minds, “Sartre was becoming the anti-humanist par excellence: he demoralized the French at a time when France, lying in ruins, most needed hope” (Elkaiim-Sartre, 1996/2007, ix).

Responding to his critics, the aim of his lecture was to present the public with a consistent and more accurate perspective on his philosophy. Compelled to dispel public misconception of his philosophy and to establish a relationship with the more “hopeful” movement presented by the Communist Party, Sartre presented a more pedagogical version of his theories, “stressing only those that people were likely to understand” (xii). With the same defensive impulse, he agreed to publish the lecture a year later, which ironically moved his philosophy of existentialism outside of its purpose of being a doctrine for philosophers, towards a “universal” philosophy accessible to a general audience. The irony lies in the desire to be understood, which came at the cost of simplifying and misrepresenting the necessarily rigorous project of pure reflection, which was at the heart of his major doctrine. Accounting for the affective charge of his lecture, I move further towards remembering how Sartre endured his untimely fractures through his public defense.

He begins his defense by outlining the accusations made by the Communist Party and Catholic critics. He then makes an interesting move in explaining that addressing these accusations will reveal something about the state of the humanities: “we shall
attempt to discover in what sense we understand it” (Sartre, 1947/2007, p. 18).

Foreshadowing what is to come, Sartre begins to chart existentialism as a “belief that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that subjectivity must be our point of departure” (p. 20). There is no such thing as human nature, or a predefined concept of that which is human. The concept of that which is human comes after the process of existing, meaning that “man” first exists, encounters himself in the world, and only afterwards defines himself. He then moves, without much nuance, towards the second principle of existentialism, which is that man is responsible for himself. His subjectivity depends on an awareness of projecting into a future. This awareness presents man with a choice, and that the value of this choice affirms “an image of man as we think he ought to be” (p. 24). In being responsible for himself, man is responsible for all humanity: “I am fashioning a certain image of man as I choose him to be. In choosing myself, I choose man” (p. 25). It is this responsibility that causes “anguish,” which is the next move he makes in streamlining his philosophy, and highlighting existentialism as a universal project of humanity.

Responding to the criticism of his philosophy “emphasizing what is despicable about humanity, for...ignoring beauty and the brighter side of human nature” (Sartre, 1947/2007, p. 17), Sartre introduces anguish anew here as being “quite simple” (p. 25). Anguish is a universal experience of the human condition, and while “many people do not appear especially anguished…we maintain that they are merely hiding their anguish or trying not to face it” (p. 25). Anguish humanizes man, “every man ought to be asking himself ‘Am I really a man who is entitled to act in such a way that the entire human race should be measuring itself by my actions?’ And if he does not ask himself that, he masks
his anguish” (p. 27). Offering the example of the ethical anguish of a military leader sending troops into battle, he explains anguish not as “a screen that separates us from action, but a condition of action itself” (p. 27). He further defends anguish from its negative connotations by bringing in feelings, arguing that the choices that we make (the source of our anguish) measure the strength of a feeling: “what gave any value to the young man’s feelings for his mother? Precisely the fact that he chose to stay with her… the only way I can measure the strength of this affection is precisely by performing an action that confirms and defines it” (p. 32). This works the other way as well, “I am depending on this affection to justify my action” (p. 32).

After defending the specific charges that were brought against existentialism, Sartre moves his defense towards defining existentialism as “optimistic” (Sartre, 1947/2007, p. 40), as a dignifying account of man, and as a “doctrine of action” (p. 54). Defending existentialism from being a contemplative and individualistic project, Sartre moves an optimistic and collective account of his doctrine by explaining why “the other is essential to my existence, as well as the knowledge I have of myself… we attain ourselves in the presence of the other, and we are just as certain of the other as we are of ourselves” (p. 41). This intersubjectivity moves him to say that the project of defining man “can be reinvented again and again,” and that the fundamental aim of existentialism

…is to reveal the link between the absolute character of the free commitment, by which every man realizes himself in realizing a type of humanity—a commitment that is always understandable, by anyone in any era—and the relativity of the cultural ensemble that may result from such a choice (p. 43).
The universal claim of “always understandable, by anyone in any era” is meant to be an argument for a fundamental human situation of being in the world: “what never varies is the necessity for him to be in the world, to work in it, to live out his life in it among others, and, eventually, to die in it” (p. 42).

To conclude his defense, Sartre puts his streamlined map of existentialism to work towards defining the humanist project anew. Responding to yet another critique, that criticizes Sartre for being anti-humanist in his work, he offers two different meanings of humanism. He explains the first meaning and use of humanism as a theory that takes man as the supreme value of all things. He rejects this humanism based on his premise that man is always in the making. There is another meaning for humanism, he argues, one that understands man as “always outside of himself, and it is in projecting and losing himself beyond himself that man is realized…the link between transcendence as constitutive of man and subjectivity is what we call ‘existentialist humanism’” (Sartre, 1947/2007, p. 52-53). This is a humanism because it “reminds” man that he is his own legislator, and that in the anguished state of that realization, he must make his own choices. Further, it is a humanism because it shows “that it is not by turning inward, but by constantly seeking a goal outside of himself in the for of liberation, or of some special achievement, that man will realize himself as truly human” (p. 53). He ends with a reworking of the term despair, which allows him to not only craft a poignant response towards his (Christian) critics, but also to further an understanding of existentialism as a doctrine that radically affirms negative passions. The goal of existentialism, he explains, is not to plunge mankind into despair, at least not the kind of despair labeled by Christians. Despair for existentialists is not an attitude of unbelief: “it is not that we...
believe that God exists, but we think that the real problem is not of his existence; what man needs is to rediscover himself and to comprehend that nothing can save him from himself, not even valid proof of the existence of God” (p. 53-54). This does not mean that existentialism is a philosophy that aims at demonstrating the nonexistence of God, but rather, that it makes no difference if God exists. Put differently, even if there was valid proof that God existed, this validation still would not save man from himself. Existentialism is a project that aims to rediscover man in the face of this apprehension. In confusing their notion of despair with an existentialist notion of despair, Christians not only misinterpret existentialism as hopeless, but more note worthy, they do so in bad faith.

Remembering both existentialism and humanism through this lecture accounts for the endurance and self-propagation of Sartre’s theorizing, which in its own way is a practice of remembering and putting memory to work. In defending existentialism from epistemic fractures and violent rejections, Sartre returns to his doctrine, which in many ways, was never fully complete. Densely written and often distorted, the rigor of his thinking was improperly understood. It had, as his adopted daughter and literary executor notes, “become something out of his control, although he still assumed responsibility for it” (Elkaim-Sartre, 1996/2007). Not unlike Roquetin’s nausea and the anguish that comes with “the apprehension of the work as such as my possibility” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 75), Sartre returns to the condition of possibility of writing through his public lecture, and thus through a de-familiarized framework, is able to create a holding environment where he can hinge himself in a pedagogical pivot point. While his defense allowed him to do what his rigorous philosophizing did not, which was to inspire collective action, it came
at the cost of his methodology of pure reflection. Considering that his philosophical doctrine has multiple components that move through one another, simplistic explanations of existential components flattens out the conceptual project of existentialism. For example, in placing the primary principle of existentialism (of existence precedes essence), against his accusers, not only does his temporal reworking of subjectivity becomes undone, but without a more nuanced explanation of precede, it dichotomizes subjectivity. According to Elkaim-Sartre (1996/2007), Sartre very soon regretted the publication of his lecture, which quickly replaced his dense and complicated doctrine, or at best, was being read by many as an introduction to it. His desire to be involved in a collective life came at the cost of being misunderstood, or ironically, put him in bad faith. He would later write in Search for a Method (1960/1963) about the untimeliness of his doctrine, or any “undisciplined movement,” suggesting that the “freedom-reflex” inherent in such movements prevents it from conforming to the discipline or schema imposed upon it. It cannot be captured by a contemporaneous time. Time is an essential factor in philosophy. On the one hand “one needs a great deal of it to write a theoretical work” (p. 38), and on the other hand, time is needed to activate the philosophy. Sartre warns that if we totalize these undisciplined movements too quickly, “if one transforms—without evidence—signification into intention, and result into an objective deliberately aimed at, the real is lost” (p. 45). The real that he alludes to is the experience that formed the concepts and philosophizing. The real is the temporal, living quality of reflection, interpretation and concepts. As an undisciplined movement, Being and Nothingness always comes too late. Its untimely nature is at the heart of his doctrine and methodology. Nonetheless, it is a doctrine that desires to be understood, to be in time, to have a place.
For this reason, his lecture-turned-essay *Existentialism is a Humanism* is an important reflection of the contradictions Sartre was struggling with, and how these reflections were situated in an untimely public. The event of this lecture was in many ways a holding environment for Sartre’s untimely theorizing, enabling a turning point in Sartre’s intellectual life and a new cycle of philosophical inquiry.

Using posthuman memory to remember Sartre’s *existentialist humanism*, we are reminded of the “fleeting co-presence of multiple time-zones” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 165). Posthuman memory reminds us that being on the precipice is an untimely meeting with someone or something. Considering Sartre’s lecture as an event that endures the affective charges of remembering and thus performs a holding environment that puts us in touch with thinking, reworks notions of a public. Following Ellsworth (2005), remembering in this way is untimely, it creates a place “in which to think without already knowing what we should think” (p. 54). Concepts have a private life and a public life. In the context of remembering existentialist humanism, the private self-propagation appears through the need to defend one’s work and maintain the conditions of possibility for that work. The public component is called upon during moments of personal anguish. The public and private components inform one another, they are conceptual personae, however their rendez-vous always comes too late. The following section will consider the untimeliness of public pedagogy, and how the notion of arriving too late (or too soon) helps us to remember the Humanities.
2.2.1 Untimely interlude: Making connection in “Posthumanism is an existentialism”

Theorizing the memory work in self-reflexive methods that develop out of moments of crisis in the social sciences and humanities, I re-member past experimentations through diffractive leaps. Putting memory to work in an untimely way means making connections out of pedagogical slippages and phenomenological shifts. Moving away from a chronological understandings of making connections, untimely memory reworks the historicity of synthesis towards an open-ended practice that is always ongoing. Such reworking requires a commitment to paying attention and taking account of change taking place. This ability to take account of the intensities and uncertainties of being in difference holds affirmative implications for the status of theory and its ability to describe the radical repositioning of subjectivity. Being in difference, or what Braidotti (2013) terms de-familiarization, happens through “encounters that shatter the flat repetition of the protocols of institutional reason” (p. 169). At the same time, de-familiarization is a strategy for creating these encounters, a strategy for “trying to think to infinity, against the horror of the void, in the wilderness of non-human mental landscapes, with the shadow of death dangling in front of our eyes” (p. 134). These encounters can generate an active endurance where thinking as usual becomes a creative act of returning, remembering and rewriting, acts which momentarily anchor us in the midst of angst. Posthuman memory puts memory to work, accounting for the excluded matter that holds memory together, making memory leap towards an elsewhere.
Reading Sartre’s (1947/2007) “Existentialism is a humanism” as an act of remembering his existential phenomenology, as an act of returning to matters that were excluded so that he could dispel public misconceptions of his philosophy, memory is put to work in an untimely way. Accounting for these differences defends existentialism from being a contemplative and individualistic project, allowing Sartre to motion an optimistic and collective account of his doctrine by explaining why “the other is essential to my existence, as well as the knowledge I have of myself...we attain ourselves in the presence of the other, and we are just as certain of the other as we are of ourselves” (p. 41). This intersubjectivity moves him to say that the project of defining man “can be reinvented again and again” (p. 41), and that the fundamental aim of existentialism is to reveal how this ongoing reinvention is necessarily connected to the ongoing reinvention of humanity. Read in this way, the aim of existentialism is to reveal how this intra-action matters, or put differently, to make the intra-action matter.

Another way that Sartre puts memory to work in his lecture is by returning to his doctrine, which in many ways, was never complete. Returning to the epistemic fractures of philosophizing, his defense allowed him to do what his rigorous philosophizing did not, which was to inspire collective action. At the same time, in simplifying the terms for the purpose of defending his philosophy, the epistemic fractures that materialized his methodology of pure reflection (which is at the heart of his philosophizing) are lost. A posthuman reading of what is excluded in order to be constituted re-members what is at stake in memory work, and in this particular example, re-membering existentialism as a methodology that is constituted by being untimely, undisciplined, and constantly escaping itself. Re-membering existentialism reveals its untimeliness, a quality that can
help us in describing our historical location, which in turn, can reinvent humanity in the face of the post.

2.3 Untimely publics and joyful discontinuity

So how do we begin to move along the precipice that propegates us? What calls upon an active re-invention of the self? Is de-familiarization a strategy (Braidotti), or a bout of sickness that strikes us (Sartre)? Currere suggests that we can bracket ourselves out of our current perspective by writing our biographical selves. This can move us to a new perspective where we are able to view past educational experiences differently, which moves the new understanding of the old through another recursive cycle, bracketing off of the new current perspective, etc. While the recursive movement of currere slows down our biographical present, it nonetheless continues on towards a progressive sense of time. The exemplar of Roquetin explores de-familiarization as a sensation that comes over us, out of nowhere: “something has happened to me…it came as an illness does…it came cunningly, little by little” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 4). It is not the writing of the biographical self that causes a new perspective, rather, writing anchors one in the malaise of the this new perspective: “once established it never moved, it stayed quiet, and I was able to persuade myself that nothing was the matter with me” (p. 4). As the increasing nausea spreads to the world around him, we wonder if the sickness is happening to him or if it is caused by him. The division between inside and outside, space and time becomes porous. Space, time, inside, outside are liberated from their form. Things begin to resist how they appear for consciousness. De-familiarization is a nauseous perspective, a
melting away of boundaries and representations. In his nauseous state, Roquentin apprehends his contingency: “Nothing happens while you live. The scenery changes, people come in and go out, that’s all. There are no beginnings” (p. 40). The utter contingency of things is met with the dizzying force of nausea, all of a sudden, “anything, anything could happen…where shall I go? Where shall I go? Anything can happen” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 77, 78). De-familiarization is therefore something that happens, causing a loss in trust of things around you, causing an angst that anything can happen. The anything can happen forces one to choose to go on, which involves reforming boundaries and representations on the edge of the precipice. The force of anguish marks a moment of choice.

For Roquentin, this force that happens between anguish and choice causes him to feel something brush up against him, “something I didn’t know any more: a joy of sort” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 177). This causes him to reflect on his current situation of having to make a choice. He likens this moment of choice to “a man completely frozen after a trek through the snow and who suddenly comes into a warm room. I think he would stay motionless near the door, still cold, and that slow shudders go right through him…Couldn’t I try?” (p. 177-178). In the end, he contemplates writing a book. Not a history book as he has come to learn through his research that “history talks about what has existed—an existant can never justify the existence of another existant” (p. 178), but “another type of book…a story, for example, something that could never happen…it would have to…make people ashamed of their existence” (p. 178). Alas, he “dare not make a decision,” but reflects on a day when that book would be written, when it would
be behind him, when what it is that he is going to write might fall over his past. It is then that he might reflect on his life without repugnance

...perhaps one day, thinking precisely of this hour...I shall feel my heart beat faster and say to myself: ‘That was the day, that was the hour, when it all started.’ And I might succeed—in the past, nothing but the past—in accepting myself” (Sartre, 1938/2007, p. 178).

_Nausea_ ends with this pure reflection, with reflection that imagines a future in order to re-write his past. Pure reflection is perhaps best understood if we consider it as the experience of reflecting purely, which is experienced on the temporal plane of nothingness, the nothing that separates the present and the past. The nothingness of pure reflection is situated at the very heart of temporality. The experience of reflecting purely is an experience of temporality. This experience of temporality can only be approached as a “totality which dominates its secondary structures and which confers on them their meaning” (Sartre, 1943/1984, p. 159). In other words, the experience of pure reflection can only be understood through the elements of past, present, and future. These elements are structured moments of an original synthesis (_Temporality, being of time, nothingness, pure reflection_). The past, present and future in this sense are methods of understanding our relationship to temporality. The past, present and future are places where temporality acts and ceases to act. Temporality (our experience of being) can _be in_ the past, but it can also move and haunt the place of the present and the place of the future. There is no chronological order for this temporality. The place of the future can also haunt the place of the present and the place of the past. Roquentin’s being in the future haunts his being in the past, and the untimeliness of his book exists in the present. Pure reflection accounts
for the ontological relation of these structured moments, but only through and as experience. Pure reflection is the past becoming future, future becoming past, past becoming present, present becoming future etc. The place of the experience of becoming is untimely.

This writing that is out of its time is echoed in the moment of pure reflection in Being and Nothingness, a moment when pure reflection as the core methodology in his doctrine appears through the exemplar of Sartre’s own anguish of being conscious of his possibility depending on the doctrine that he is writing. Like Roquentin, Sartre’s contingency is nauseating, causing him to reflect on his contingency in order to free himself from it:

…it must discover my essence as ‘wanting to write this book’…as I have been ‘wanting to write,’ but nothing, not even what I have been, can compel me to write it…I must discover that the permanent possibility of abandoning the book is the very condition of the possibility of writing it and the very meaning of my freedom (p. 75).

In this passage, we can account for how time separates the author. In this example, time separates him from the realization of his desires. However, time as separation is a separation of a special type—“a division which reunites” (p. 189). In this passage, this unity of experience (the unity of temporal change) is endured by the author.

Not unlike posthuman memory, pure reflection is an active reinvention of the self in the midst of de-familiarization. As a creative process of reinventing the self in the midst of anguish, it is affirmative and therefore is capable of “transmuting negative
passions into productive and sustainable praxis” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 122). This creative process always comes too late, it always falls over our past. Or put differently, I am always already my past, but without knowing it.

Remembering my conference presentation which remembered my father through public pedagogy, existentialism, critical autobiography and multiple voices, I relay its firstness to a different moment in space and time. In remembering my presentation as an untimely event, the notion of public as an event of becoming also comes too late—or too early. As a mode of address, writing, lectures, defenses, presentations, and other holding environments cannot “control where and when its address arrives or how it is taken up” (Ellsworth, 2005, p. 55). Their affective charges can however be re-membered in an untimely public. An untimely public, like the precipice, takes place on the detouring of memory. In this way, considering my presentation as a holding environment, it hinged and was hinged by multiple publics and their many “outsides.” Whether the audience responded to my presentation or not does not matter. What does matter is that we were immersed in fields of constant flows where we cannot know or judge each other’s becomings a priori. Instead, what begins to matter is what Braidotti (2013) calls becoming-imperceptible, where public pedagogy is somewhere “between the ‘no longer’ and the ‘not yet’, mixing past, present and future into the critical mass of an event” (p. 137). As an untimely public, my presentation is re-membered as the joyful discontinuity of the self. In the end, the presentation’s firstness, the source of my anguish, brushes up on me yet again. Where will it take me, and who or what will it meet? It is too early to tell, or perhaps, too late.
3  
Becoming companion species: Translating an active history
Mój dom murem podzielony
Podzielone murem schody
Po lewej stronie łazienka
Po prawej stronie kuchenka
Mój dom murem podzielony
Podzielone murem schody
Po lewej stronie łazienka
Po prawej ...
Moje ciało murem podzielone
Dziesięć palców na lewą stronę
Drugie dziesięć na prawą stronę
Głowy równa część na każdą stronę

Moja ulica murem podzielona
Świeci neonami prawa strona
Lewa strona cała wygaszona
Zza zasłony obserwuję obie strony

Lewa strona nigdy się nie budzi
Prawa strona nigdy nie zasypia
Lewa strona nigdy się nie budzi
Prawa strona nigdy nie zasypia

-Kazik Staszewski  Arahja 1988

My home divided by the wall
The stairs divided by the wall
The bathroom on the left side
The kitchen on the right side
My home divided by the wall
The stairs divided by the wall
The bathroom on the left side
On the right...
My body divided by the wall
Ten fingers on the left side
The other ten on the right side
Head’s equal part on each side

My street divided by the wall
The right side glowing with neon lights
The left side all lights out
From behind the curtain I observe both sides
The left side never wakes up
The right side never falls asleep
The left side never wakes up
The right side never falls asleep

-Trans. (Zaliwska) Kazik Staszewski
Arahja 1988/2017
Translation. What do we make of this phenomenon in the posthuman context? If translation is meant for readers who do not know the original, then translation is a process of understanding the translatability of the original. But who translates and for whom? Following Benjamin (1921/2002), “a translation issues from the original—not so much from its life as from its afterlife” (p. 254). Considering that translation comes after the original, “translation marks the stage of continued life” (p. 254). Conversely, the translation owes its existence to the original, “the life of the originals attains its latest, continually renewed, and most complete unfolding” (p.255). This nuanced understanding of historicity points to the representation, the manifestation of this “marking” and “attaining.” Representation of the original is not about revealing its “nature,” but about disclosing the relationship between the two wherein lies an intensive form. It is the intensive form, the special kinship of languages, that comes to matter in translation. This kinship holds and can make itself appear, because “languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express” (p. 255). It is here that Benjamin’s important theorizing of historicity for translation and representation hits a roadblock and thus “rejoins the traditional theory of translation”: how can the kinship of languages be represented without “conveying the form and meaning of the original as accurately as possible?” (p. 255). This roadblock provokes Benjamin to consider translation not as a process of transmitting or imitating the form of the original, but rather, as a literary mode that recognizes the translation and the original as fragments of a “greater language.” As a literary mode, the language of translation seeks to represent the essence of change in the very life of language. What makes language alive and full of history is its ability to make
kin with other languages. The life of a language is driven by a desire for expression, and this desire for expression holds through a kinship with another desiring language. In other words, the life of a language depends on a relationship with another desiring language. Change is constituted by the qualities of this arrangement. Therefore, the task of the translator is to account for her own desire for expression, “for just as the tenor and the significance of the great works of literature undergo a complete transformation over the centuries, the mother tongue of the translator is transformed as well” (p. 256).

I jump into Benjamin’s theorization of translation in order to begin theorizing posthuman translation. Considering posthumanism as an untimely methodology for remembering the Humanities, what does a posthuman temporality do to the notion and processes of (being-in-) translation? What is the task of the posthuman translator? The first step might be to re-member the philosophical significance of translation as a site of difference. Following post-colonial explorations of the problematic of translation as “a significant site for raising questions of representation, power, and historicity,” (Niranjana, 1992, p. 1), the question of historicity continues to be unchallenged, subsequently perpetuating the problem of fixity in the construction of colonialism. To problematize this fixity, we need to attend to difference. Attending to difference is not simply identifying/locating/representing difference. It is an attending to the articulation of those differences, making difference matter. Keeping in mind that the articulation of forms of difference constructs “the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse” (Bhabha, 1983, p. 19), what needs to be questioned is the mode of representing difference. While Benjamin’s modern text does not address colonialism per se, his notion of kinship offers a relational understanding of difference, one where
difference is not cancelled out, but rather, responds to an afterlife. I want to move “forward” with this notion of historicity of translation, but with caution. While Benjamin’s relational understanding of difference is useful in developing an untimely methodology, the alterity and ambivalence in his articulation of a language of translation and kinship runs the risk of not only losing its usefulness, but more violently, “unifies the subject of colonial enunciation” (p. 25). In addition to alterity and ambivalence, Bhabha (1983) draws our attention to the ways in which the fetishizing/stereotyping of difference is fixed and reproduced through the uncritical use of metaphors (masking a lack) and metonymies (concealing the masking of lack; double masking).

Translating translation, in this chapter I will rework the notion of kinship through a posthuman historicity in order to move towards more responsible articulations of difference. While the ontological turn in the social sciences and humanities together with our posthuman condition has introduced new images and representations of difference differing such as multispecies (Haraway, 2003, 2008), inhuman (Chen, 2012; Grosz, 2011), more-than-human (Pedersen & Pini, 2016), trans-corporeality (Alaimo, 2010), intra-action (Barad, 2007), viscous porosity (Tuana, 2010), mattering (Puar, 2007; Weheliye, 2014), these new discourses do not always take up the ambivalence of their articulations. Arguably, in many of these articulations, the fixating and fetishizing of difference rears its ugly head. Responding to post-colonial critiques of posthumanism, I begin this chapter by exploring a particular understanding of multispecies through the storying of a generational kinship between my grandmother and I. I then return to this event of storying through an exploration of posthuman translation, with the aim of locating my own ambivalent articulations of difference. Finally, with a focus on the site
of difference and the place in research (Tuck & McKenzie, 2014), I move to re-member the untimeliness of kinship. Moving through the sections in an untimely way, I put to work a radical relationality of translation, offering alternative and creative methods for synthesizing difference, methods that are situational and are re-membered differently and with difference depending on the unique qualities of the arrangements. The aim of this chapter is to show how an untimely methodology creates methods as it re-members, troubling the relationship between method (as a component of and tool for research) and methodology (the justification of research methods).

3.1 Storying Significant Otherness PART 1: Cum panis, specer, and respecere

Ethically speaking, the relational and temporal capacity of the posthuman subject can no longer be confined within the human species. We can no longer afford to think of life as belonging to us, as linear and individualized, as inherent and self-evident. There is far too much at stake in living an all-too-human life. On the line is the ability to ethically endure our posthuman anguish, the capacity to become joyfully discontinuous and worldly, and perhaps the potential to recover from our inhumaneness so that we can have a multispecies future. So we must live a life beyond the self and learn to share “this planet, territory or environment on terms that are no longer clearly hierarchical, nor self-evident” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 71). Posthuman sharing “is to recognize copresence in relations of use…sharing suffering…has to be material, practical, and consequential, the sort of engagement that keeps the inequality from becoming commonsensical or taken as obviously okay” (Haraway, 2008, p. 76, 77). Learning to share goes hand in hand with
learning to live beyond the self: it requires a de-familiarizing framework, one that approaches time not as a barrier, not as a category that assumes we own life, but as a condition of possibility that understands life as something we inhabit.

To think about time in this way is a highly abstract reflective activity that has concrete implications for discursive practices as well as cultural and political consequences. Offering feminism as an example, Grosz (2004) explains that a reflective emergent practice rearranges and restructures the past in order to unravel what is not yet actualized in the present. To rearrange and restructure means to position oneself within and begin the work of revealing the dominant structures that are both taken for granted (the very imperceptible forces that move our lives along), and maybe more importantly, unraveling the very dominant structures that provide the conditions of possibility for such a radical practice. According to Grosz (2004), such a reflective practice “must be latent in and a product of the very systems or structures it challenges” (p. 253), making this practice a virtual effect of the very subject that it challenges. Virtual effect in this context is intimately and radically tied to a notion of temporality. To become a virtual effect of something is to become temporally entangled with “the persistence of the past in the present, and the ongoing revision of the past in the light of its changing relevance to the present” (Grosz, 2004, p. 254).

In this section, I build on an emergent reflective emergent practice through an ongoing empirical project involving a living archive of my grandmother. With a focus on feminist temporality and an exploration of the temporal dimension of Donna Haraway’s companion species, this project asks what it means to co-habit an active history where the transcultural and temporal space of translation is always at stake. In remembering the
materials of our documented interaction in this way, I wonder about how the conceptual can open up the potential for the empirical and the relational to become otherwise, to become out of its time. Through this exploration, I will consider the ethical implications that materialize out of an emergent reflective practice in order to develop methodological imperatives that push us to reconsider once again the force of temporality, the very object and milieu of the (post)humanities.

My grandmother and I inhabit a common nomenclature: we share the same given name for one. We also inhabit the same genus, the same superfamily and taxonomic rank. We share a common motherland and mother tongue. From my grandmother, I have inherited a pliant nature and a stiff upper lip, as well as stubborn bunions and creeping varicose veins. While our natureculture ties us together, we are significantly other from each other. One of our bunions is formed by thick pigskin leather and state-owned rubber pepegis; the other one’s swelling stretches the engineered yarn of Flyknit Nikes. One of us has mastered our native language; one of us is lost in translation. Following Haraway (2003), that we are other to each other is significant and that “in specific difference, we signify in the flesh a nasty developmental infection called love. This love is an historical aberration and a naturalcultural legacy” (p. 3). Znacząco inne dla siebie, pozostające w relacji konkretnej różnicy, ucieleśniamy znaczenie złośliwej infekcji miłością. Miłość ta jest historyczną aberracją i naturokulturowym dziedzictwem (Haraway, 2003/2012, p. 242). According to Haraway, being in difference implies a temporality that derails linear conceptions of history and legacy, practicing instead within this difference which implies a situated practice that departs from what is usual or expected, where the partners that engage in significant otherness do not precede their relating. Put differently, relationships
are not inherited, nor are they ahistorical and timeless, but rather, they are constituted through a differentiating difference, through a mapping of the effects of difference that materializes when species meet. I wonder about what this relational practice can do to a granddaughter-grandmother relationship, where the relationship is normatively and habitually understood as ready-at-hand, as a birthright that precedes the actual relating. What can be learned from taking this relationship seriously? What kind of ethics and politics are needed to promote the flourishing of significant otherness?

Before I explore the temporal dimension of significant otherness, it is important to first flesh out the ontological implications of a situated practice of co-habitation and co-evolution, because implicit in these articulations is a temporal scale. For Haraway, key to grappling inside the flesh of this situated ontology is the use of figures. Figures, according to Haraway (2008) “are not representations or didactic illustrations, but rather material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meanings coshape one another” (p.4). For Haraway, figures have always been where the biological and the artistic come together with all of the force of lived reality. The force of lived reality is understood as a radical presence that can be made concrete by practicing artful combinations. To get in the presence of “demands work, speculative invention, and ontological risks. No one knows how to do that in advance of coming together in composition” (p. 83). Presence, in this framework, is radicalized in that it moves away from the deterministic sense of causality and therefore cuts agency loose from its traditional orbit. Getting into the presence of means making decisions, somehow, in the presence of those who will bear their consequences. It is ontologically risky because the making concrete of the “somehow” is an exclusionary practice and therefore always open
to contestation.

For many years, Haraway has written from the belly of power figures such as cyborgs, monkeys and apes, oncomice, and recently, dogs. Her most recent interest in dogs and what she terms as companion species, departs from past figures to think about a situated ontology that is more than a game of cat’s cradle. Cat’s cradle is a metaphor that Haraway used in her earlier work to flesh out the contact zone of situated knowledge and to illustrate collaborative practices for making and passing on culturally interesting patterns. You cannot win at cat’s cradle, Haraway (1994) reminds us; “the goal is more interesting and more open-ended than that. It is not always possible to repeat interesting patterns, and figuring out what happened to result in intriguing patterns is an embodied analytical skill” (p. 70). This embodied analytical skill requires an alternative form of engagement that nurtures entanglement and generative interruption. It is no longer enough to think about the situated ontology of intriguing patterns as something that figures invite us to inhabit and respond to. According to Haraway, that figures invite us into an ontological situation assumes that a partnership precedes the meeting. Pushing the doubleness of being entangled and responding to that entanglement, we need to reconsider what constitutes this ontological meeting.

Turning to companion species, Haraway reinterprets this contact zone as more than an entangled dimension that demands response and thus constitutes what will be. The word companion, Haraway explains, comes from the Latin cum panis, meaning “with bread.” Companions help each other to consume well. As a verb, to accompany is to consort and to keep company, “with sexual and generative connotations always ready to erupt” (Haraway, 2008, p. 17). The word species, from the Latin specere, means “to
look” and “to behold.” It is at the root of Haraway’s (2008) companion species figure in that it highlights this radical relationality as “a dance linking kin and kind,” where companions must learn to live intersectionally, to untie and better the knots within and across differences, in order to survive collapsing the other into one another. Learning to live intersectionally means inhabiting a temporal mangle where “the partners do not precede the meeting; species of all kind, living and not, are consequent on a subject and object shaping dance of encounters” (p. 4). “Partnerzy nie poprzedzają spotkania; gatunki wszystkich rodzajów, żyjące czy nie, stanowią konsekwencję podmiotowo i przedmiotowo kształtującego tańca spotkań” (Haraway, 2008/2010, p. 4). Unlike the figure of the cyborg, companion species are ordinary knotted beings that are also always meaning-making figures that “gather up those who respond to them into unpredictable kinds of “we”” (Haraway 2008, p. 5). While Haraway primarily reflects on animals who are not meat animals, lab animals or wilderness animals, but who are part of a very particular historical relationship, she makes clear that companion species is a bigger and more heterogeneous category that includes all species, not just animals. Species is about the dance linking kin and kind, and companion species is a figure she uses to explore this relation that human exceptionalism has rendered invisible, one-dimensional, and dangerously simplistic. The event of looking back together is tied to the act of respect: *respecere*. To respond is to look back reciprocally, to notice to pay attention. Responding is what constitutes the emergent ontological practice, the polis where and when species meet. To look back reciprocally means living with the histories that we are coming to know. According to Haraway (2008), “when species meet, the question of how to inherit histories is pressing, and how to get on together is at stake” (p. 35). The event of species
meeting does not happen from scratch, or some kind of initial invitation, but is full of patterns of “their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritage both before and lateral to this encounter” (p. 25). Once one has been in touch with the conditions of possibility that constitute us as companion species, obligations and possibilities for response change. In other words, in thinking about difference in ordinary taken for granted relationships, there is this potential to be touched or affected in a way that requires a new kind of ethics in moving forward and that this micro analysis of difference could have macro global consequences.

To be in touch with is to be situated in what she calls contact zones. Borrowing from Mary Pratt’s adaptation of this term as a linguistic space where improvised languages are developed among speakers, Haraway (2008) uses the term to articulate a space of entangled communication where “sociocultural systems already constituted relationally, enter new relations through historical processes of displacement” (Clifford in Haraway, p. 217). To enter into this relation is to pay attention and to communicate meaningfully. Meaningful here is not necessarily comprehensible (this is where she extends Pratt’s ethnographic terming of contact zones), but perhaps more radically, to communicate meaningfully is to train and play within a field that is disengaged from semiotics and other technologies of understanding.

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I grew up in a Canadian city where, at the time, twenty percent of the population was made up of Polish Canadians. My childhood home was located within a Polish community housing complex. Inhabited by Polish new comers, the playgrounds, parking
lots and other common spaces where filled with the sounds of our native language. My grandmother lived with us for a period of this transition, raising my brother and I and caring for our family home. Every morning, whether in the cold of winter or in the dead of summer, awaiting us was a bowl of warm cereal. Our lunchbags were filled daily with peanut butter sandwiches on buttered rye and polish chocolate bars, foreign items that had no exchange value during lunchtime bartering, where more popular processed sugary snacks were prized. Afterschool, we would gorge on grapes and apples set out for us—the skins carved out by hand. Soon after, homemade soup, followed by a traditional dish involving a kind of artful timing that necessarily goes unnoticed. During those years, my grandmother did not develop friendships outside of the family, did not particularly care for organized events that took place in the complex and did not participate in London’s polonia. Her community was made up of two grandchildren who got a kick out of speaking a language foreign to her ears, grandchildren who at the time did not learn to look back, failing the simple obligation of companion species.

Through an ongoing archival project involving my grandmother, I foray into too many half known territories. Filming my grandmother and I making my favourite childhood dish in her Warsaw kitchen tells the story of significant otherness, “vulnerable, on-the-ground work that cobbles together non-harmonious agencies and ways of living that are accountable both to their disparate inherited histories and to their barely possible but absolutely necessary joint futures” (Haraway, 2003, p. 7). “w ramach kruchej, przyziemnej pracy zbierającej razem niemożliwe do zharmonizowania podmiotowości i sposoby życia, odpowiadające zarówno za swoje odziedziczone, niewspółmierna historie,
Stories of significant otherness means abandoning “a favorite story, a favorite fact, shown to be somehow off the mark” (p. 19). To tell a story of significant otherness, “the practitioner must also have the heart to stay with the story through thick and thin, to inherit its discordant resonances, to live its contradictions, when that story gets at a truth about life that matters” (p. 19).

To tell the story of significant otherness is the work of companion species, part fiction part fact, it is “in process and still at stake, not finished, still prone to falling afoul of facts, but also liable to showing something we do not yet know to be true, but will know” (p. 255).

...Wywiedziona z imiesłowu czasu teraźniejszego niedokonanego, fikcja jest zawsze w toku, niedokończona, zawsze narażona na zderzenie się z faktami, ale także zdolna do ukazania czegoś, o czym jeszcze nie wiemy, że jest prawdą, ale czego się dowiemy...starać się mówić prawdę o tych związkach, współzamieszkiwać wąreącą się historię: oto zadanie ‘gatunków stowarzyszonych,’ dla których ‘relacja’ jest najmniejszą możliwą jednostką analizy (Haraway, 2003/2012, p. 255).
Responding to Haraway’s prompt that interesting research is research on the conditions that make something interesting, my empirical and living archive project involving my grandmother attempts to both co-habit an active history as well as perform a reflective emergent practice that explores the relation as the smallest possible unit of analysis. Returning to these documentations, I remember our relation though a mangle of storytelling and theorizing about relating in significant otherness. Remembering our encounter through the conceptual, our partnership is opened up to remolding the codes of life in flesh and sign. In remembering the event of relating, I wonder about the contradictions and mistakes I make in my quest for knowledge of the intimate other. Who is inviting whom into this ontological relation? How can the conceptual open up the ethical within the empirical, for both messmates? This leads me to ask: What doesn’t translate across difference? I want to learn how to narrate this co-history and how to inherit the consequences of our continual co-evolution. There is no easy way to do this, as Haraway reiterates and elaborates even further “in the face of companion species, human exeptionalism shows itself to be the specter that damns the body to illusion, to reproduction of the same, to incest, and so makes remembering impossible” (Haraway, 2008, p. 165). This is where Grosz and Haraway need each other, where Grosz can push Haraway’s ontology “of staying with all the complexities” (p. 83) to

…leap into the future without adequate preparation in the present, through becoming, a movement of becoming-more and becoming-other, which involves the orientation to the creation of the new, to an unknown future, what is no longer recognizable in terms of the present” (Grosz, 2010, 49).
This reorientation involves a deeper analysis of temporality, a temporal force that constitutes and is constituted by the event of significant otherness. If we are to take Haraway’s call to rethink relations seriously, we must explore the ethical imperatives as well as implications of intervening in the world’s becoming where rewriting the past is intimately tied to rewriting a future. Time, after all, matters.

3.1.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “Cum panis, specer, and respecere”

The unavoidable call to learn to live differently with each other and with difference can no longer be ignored. What is at stake in this resonating call that comes from an elsewhere is response-ability. Ignoring, forgetting and disavowing this call in favour of a more tolerable existence only pushes us further into an anguish that we cannot recognize. Turning a deaf ear to this call from elsewhere puts us in what Sartre calls bad faith, deceiving ourselves and denying our capacity to live differently. The very fact that we can “hear” this call is evidence of our awareness, but more over, an awareness of that awareness. We can no longer ignore that we are always aware that we are more than what we are aware of. Learning to respond to this call means learning to live with a self that is beyond itself. This involves understanding time not as a barrier, not as a category that assumes we own life, but as a condition of possibility that understands life as something we inhabit.
Grosz offers a **reflective emergent practice** of theorizing that is useful in putting to work an untimely methodology capable of engaging with the call from elsewhere. Offering feminism as an example, Grosz (2004) explains that a reflective emergent practice rearranges and restructures the past in order to unravel what is not yet actualized in the present. Rearranging our relationship to a historical past involves an awareness of how our position and ability to reflect is a product of the very systems of structures we wish to challenge. This howness, this relational exploration makes the dominant system of structure virtual, it creates a **virtual effect** of my seemingly inescapable position. This allows re-turning the past in the present, re-visioning the past “in the light of its changing relevance to the present” (Grosz, 2004, p. 254). In an attempt to put an untimely methodology to work, I use Grosz’s emergent reflexive practice to re-member my relationship with my grandmother, asking what it means to co-habit an active history so that I can respond to the temporal space of translation that is always at stake in learning to live with a self that is beyond itself. Entangling storytelling with Haraway’s theorization of **companion species** and the polish translations of her text, I reflect on the assemblage of **significant otherness**. To get in the presence of this artful combination “‘demands work, speculative invention, and ontological risks. No one knows how to do that in advance of coming together in composition’” (p. 83). **Respecere**, or learning to look back reciprocally creates a virtual effect out of the ongoing assemblage of significant otherness, constituting the polis where and when species meet. Responding as respecere is an ability to be in touch with the conditions of possibility that constitute us as companion species, where we learn to inherit histories and learn how to get on together with difference, where obligations and possibility for response change.
Theorizing my relationship with my grandmother through an assemblage of significant otherness and polish translations that interrupt the text, I perform contact zones, points of entry for more meaningful communication where we can build new technologies of understanding. There is no easy way to do this, as Haraway reiterates and elaborates even further “in the face of companion species, human exeptionalism shows itself to be the specter that damns the body to illusion, to reproduction of the same, to incest, and so makes remembering impossible” (Haraway, 2008, p. 165).

3.2 Storying Significant Otherness PART 2: Untimely relations

In her highly cited essay “The Untimeliness of Feminist Theory,” Grosz (2010) offers a new approach for feminist theorizing that returns to the earlier days of feminist studies when the abstract and non-determinable was valued in the analysis of patriarchal relations. She places emphasis on the conceptual not because the empirical has no place, but because “without a conceptual frame, the empirical has no value, no context, no power, it simply is” (p. 49). Without the conceptual, she contends, the empirical cannot hold the potential to become otherwise. To that end, she urges feminism to direct itself to change, “to changing itself as much as to changing the world,” which involves becoming “untimely and abstract of all domains—the future, and those forces which can bring it into existence” (p. 49). Grosz offers two ways of thinking about the untimely: 1) as something that has not been used up in its pastness, and thus its vitality has potential for the present and the future; 2) as something that leaps into the future and therefore is not recognizable in the present. While she clarifies that feminist theory has always directed its inquiries to the nature of the past and present while being radically directed towards a
future, she contends that it has not directly analyzed the force of temporality, which is the very object and milieu of feminist theory.

Responding to such calls, I return to Haraway’s companion species in order to recontextualize the unit of relation as a non-linear potentiality, pushing me to consider a granddaughter and grandmother relationship as immanent, recursive and intensive which simultaneously problematizes modes of observing, describing and intervening in the worlds we are part of. Considering Haraway’s proposition that telling the story of significant otherness is the work of companion species, I remember our contact zone through a mangle of theory, images, translations and recollections in order to “stray from calculable paths…making here and there from leaps, shifting familiarly patterned practices, testing the waters of what might yet be/have been/could still have been, doing thought experiments with our very being” (Barad, 2012, p. 208).

Together, Grosz and Haraway open up a protean analysis of the intensities that make up a life and move it along. Read together, they offer a way to move forward with the recent call to re-member discursive practices as processes of materialization, where agency and future-making are intimately tied in the new materialist project of decentering a humanist epistemology from a representationalist ontology. Following Barad (2003), representationalism is a habit of mind that takes for granted the effects of language and other forms of representation, limiting epistemological possibilities and propagating dominant systems of power that control our onto-epistemological experiences and flatten out our possibilities of being in the world otherwise.
For these reasons, representationalism has received significant challenges from feminists, poststructuralists, postcolonial critics and queer theorists. These anti-humanist challenges generate questions about the ontological gap between representations, entities to be represented, and someone who does the representing, and subsequently formulate possibilities for political intervention that go beyond the framework and common sense appeal of representationalism.

Performativity and performative approaches to discourse analysis is an example of an alternative to representationalism. Barad (2003) references Judith Butler as the name most often associated with the term in feminist and queer theory, but also includes science studies theorist such as Donna Haraway, Bruno Latour and Joseph Rouse in her posthuman reformulation of performativity. According to Barad (2003), a posthumanist notion of performativity problematizes the passivity of matter in post-representationalist accounts (such as Foucault’s analysis of power, and as a result, Butler’s performative elaboration of Foucault’s analysis). Barad argues that while post-representationalist accounts of discursive practices offer an alternative that shifts the focus from linguistic representations, these accounts are constrained by several important factors. Constrained by humanist modes of analysis, post-representationalists fail to account for how matter comes to matter. In failing to account for the active role of materiality in their theorizing, post-representationalists reinscribe the passivity of matter. This is an important factor because it marks and puts into appearance the surviving elements of representationalism that continue to haunt post-representationalist discourses. Barad’s observation offers an interference pattern that breaks away from generational representationalism and builds towards a robust account of materialization “and the material-discursive practices by
which their differential constitutions are marked” (p. 810). In order to begin grasping the mechanisms of this posthuman method, it is important to layout Barad’s conjunctive term that she calls *intra-action*.

*Intra-action*, arguably one of the more popular concepts from Barad’s oeuvre, is tied to Barad’s philosophical account of what she has been calling *agential realism*, a relational ontology that advocates “a causal relationship between specific exclusionary practices embodied as specific material configurations of the world (i.e., discursive practices/(con)figurations rather than ‘words’) and specific material phenomenon (i.e., relations rather than ‘thing’)” (Barad, 2003, p. 814, original emphasis). In other words, agential realism refuses the representationalist fixation on “words” and “things” by acknowledging the taken for granted ontology that happens (or put differently, that materializes) between “knowledge”, “the known” and the “knower.” Agential realism explains that these categories are always in relation, making it once again possible to escape the infinitely repetitive trap of representationalism by shifting the focus to physical optics, from reflection to diffraction, by “reading the insights of feminist and queer theory and science studies approaches through one another […] illuminating the infinite nature of boundaries […] that always entails constitutive exclusions and therefore requisite questions of accountability” (p. 803). Constitutive exclusion is where difference matters, it is a conjunctive event where agency is not an act that presumes the prior existence of independent entities, but rather, it is an intra-active component that is always already entangled with the boundaries of phenomena. That is, the observer and the observed, the known and the knower, are co-constitutive. Not only does this shift our traditional and habitual understanding of agency, but furthermore, it presents us with a
profound conceptual shift. This conceptual shift begins with an experimental metaphysics that moves out of the paradoxical and “sticky problem of humanity’s own captivity within language” (p. 812) while making possible the conditions for the possibility of objectivity. An experimental metaphysics starts with acknowledging that we create ontological relations by effecting a separation between “subject” and “object,” and begins to move by accounting for the materiality (the local resolution within the separation) of the inherent ontological indeterminacy.

The conjunctive term *intra-action* puts emphasis on being-in-relation and therefore flattens out the hierarchy between the “knower”, the “known” and “knowledge” that has privileged the knower as the only actor who has the capacity to act and make meaning. The conjunctive term *intra-action* thus reworks “the classical ontological condition of exteriority between the observer and the observed […] and […] the traditional notion of causality” (p. 815). Accounting for ontological relations, not unlike Haraway’s notion of significant otherness, is a boundary-making practice that germinates further events of relating. It creates interference patterns within the reflective trap of representationalism, patterns and/or cuts where phenomena come to matter. It is at this point of her essay where Barad introduces temporality into the mix of her conceptualizations. Temporality and spatiality, which materialize through the processual historicity of intra-actions, offer new ways of thinking about discursive practices as “dynamic topological reconfigurings/entanglements/relationalities/(re)articulations” (p. 818).

Discursive practices are boundary-making practices, they make local cuts that include the exterior within the phenomenon—they are differential practices. Thus,
discursive practices have no finality; they are causal; ongoing; differential articulations. According to Barad, this demands a genealogical analysis of boundaries and cuts that emerge out of material-discursive practices. In other words, discourse (like matter) is always already an ongoing historicity that requires an analysis that accounts for the intra-action of material-discursive constraints and exclusions. Such an analysis is always entangled with processes of conceptualization that takes difference into account in such a way that it invents with the phenomenon “under analysis” without “reinscribing traditional empiricist assumptions” (Barad 2003, p. 823). An agential ontology opens up a much larger space “that is more appropriately thought of as a changing topology” (Barad 2003, p. 825) where the dynamics of intra-actions enfolds the spacetime manifold upon itself. In other words, the conceptual shift that happens with an intra-active approach to relatiornality provides the condition of an open future, a futurity that opens up a much larger space for material-discursive forms of agency.

Barad’s conceptualization of the future as being radically open at every turn is a constrained freedom as it is conditioned by particular exclusions. An agential realist approach to the future is always already tied to the intimate intra-actions that are always already happening. The future in this sense is not deterministic, it is not a looming event that is bound to the effect of the past and the present. Rather, it is understood on a micro scale, or on a quantum physics scale, as being inherent in the nature of intra-activity. Each intra-action which enacts unique cuts is tied to a momentum that opens up a future. This futurity is mutually exclusive to the particular intra-action. The future is a matter of agency; agency is a matter of intra-acting. A future tied to agential realism is not something that someone or something has, it is enacted through the dynamics of intra-
activity. The future is everywhere and all the time, which is why it entails “a responsibility to intervene in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (p. 827). Following Barad in this particular essay, agency and futurity are conceived as intra-acting and thus are configured as “specific local parts of the world’s ongoing reconfiguration” (p. 829). They are practices of knowing that are also practices of being. Feminist science studies scholars have made the point that our epistemology must take account of our situatedness, that we are part of that nature we seek to understand. Barad expands on this observation by challenging the humanist understanding of “we,” “our” and the “knower” of knowledge projects in. A posthuman situated knowledge accounts for the “beginning,” the materialization, of our situatedness. Accounting for the beginning challenges the positioning of situated knowledge as either “a given or a mere effect of human agency” (p. 827). In other words, a posthuman framework asks that we not only account for our relational situation to our object of study, but moreover, to account for the always already ongoing historicity (the iterative changes) of our situatedness.

In reading Haraway, Grosz and Barad diffractively, I consider my relationship with my grandmother as an ongoing archival project where the persistence of the past in the present can set up the conditions of a possible future. Considering the empirical/archival project as a virtual effect of our significant otherness, I remember our contact zone through a mangle of theory, images, translations and recollections in order to stray from calculable paths so that we can make leaps here and there, or rather, “making here and there from leaps, shifting familiarly patterned practices, testing the waters of what might yet be/have been/could still have been, doing thought experiments
with out very being” (Barad, 2012, p.2). My storying of significant otherness concludes with some fielding questions around research practices in the posthumanities, posthuman practices that activate the past in whatever form the present may enable so that it can provide resources for potentially infinitely future forms: What kind of methodology is required to ensure that a reflective emergent practice is transformative and does not become a resource for affirming and strengthening dominant structures? What kind of relationship to temporality must be learned in order to activate a difference in the present? Pushing even further, how do we conceive of research practices as not proper to either humanism or posthumanism, but rather, as an ethical regard for all sorts of temporalities and corporealities in which species of all sorts are in question. Echoing Haraway (2008), “the ethical regard that I am trying to speak and write can be experienced across many sorts of species differences. The lovely part is that we can know only by looking and by looking back. Respecere” (p. 124).

3.2.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “Untimely relations”

Putting to work Haraway’s companion species through Grosz’s theorizing of untimeliness, I account for the temporal force of storying significant otherness, considering a granddaughter and grandmother relationship as immanent, recursive and intensive which simultaneously problematizes modes of observing, describing and intervening in the worlds we are part of. Creating contact zones re-members in order to make leaps where we can touch an elsewhere, “testing the waters of what might yet be/have been/could still have been, doing thought experiments with our very being”
(Barad, 2012, p. 208). An untimely reading of companion species and a response-able reading of untimeliness invents a protean method for the analysis of the intensities that make up a life and move it along. The force of response-ability returns Barad’s critique of representationalist ontolo-gy with difference. Repeating her critique in the space of re-membering significant otherness, I put the **conjunctive event** of intra-action to work, forcing an encounter with a profound conceptual shift, with the “sticky problem of humanity’s own captivity within language” (p. 812).

This conjunctive moment puts self-reflexive practices in translation, without origins or finalities, inventing with the phenomenon “under analysis.” The future is everywhere and all the time, which is why it entails “a responsibility to intervene in the world’s becoming, to contest and rework what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (p. 827). In reading Haraway, Grosz and Barad diffractively, I consider my relationship with my grandmother as an ongoing archival project where the persistence of the past in the present can set up the conditions of a possible future. The ongoing nature of our translation sets up the conditions of possibility to respond responsibly to all sorts of temporalities and corporealities in which species of all sorts are in question.

### 3.3 Placing Translation: Remembering Untimely Kinships

The conceptual mangle of “Storying Significant Otherness,” originally titled “Becoming companion-species: Re-membering a living history,” was written for the 7th Annual Conference on New Materialisms in Warsaw. Acknowledging the fast approaching thirtieth anniversary of the publication of Donna Haraway’s groundbreaking essay on “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial
Perspective” (1988), the conference invited participants to explore, perform anew, and enliven the concept of situated knowledges. Reflecting on the three main concepts around which the conference was organized, namely space, time, and vulnerability, some of the questions that this conference posed in its call for papers included:

- What kind of generationalities/trans-temporalities emerge in NM? What forms of dialogues with the past are produced?
- How to envision futures as yet un-thought of?
- How does NM travel? How is NM itself situated and performed?
- What kind of knowledges do vulnerable bodies produce? What are the zones of insecurity and vulnerability in/around academia?

Addressing the question of the how of situated knowledges and new forms of collectivity and collaboration, our panel proposed an exploration of Stengers’ “politics of slowness” as a call to think “in the presence of others” (Stengers, 2005, p. 996). The how of slowness, our panel contended, demands that we respond to the question of inheritance (Haraway, 2008) where “in the presence” does not mean we know beforehand how to respond, but rather in the event of relation, politics becomes situated, indeterminate, and artful (Truman & Springgay, 2016). My contribution was the storying of significant otherness, a mangled presentation that performed a living archive of companion species. The mangle included readings of polish translations of Haraway as well as images of cooking with my grandmother. This was not the first time that I have turned to images and my mother tongue as strategies for enacting live cuts in the chronological reading of paper presentations. However, it was significantly different this time around. Presenting an academic paper in my childhood hometown, I was both a native and a foreigner.
Considering the conference was a new materialist meeting and considering its theme “Performing Situated Knowledges: Space, Time, Vulnerability,” the translations mattered. It also mattered that my mother tongue stumbled on itself, the language of polish theorizing unfamiliar to my tongue. It mattered not only as a method of de-familiarization, a method that creates a critical distance from the dominant habits of thought and representation, but simultaneously, it mattered as a method of creating familiarity and intimacy. More than re-connecting with my mother tongue, the translations were meant to offer an entry point for members in the audience who did understand Polish, and for those who only understood Polish. Considering that I stumbled through the Polish theorizing, the entry points did not provide easy access. Instead, the translations made palpable a shared space of translation, opening up the sort of engagement “that keeps the inequality from becoming commonsensical or taken as obviously okay” (Haraway, 2008, p. 77). It mattered that my family was present, including my grandmother. The images, pulled from a video of cooking with my grandmother in her Warsaw kitchen, took on a different agency as well. It mattered that the images were projected in that particular room, in that particular University, in that particular part of the city. Tied to an uncanny historicity, the site of cooking in my childhood home together with the site of the conference deepened my consideration of place in relation to the work of companion species. I want to re-member the situatedness of that presentation, to account for a historicity of kinship and a place of translation. Remembering the site of the research event re-considers the unit of relation as untimely and reminds us of the importance of place in research, where and when relational interventions are possible. In this section, I will theorize place, historicity and respecere
in order to propose a posthumanist account of translation, highlighting the role remembering in performing significant otherness.

The presentation came and went. The shared space of vulnerability held by the translations quickly disintegrated. With the event finished, it was too soon to tell what would become of the experiment, and too late to recall it. If paving the way out of de-familiarization “towards creative alternatives” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 89) is a process of remembering “the intensity of the affective forces” that composed the event, what would it mean to remember an event that remembers remembering my grandmother? Reflecting on the first site of remembering my grandmother as a site of new materialist theorizing, I return to it through a consideration of place as a way to account for and expand out of feminist new materialist interests of human and nonhuman relationality. Returning “Storying Significant Otherness” through critical place inquiry can hopefully begin to account for the affective forces that held the event of sharing in order to consider the ethical implications of untimely relations: who benefits from this relationship, and who suffers?

Following Tuck and McKenzie (2014), while the new materialist/neo-materialist/ontological turn has greatly contributed to the renewed interest of space and “the world,” and despite the variation of these approaches, “most gather place or land into broader categorizations of actors or objects that are views as also influencing and influenced by social life” (p. 14). Caught up in a particular notion of the human intellectually rooted in “Continental philosophy and Anglo-American thought” (p. 14), and with a particular impulse “to reject dualistic separations of the mind from the body, and of nature from culture” (p. 14), the recent turn traversing the social sciences and
humanities leaves place undertheorized. Furthermore, the authors warn that the trendiness of this turn, which lies in its drive to innovate and recalibrate research practices, often leads to a flattened ontology and a reduction of place, which in turn “de-emphasizes the agency of people and politics in attempting to better attend to the inter-connected ‘networks’ or ‘mangles’ of practice in researching social life” (p. 17). Part of the turn’s drive to innovate and recalibrate research practices depends on an innovative use of language and concepts. Echoing Bhabba’s warning of ambivalent articulation, Tuck and McKenzie remind us that the trend of using metaphorical representations of space such as “‘positionality’, ‘locality’, ‘grounding’, ‘displacement’, ‘territory’, ‘nomadism’” (Smith & Katz in Tuck & McKenzie, 2014, p. 18) are often taken up without critical scrutiny and thus “invoke place superficially, too easily” (p. 18).

Through their critical engagements with the ways in which place is (not) taken up in research, Tuck and McKenzie (2014) push us to understand places “as themselves mobile, shifting over time and space and through interactions with flows of people, other species, social practices” (p. 19). Siting my grandmother’s kitchen in the archival project, in my theorizing, in the Polish Academy of Sciences and now in this section, the kitchen travelled over space and time and flowed through concepts, language and social experimentations. Remembering my grandmother’s place as a concrete location with its own historicity—shifting between Warsaw’s political climate, provoking and anchoring family dynamics—it’s a place that both reshapes and is reshaped by flows of people.

Attending to the kitchen as a vital place pushes me to reconsider, with more scrutiny, the storying of our significant otherness, where the kitchen is more than something that contains our relating. (Re)siting the kitchen in Warsaw for colleagues and family,
significant otherness meant something different. The archival project, making my grandmother’s kitchen and our significant otherness archivable, is changed by the technology of the new site.

In “Archive Fever,” Derrida (1995) reminds us that the archive is a *placing* of autobiographical, theoretical, and institutional memories. Placing is an important distinction in that it reminds us that archives create a place for memories to dwell, and as a place of dwelling, the archive “marks the institutional passage from the private to the public” (p. 10). As a dwelling that places memory, the archive unifies, classifies and identifies the past. The archive re-members and is therefore a place where power is continuously reconfigured. Derrida challenges the place from which order is given with a view to interrupt discourses about memory and historiography. Turning to Freud’s notion of the death drive, Derrida deconstructs the passion of the archive and exposes its fever. The placing of memory responds to and is driven by a desire to repress and to forget. This instinctual drive to repress feeds the passion for the archive, to re-member in order to repress. Without the drive to forget, there is no passion for the archive. And without this passion for the irrepressible, for that which is uncontrollably repressed

…there would no longer be any question of memory and of archive…and one would no longer even understand how an ancestor can speak within us, nor what sense there might be in us to speak to him or her, to speak in such an…‘uncanny’ fashion, to his ghost or her ghost. *With* it (p. 27).

The placing of memory as the work of an archive is not about a question of the past, but rather, it is “a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question
of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow” (p. 27). It is about seeking. The archive as an event of re-membering forgetting can only be known in the times to come, or perhaps never. The placing of the archive is out of its time. Re-membering (re)siting the story of significant otherness, in returning to the story through an attention to place, this section seeks out (once again) the story of memory. Accounting for change that the place of re-membering affects, I consider the implications for future kinships: “what is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way” (p. 18). This “vertiginous difference” (p. 40) returns me to the precipice where the future haunts the past.

Accounting for place in research returns the site of remembering and forces a slowing down of thought, where we have a better chance of paying attention to significant otherness “as something other than a reflection of one’s intentions” (Haraway, 2003, p. 28). Performing the translingual mangle of significant otherness, the granddaughter-grandmother relation was lost in translation. The archival project no longer had any relation to record of what is, “to the record of the presence of what is or will have been actually present” (Derrida, 1995, p. 47). In the place of difference differing, significant otherness waits for a future. Stumbling through Polish translations of Haraway, feeling the materialization of my mother tongue, “communication” and desire for expression across irreducible difference is what mattered. Mediating between languages, images, concepts and narrative put us in a place of translation, a vertiginous plane that suspends representation and waits for meaning that is yet to come. Springgay and Truman (2016) propose a thinking-in-movement as a way of becoming “open to stimuli we cannot represent” (p.3), which in turn can shift how we write and represent
“felt difference” (McCormack in Springgay & Truman, 2016). Writing in place is different from writing about place. Writing in place forces a thinking that perpetually escapes capture. Writing in place is always in translation, permanently putting in question just who is at home in the haunted polis where and when species meet. This shifts the archival practice of remembering: “rather than an archive encapsulating what happened, the archive creates invitations to re-activate the event’s core propositions” (Springgay & Truman, 2016, p. 11). Companion species is about looking back and responding anew. It is about becoming curious and recognizing emergent forms of consciousness. The task of companion species is

…the to become coherent enough in an incoherent world to engage in a joint dance of being that breeds respect and response in the flesh, in the run, on the course…and then remember how to live like that at every scale, with all the partners (Haraway, 2003, p. 62).

Writing in place returns me to the event of stumbling-through the Polish translations of Haraway’s “permanently undecidable category” (Haraway, 2008, p. 165) of companion species, re(siting) her metaphor anew. Reading the Polish translation of companion species forced me to experience her metaphor as a moment of co-shaping. Putting her metaphor to work through an interlingual mangle allowed me to slow down the quick rush of metaphoric representations and to feel “the material-semiotic nodes or knots in which diverse bodies and meaning coshape one another” (p.4). Remembering the place in research returns significant otherness back to the process of translation, back to its nuanced historicity and untimeliness. It puts us back on the nauseating precipice where we are confronted with a choice to either live in bad faith and without passion, or to bear
the sickness long enough to learn to look back affirmatively. Duration here is not about
elongating time, but repeating it, a duration that never rests, “searching for the archive
right where it slips away,” running after the archive “even if there is too much of it” (p.
57). To be in duration, to endure, means “to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic
desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a home-sickness, a
nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement “ (p. 57).
We learn to bear this sickness through constant repetition, re-memebering, re-turning.
Looking back affirmatively orders this repetition. There would be no future without
repetition. There would be no future without the return of the repressed. The task of the
translator is to feverishly interrupt the past, to put to work a historicity of re-membering
the presence of the future.

Re-membering the storying of significant otherness as a conference presentation, I
account for a difference that matters between creating place in writing and writing about
place. Speaking the translations to an audience created a different kind interruption that
made the theorizing matter differently than in the discursive space of writing. Re-
membering the site of the research event re-considers the unit of relation as untimely and
reminds us of the importance of place in research, where and when relational
interventions are re-sited and re-made as possibilities. The difference between writing
about place and writing in place comes to matter in the process of re-membering the
assemblage of significant otherness. What comes to matter is the way in which methods
of writing about being in place differ depending on the unique qualities of arrangements.
Moving through the sections in an untimely way creates methods for posthuman
response-ability as the writing re-members itself. Methodology and methods cut into another creating possibilities to respond to the call from elsewhere that is everywhere.
From the mansard roof of a quiet Parisian street, the artist takes a leap, his dark suit contrasting with the white of the sky. If you’re looking at this image for the first time, you’re probably wondering about what happens next, or perhaps what happened before. If you’re familiar with this image, then you are most likely aware of the other images that exposed the illusion of the artist taking flight. If you are aware of this, then you are aware that this image is a photomontage. While the hoax behind this image has become commonsensical, the intentionality of the artist remains a subject of controversy. What we can be certain of is that there are two versions of the photomontage that were
published during his lifetime (which was mysteriously cut short). The first image was published in his fake newsletter *Dimanche*, and the other (with the bicycle missing from the scene) was published in a catalogue for his 1961 show in Germany. Some scholars suggest that this was not a mistake on behalf of the artist. Considering his taste for self-promotion and pranks, and the growing number of artistic interventions and critiques of postwar consumer culture in France, it is reasonable to entertain this possibility. However, with Klein’s mysterious death two years after the image appeared in *Dimanche*, the artist’s intention remains a mystery. Suspended in untimeliness, the spectacle continues to leap.

I enter into this chapter through Klein’s leap, with a focus on his hoax. His humorous deception is both an act of self-promotion and a political response to the increasing post-war consumer culture. Considering the cultural context and a particular taste for aporia that artists, activists and philosophers shared, Klein’s photomontage is a truth-false dance that addresses a world in which everything has become myth and spectacle. His leap addresses the spectacularization of culture by staging an even greater hoax. The hoax allows us to consume the image in a different and more radical way, inviting us to question modes of representation and engage with the conditions of the leap’s impossibility. While the art of the hoax is satirical, the motivation can be very serious. Considering a hoax an artful deception, a good hoaxter “is a very skilled reader and manipulator of textual genres and often specialized discourses” (Fleming & O’Carroll, 2012, p. 45). A hoax is therefore performative, “a deconstructive structure that *inhabits* what it attacks” (p. 46), and so it carries with it the features of the structure that is being hoaxed. Considering the art of hoaxing as a performative act, its relationship to
deception is not fraudulent, but rather, it is a deception that intends to be discovered. The hoaxer is a kind of pedagogue of sorts who engages with an audience in a way that aims to teach them something about their act, and in so doing, about life itself. This intention is untimely in many ways: it lies dormant, suspended in a period of time until its trick is discovered. In the case of Klein’s leap, his hoax was discovered after his death, leaving his intentions up in the air, forever suspended in an untimely void. The hoaxer is therefore an untimely pedagogue who “occupies a strange borderline between truth and falsehood” (p. 46), performing a deception in public and for a public—and waits.

In this chapter, I will explore the untimeliness of the hoaxer in order to think about how the untimely can be taught, or perhaps, how it cannot be taught. The first section will explore the art of temporality in modern avant-garde groups such as Fluxus and the incorruptibles with a focus on the conditions of possibility of these process-based practices. The following section delves further into artful temporalities, situating untimely practices within conjunctive moments where time teaches. The final section explores the pedagogical slippage of teaching time as a condition of possibility for an untimely methodology and posthuman pedagogies. Throughout the sections, I will consider the ethics of the hoax in relation to the simultaneous concealing and revealing of posthuman memory and translation. What kind of artful expertise is required to perform out of time, and at who’s expense?
4.1 Untimely Mediations: *Fluxus, Dissemination and Research on Research*

*Fluxus* was first coined by its co-founder George Maciunas in 1961 after attending John Cage’s class at the New School in New York, where the undisciplined avant-garde movement was beginning to stir. At least that is one account of the inauguration of the term. But perhaps we can begin tracing the movement earlier, with John Cage’s frequent visits to Black College Mountain. Founded in 1933 between the isolated foothills of the Great Smokey Mountains, Black College Mountain served as one of the leading experimental art schools in America until its closure in 1957. Founded on the principles of John Dewey’s (1916) progressive education with its emphasis on learning by doing and subsequent de-emphasis on textbooks and “uniformity of procedure,” the school created a democratic environment that placed equal weight on academia, the arts, and manual labour, freeing these activities from their industrial occupation and “the conditions under which they are carried on” (Dewey 1916, p. 218). As a result, “there were few formal academic requirements, no required courses, no grades, and limited resources” (Perrow, 2013, p. 77). In terms of instruction, the college set out “to teach method, not content,” and the role of the teacher was to function as a “working ‘artist,’ in the teaching world…to be and increasingly to become productive, creative, using everything that comes within his orbit, including especially people” (Katz, 1952/2003, p. 202). Both student and artist/teacher engaged in experimentation, embracing the contradiction of “going to school” to unlearn learning.

The college also served as a summer institute for the arts. Initiated in 1944, the college held its summer institutes annually, and considering the influx of new and
temporary people that made up the session, the annual meetings offered a different
experience than in the typical school year. According to the historian Martin Duberman
(1972), “the summer people weren’t trying to make a life in Black Mountain; they were
trying to put together a concert or an art show…The result was that the summer institutes
often were utopias of a sort”. For many artists, the institute was a place that would help
them to imagine what they would finish next. John Cage’s first visit to the institute in
1948 is where he imagined a new school that would break down the conventional ways of
schooling. Calling this schematic new school “the finishing school,” Cage together with
Merce Cunningham and Buckminster Fuller imagined the school as a caravan that would
travel from city to city (Fuller in Jones, 1993). The institute also served as a testing
ground for his experimental musical compositions and unpredictable performances that
he would later bring with him to New York.

Between 1950 and 1960, John Cage taught academic courses on compositional
innovations at New School for Social Research. Following Allan Kaprow’s account of
Cage’s “Experimental Composition” course that took many times between 1956 and
1961, Cage would never assign anything, but would often suggest compositional
exercises, for example, “prepare a two minute piece for barely audible sounds” (Kaprow
in Bernstein & Hatch, 2001, p. 171). These compositional exercises were related to
Cage’s own compositional projects, which involved apparent silence and sound
reception. Over the years, his engagement with teaching would later shift his
compositions toward theater, performing “amateur” compositions written by students
who would go on to form Fluxus. This included George Brecht, who in the course of his
studies with Cage invented the *event score*. In the form of brief verbal (and later written)
scores that compromised of lists of terms or open-ended instructions, these event scores acted as prompts or performative devices for indeterminate compositions. Before being adopted and made popular by Fluxus artists, event scores were intended by Brecht as “structures of experience” that can potentially reveal the underlying connections between chanced forms. Usually hand written on small cards, his scores were brief and contained only a few terms, sometimes only one (Lippard, 1973, p.11). Deriving from a series of notebook entries where Brecht ‘analyzed’ a range of composers. His music analysis bears no relation to traditional models of musical analysis. For example, one entry counts the number of pitch classes in Beethoven’s String Quartet No. 11, another compares “sound variables” to their “light analogs” (p. 33). These ‘analytical’ notes would then be used to create a series of propositions. Brecht explains in a 1967 interview:

…Suppose that music isn’t just sound. Then what could it be? And thinking this, I made a series of propositions. For example, a string quartet where the players simply shake hands. They have their musical instruments and they sit as they would to play a quartet, but they just shake hands…I don’t think we know now whether or not music has to have sound—whether or not music necessarily involves sound. And if it doesn’t, a possible direction of research is to see what it can be (Martin, 1978, p. 81).

With this shift from the aural, the event score becomes as much an invitation to find an event as to perform it. Brecht’s unconventional approaches to the analysis of music prompted a series of pieces. Examples include Solo for Violin Viola Cello or Contrabass (1962) where the instrument is polished, not played; Comb Music (1962) instructed to make music with a non-sounding instrument; Solo for Wind Instrument (1962) instructed
to put down the instrument. As his event scores accumulated, he started to mail them out to various friends, sending out what he called “little enlightenments,” communicating the scores to his friends “who would know what to do with them” (Brecht in Robinson, 2005, p. 70). The issue of distribution was a concern for Brecht as early as 1959, when he asked “shouldn’t scores be simply published in the newspaper, or available on printed cards or sheets of paper, to be sent to anyone” (Brecht in Robinson, 2005, p. 135)?

This concern for distribution and public engagement along with what he observed at the New School, Maciunas set out to capture this movement both by giving it a name and by creating an alternative mode for publishing and circulating the work. With the aim to create a quarterly magazine that would provide an overview of a culture in flux, Maciunas consulted his dictionary in search of both a name for his magazine and a word to capture the dynamism of the movement. In his publication Fluxus...Tentative plan for contents of the first 6 issues issued in 1961, he rearranged 5 of the seventeen different meanings for flux to define the movement, bringing to the fore the association of purging, “to cause a discharge from” (Maciunas in Phillpot & Hendricks, 1988, p. 10). Other definitions that built Maciunas’ title included: “to affect, or bring to a certain state, by selecting to, or untreated with, a flux”; “Act of flowing; a continuous moving on or passing by”; “The setting in of the tide toward the shore”; “State of being liquid through heat; fusion” (Maciunas in Phillpot & Hendricks, 1988 n.p. referencing an image of Maciunas’ manifesto reproduced in said book). Maciunas’ concept for the magazine remained exactly that: a documented conceptualization. Instead of a quarterly magazine, Maciunas set out the aims of undisciplined movement in his Manifesto of 1963. Two years after his Tentative plan, the definition of flux could no longer encompass the
developing intentions of the movement, prompting Maciunas to promote three particular senses of the word: purge, tide, and fuse (Phillpot & Hendricks, 1988). The unified aims of Fluxus were now established as purging “the world of bourgeois sickness, ‘intellectual,’ professional and commercialized culture,” promoting “a revolutionary flood and tide in art, promote living art, anti-art, promote non art reality to be grasped by all peoples,” and fuse “the cadres of cultural, social and political revolutionaries into united front and action” (Maciunas in Phillipot & Hendricks, 1988, n.p). Two years later, Maciunas would reformulate his manifesto which was significantly different in tone highlighting amusement and humour as integral to establishing artists nonprofessional status in society. In many ways, Maciunas’s conceptualizations of the movements were always out of their time, playing catch up with a movement that refused, by its very nature, to be disciplined. Maciunas’ (re)conceptualizations matter, they activate a historicity of a movement and highlight the ephemeral spirit that brought this movement together, if only for a moment.

The story of Maciunas’ coining of the term is only one story of the beginning of Fluxus. Some art historians trace the inaugural moment of Fluxus visibility to a panel discussion at MoMA on October 19, 1961 (Harren, 2016, p. 45), an event that Maciunas attended. Further complicating the origin story, during the Q&A portion of the panel, Maciunas’ write-in-question which was read out loud cited him as the editor of a Fluxus magazine which did not yet exist (Harren, 2016). The temporal mangle of the movement as undisciplined and as recorded is further complicated considering that the movement had another parallel life in Western Europe. The difference between European and North American avant-garde practices is reflected in the references to contemporary political
events. The art historian Gunter Berghaus explains that the North American movement “regarded their activity as an apolitical means of changing people’s attitudes towards life,” whereas by contrast, the European movement confronted their “alienated existence in late-capitalist society…encouraged to experience the authenticity of their existence in opposition to ‘life unlived’” (Berghaus in Bishop, 2012, p. 91).

It seems as though marking a beginning of this movement, an origin so to speak, is bootless. Perhaps the best place to start an exploration of this radical movement is to acknowledge the problem of representing such an anarchic and ludic movement that is rooted in the ephemeral quality of its process, a quality of the experience of making work. Following the Fluxus art historian Chris Thompson (2011), the conundrum of how to write a history on practices and mostly unrecorded performances in which nothing in particular seems to have happened requires “a strange kind of art history” (p. xvi). Such a strange art history involves a methodology that resists converging stories into an intelligible discourse, and moves towards putting these stories to work. This involves a particular scripting that maps a “constellation of individuals, ambitions, failings, ideas, initiatives, works, and doesn’t-works” while also scripting “the theoretical machinations necessary to make this ‘intrigue’ intelligible” (Thompson, 2011, xxvi). Inspired by the French Fluxus artists Robert Filliou and his figure of the imaginary ethnography, Thompson (re)scripts the history of Fluxus through Filliou’s proposition of scholarly nonknowledge.

Almost half a century ago, the French Fluxus artist and later Tibetan Buddhist Robert Filliou imagined a similar methodological situatedness that put forward a radical vision of experimental ethnography. In his multi-book *Teaching and Learning as*
Performing Arts (1970), Filliou sets out to apply the participation techniques developed by avant-garde artists to ease the problems inherent to teaching and learning. He does this by engendering the very method that he is exploring. As a multi-book, the aim of its form is to provide a shared performative space for both the reader and the author. There is a transparency to his thought process, a thinking out loud that involves moments of stuttering, rambling and self-doubt. The ethos is unapologetic, allowing the reader to move through uncertainty and taste the audacity of the author’s method. He offers propositions that mimic a workbook in order to engage with his reader. He interrupts his explanations with spontaneous thoughts, recollections and coming-across of materials: “I just come across a note made two years ago: ‘Built in in the book must be its own satire, contradiction and eventual obsolescence.’ Let’s try it” (p. 12). He digresses: “Of course things turned out somewhat differently from what I had planned. Writing also is a performing art” (p. 14). He shares the correspondences he had with colleagues during the writing of the book. He offers research methods for teachers and ethnographers interested in the point of view of pupils and in assessing the innocence and imagination of children. He invents an imaginary ethnographer who is faced with the following question from his objects of study: “Hey, instead of studying us, why not come over here and have a drink with us” (p. 87)?

In reading this multi-book, there is no sense of rush: it takes its time and its own course. Both a work-in-progress and a workbook, his piece acts as an intermedium (Higgins, 1966), a situatedness of work in the present moment of its creation, where we can attend “to the inherent qualities of the media and the way they do or do not respond,” and where we can experience “the internal dialogue that happens between oneself and
one’s work” (Thompson, 2011, xxvii). It is an example of what he would later refer to as “research on research,” where research is the object of inquiry. In a short text that he published after a month long residency, he outlined a practice of attention to the ways in which the researcher’s methodology and discursive terrain (which Filliou terms territory) shape one another. What is evident—once again—in his explanations is a particular ethos. He writes: “Getting a territory inside the Territory was in itself research…at times I felt I knew what I was doing, at times I felt I didn’t. I worked on a hunch, an intuition, or rather several of them” (Filliou, 1971, n.p.). This celebration of spontaneity and emphasis on leisure and delay threaded into a modernist liberatory discourse, one that we should consider in order to begin to understand the conditions of possibility for this experimental work that makes this kind of audacity possible and potentially methodical.

Filliou’s artistic engagement with the everyday processes of life would have been difficult to enter into if it was not for a specific ethos that was intensifying during the postwar era of consumerism, specifically in France. The field of hobbies had become a focus of 1950s French sociology, in particular Henri Lefebvre’s study of leisure. Lefebvre stressed that leisure needs to gain critical importance and be explored materially and philosophically in order to recuperate our relationship to our everyday life—the visible sphere of daily activities that has become subject to the same alienation as the workplace. According to Lefebvre, certain leisure activities have the potential to become subversive acts within the field of consumption and can act as modes of resistance to the speed of progress and modernization. The slowness and repetitiveness of say cooking a meal can reveal a modality, a feeling of being situated, the experience of lived time that vanishes at the same time it makes itself known (Lefebvre, 1958/2002). Lefebvre would
later expand on the potential of leisure in his theory of moments where he understood the rhythm of everyday life revealing itself through the form of a moment. For Lefebvre (1958/2002), a moment is “the attempt to achieve the total realization of a possibility” (p. 348). What is important and should be stressed in his definition is a moment’s attempt at revealing a possibility. This attempt to be situated in a moment “is to exhaust it as well as to fulfill it…the moment wants to be freely total; it exhausts itself in the act of being lived” (p. 348). Through his theory of moments he develops an ethics of becoming exhausted. He explains that the moment begins and opens up through everyday decisions since these decisions perceive possibilities. We make decisions everyday, and in their inauguration, what is possible and what is not possible is not yet part of the conflict; “they are merged; there are no exact, predetermined limits which would enable a decision on what is possible and what is impossible” (p. 351). Once the choice has been made, he explains, the distant impossibility becomes an imminent possibility. When a decision is made, it pushes back the boundaries of impossibility: “it risks the possible to attain an impossible which at first seemed beyond the bounds of risk and chance” (p. 351).

What Lefebvre offers us here is an ethics around failure and perhaps even a pedagogy of anticipation. What he offered Filliou was a condition of possibility to create a practice out of moments, a space to materialize the experience and inhabit the moment of a work’s creation. It provided him with a license to experiment with the instant of failure and to develop an anticipatory method.

Of course, there were other cultural and historical factors that played into Filliou’s experimental ethics. His research on research would have been difficult to articulate without current experiments with media, more specifically, the uncharted space that lies
between media. The intermedia ethos was a central characteristic of Fluxus, an international experimental art hub that emerged in the 1960’s. Working in small formats and with mostly ephemeral materials, the focus of the Fluxus artists was to teach the art of living in the present. The way that they did that was through attempts to erase the culturally constructed borderline between art and life, to give shape to experiences by means of an action or gesture (for example making a salad, or making a sound using a comb). These gestures were meant to lift everyday routine experiences from its ordinary context an invite them to an aesthetic experience. This focal center on life and lived experience became key to the term *intermedia*. Proposed by the Fluxus artist Dick Higgins (1966), an intermedium “is not governed by rules, each work determines its own medium and form according to its need” (p. 41). In terming this in-between ontologically engaged art practices, Higgins does not mean to suggest that it is an innovation tied to that particular cultural moment, but rather, his aim was to create a referent for understanding the experiments undertaken by Fluxus artists. He explains, decades later, that

…intermediality was needed to suggest their historical trajectory, to see their sometimes obscure pedigree…it allows for an ingress to a work which otherwise seems opaque and impenetrable, but once that ingress has been made it is no longer useful to harp upon the intermediality of a work. No reputable artist could be an intermedial artist for long—it would seem like an impediment, holding the artist back from fulfilling the needs of the work at hand, of creating horizons in the new era for the next generation of listeners and readers and beholders to match their own horizons to (Higgins & Higgins, 2001, p. 53).
I quote this at length because it communicates the desire to name an undisciplined movement, to build a concept around a movement, and also because it exposes this desire as a performative gesture that produces a social fabric, a temporary resting spot from which we can invent trajectories towards new ways to live and work together.\(^3\)

In order to more fully flesh-out this space of enactment where we leap towards new modes of capture, an exploration of Derrida’s distinction between scission and dissemination as well as an engagement with the cultural context of his theorizing is needed. In his essay collection *Dissemination* (1972/2004), Derrida explores the distinction between philosophy and literature, contending that philosophy strives against the grain of language to uncover the absences that language covers up, while literature plays with the deception of language. In deconstructing both literature and philosophy, Derrida reveals how discourse has the potential to reveal its own contradictions. I focus on the third and last essay of the collection (pp. 287-366) where Derrida distinguishes between *scission* and *dissemination*.

Scission is a necessary violent *castration* or cut (p. 301) performed upon a text that opens it up to new discourse, and dissemination is what happens after scission—it is a material transfer of what comes out of scission to a new discursive context. In distinguishing the two actions, Derrida focuses on the moment of material transfer where there is a power struggle at play. He contends that scission belongs to dissemination

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because it is the necessary condition for it, but at the same time, it does not belong to dissemination because of its role as the binary opposite of dissemination—it castrates dissemination. In other words, scission signifies violence, which dissemination represents, and in representing it, closes the violence produced by the scission. Thus, scission establishes a power that dissemination seeks to relinquish: “This scission, this opening, this pure appearance of appearing though which the present seems to free itself from the textual machine (dissemination) in fact denounces itself at every moment” (p. 308). It is in this moment between “freedom” and denouncement, opening and closing of the text, where material performs. Scission produces presence; it is an operation that gives apparent immediacy but then falls under the sway of a machinated structure—of dissemination. It is in this moment of material transfer identified by Derrida where he seeks to invent a system of representation that can work within the space of difference created by the act of scission. This system is made manifest throughout his book as he superimposes different texts onto one another. By drawing our attention to the material transfer of scission as a place of intervention where we can potentially develop new systems of reference, Derrida offers a methodology that blurs the boundary between scission and dissemination, creating an event of dissemination cutting into itself. How can this event be captured? What kind of representational strategies would allow this event to happen?

According to Ulmer (1983), Derrida’s critical writing is easier to understand in the context of modernism in the arts, as his post-criticism practice is constituted by “the application of the devices of modernist art to critical representation” (p. 83). Specifically, Ulmer points to Derrida’s stylistic intervention within the moment of material transfer,
his use of the critical device of montage and collage. Acknowledging collage and montage as predominate devices of 20th century art, Ulmer distinguishes collage as “the transfer of materials from one context to another” and montage as “the dissemination of these borrowings through new setting” (p. 84). In writing about the moment of transfer between scission and dissemination, Derrida is simultaneously enacting this event by superimposing secondary text onto his own text. The book becomes both an act of scission through the transfer of materials from one context to another, as well as a mode of dissemination. It is both scission and dissemination, collage and montage: the text acts out its object of study. The point here is not to cancel out dissemination in order to restore scission’s power, but to think of dissemination as an act of scission. In other words, dissemination still exists as a cultural product, however, it is consumed in a different way. Dissemination enacts the material transfer between scission and dissemination, offering a new mode of representation as well as a methodology, or what Derrida famously calls a “wandering of the semantic” (Derrida, 1972/1982, p. 244).

These untimely mediations remind us that a concept is not only a condition of possibility for experimental work, but it is also materializes a discourse that we can trace in various movements, as well as return to in order to create temporary regularity within the precariousness of being situated in difference. Concepts also have the potential to return to us, to sneak up in front of us, to trip us on our mundane and oversimplified trajectories. Concepts provide aesthetic freedom. Following Deleuze and Guattari

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“concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies…They must be invented, fabricated, or rather created” (p. 5), a concept “is not formed but posits itself in itself—it is a self-positing” and thus has “an autopoetic characteristic by which it is characterized” (p. 11). Understood in this way, concepts are singular moments, they love to happen. To understand them, we must analyze the conditions of their creation.

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994), this approach is critical to safeguarding aesthetic freedom from being reabsorbed by universal capitalism, and to uphold what Ricoeur (1970) coined a hermeneutics of suspicion. If every concept is a multiplicity, “a matter of articulation, of cutting and cross-cutting” (p. 16), then an engagement with its fragmentary whole is an invitation to occupy its expression. Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of concept is thus yet another approach to a critical situatedness where research speaks the event of research, articulating its happening as it happens, positing itself at the same time as it is created. The researcher becomes entangled with her concept: she becomes a condition of possibility for the concept, and simultaneously, the concept brings the researcher to life. She becomes what Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) call a conceptual personae, an intermediary that produces a movement of thought and inhabits the concept’s immanent plane where she can become “something unexpected and take on a tragic and comic dimension that [she] could not have by [herself]” (p. 73). To be sustained in this entangled moment, to become an intermedium, the researcher must face the risks and dangers confronted by thought, “the false perceptions and bad feelings that surround it” (p. 76). The willingness to be situated and to explore the concept of a concept requires, according to Deleuze and Guattari, a taste for the undetermined concept
(p. 78), an “affective Athleticism” (p. 172), and therefore the ability and willingness to endure and return from “a zone of indetermination” (p. 173).

4.1.1 Untimely interlude: Making connections in “Fluxus, Dissemination, and Research on Research

Exploring temporality as a medium for artistic, philosophical and ethnographic practices, what materializes is a revolutionary taste for becoming out of one’s time and bringing something incomprehensible into the world. At the heart of these explorations is an inventive method that creates its own logic for justification. This includes Fluxus propositions, a series of proposals and instructions written to explore the limits of a particular medium, and to move the reader from simplicity towards complexity. As an artistic movement that attempts to disrupt the conditions of possibility that describe, validate and coin its practices, Fluxus is perhaps best recognized as an undisciplined movement that resists cultural consumption and capture. This problematizes the movement’s historicity and thus a representational understanding of its practices, requiring what art historian Chris Thompson (2011) calls “a strange kind of history” (p. xvi). Such a strange history involves a methodology that resists converging stories into an intelligible discourse, and moves towards putting these stories to work. This involves a particular scripting that maps a “constellation of individuals, ambitions, failings, ideas, initiatives, works, and doesn’t-works” while also scripting “the theoretical machinations necessary to make this ‘intrigue’ intelligible” (Thompson, 2011, xxvi). Put differently, to tell the story of an undisciplined movement requires putting their experimental methods
to work, enacting research on research, where research is the object of inquiry. This kind of research is about charting moments, charting lived experiences of everyday decisions and their perceived possibilities. It is about being re-situated in the research event, a being in-the-midst that can teach us the art of living in the present as opposed to the art of capture.

Derrida’s (1972/2004) *Dissemination* offers a generative challenge to representational thinking that helps us to pay attention to the moment of material transfer, the becoming material of an event. The moment of material transfer offers an opportunity to invent a system of representation and to create a stylistic intervention where representational thinking cuts into itself, offering a new style and mode of theorizing that forces a different kind of consumption. This different kind of consumption re-situates the research event in ways that account for the forces and moments of every day life that are at odds with their representations.

4.2 Conjunctive moments: Research-creation and a teaching time

Returning to Klein’s *Leap into the Void* as an untimely mediation of becoming intermedial, I would like to address the untimely qualities of its medium and the way they do or do not respond. In other words, in thinking about the medium of Klein’s leap as both a hoax and a photomontage, I would like to explore the conjunctive moment when and where the medium teaches us something about the nature of time. In this section, I enter into the exploration of the possibility for time to teach by foraying into
photomontage as a modernist avant-garde revolution in representation, and subsequently move into the conjunctive moment of research-creation.

 Considering photomontage as a modernist avant-garde revolution in representation, it is perhaps best understood as a challenge to the age of reproduction and as a method of subverting the machine (camera) by using it in ways that challenge its supposed objectivity. Man Ray, for instance, subjected the camera, a seemingly rational and predictable tool, to the accidental elements of exposure. Heartfield’s political photomontages parody the aesthetics of propaganda, subverting the power status of the camera. Walter Benjamin turned his attention to the way in which photography had thrown art itself into crisis, arguing in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1935/1969) that with new technologies of reproduction came the loss of the ‘aura’ of a work of art, the loss of its presence and unique existence in time and space. Avant-garde artists such as the Dadaists liberated art by reconstructing it through this new machine-made aesthetic, which consequently liberated the camera from its technical purpose. As a result of the new machine-made aesthetic, the artist and technology entered into a mutually liberating relationship that was none the less complex. The camera, for example, still maintained its “unresolvable internal conflict between liberating and annihilating power” (Fijkalkowski, 1987, p. 247). Roland Barthes, another prominent 20th century writer on photography, focuses on the paradoxes of the photograph and its nature in his essay “The Rhetoric of the Image” (1964/1977). Through an analysis of an image of a pasta brand, Barthes demonstrates the ways in which the image is perceived as portraying reality while in fact the image is constructing reality,
arguing that “natural” reality is not encoded, but rather, it is its reproduction as a visual image that codes “natural “ reality and enforces cultural meaning upon it.

What distinguishes photography from other means of visual representation? How do photographs acquire meaning? What impact do they have on our ways of experiencing and making sense of experience? Such questions have been central for key twentieth-century philosophers, critics and artists who turned to photography as a means to theorize the expanding boundaries of representation within the golden age of the machine. Klein’s photomontage is thus tied to these debates around how photographs operate, as well as how it can be used to resist dominant structures and practices. As a leading member of the French artistic movement *Nouveau réalisme*, one of a number of movements which called for an “art of experience” in a world where the conventions of society and mass media blanket the immediacy of experience (Metzger, 1962/1996, p. 403), Klein’s work explored this inaccessibility of experience of the post-industrial age. While artists such as Francoise Dufrene and Raymond Hains experimented with a décollage technique, the opposite of a building-up technique which entailed cutting, tearing away and at times removing pieces of an original image, Klein’s work exposed the ways an image depends on hidden *dispositifs* (Foucault, 1975/1977; Agamben, 2006/2009). Working through spaces of advertisement and using the devices of promotion, Klein’s images simultaneously exposed elements of the apparatus and its “capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings” (Agamben, 2006/2009, p. 14) as well as created an aesthetic “of total institutional and discursive contingency, but also one of total spectacularization” (Buchloh, 2000, p. 269). It is hard to deny that Klein’s work was engaging with an
emerging generation of French philosophers, who Hélène Cixous called the *incorruptibles*, later interpreted by Derrida as an:

…ethos of writing and thinking…without concession even to philosophy, and not letting public opinion, the media, or the phantasm of an intimidating readership frighten or force us into simplifying or repressing. Hence the strict taste for refinement, paradox, and aporia (Derrida, 2005, p. 33).

Klein’s *Leap into the Void* performs such an affirmative ethos through an artful combination of photomontage and hoaxter sensibility. By publishing two versions of his leap, the first in his self-published “newspaper” and the second version in an exhibition pamphlet, Klein reveals to us (whether intentionally or not) the deceptive feature of photography precisely by using this formal feature to perform his leap. Not only does he use the mechanisms of dissemination to perform (expose) the photograph, but he extends his trickery into the field of reproduction and dissemination. His newspaper does not have the gatekeeping mechanisms of peer reviewers, editors, and publication guidelines to which he must abide by. Thus, what he did was create a *new logic*, a new conceptual form that merges scission with dissemination, the event with representation, in such a way that does not reduce one to the other, but rather, in a way that brings the two together while maintaining their differences. This audacious attitude and appetite for paradox is pedagogical, it communicates something apt about life itself. This pedagogical call is untimely, its conjunctive moment hinged in a future event, in a response from elsewhere

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that may never come to fruition. What, if anything at all, can this temporal fracture teach us? Following Manning and Massumi (2014), when the untimely does happen, it is “an immediate commotion of qualitative texturing” (p. 4), an immediacy which forces us to recognize our untimely arrival to the scene, and begin to churn ourselves out of the sting of being hoaxed. This churning out of time resonates with research-creation practices, practices which inhabit conjunctive moment between research and creation where time is altered.

Research-creation is a recently recognized academic practice within the social sciences and humanities in Canada. As a research category first introduced by Quebec-based Fonds Québécois de la Recherche sur la Société et la Culture (FQRSC) in 2000, then shortly after by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), and later by the Canada Council for the Arts (CCA), research-creation focused exclusively on the Fine Arts. The original meaning and function of research-creation was about creating or interpreting works of art. Interpretation in this original meaning was more instrumental than analytical. Since then, it has gained ground in other programs, beginning with the 2012 SSHRC Insight Grant competition, which recognized the creative process as an essential part of the initial stages of research activity, and later as an eligible activity across its Talent and Connection programs. Moving away from the early precedent set by the FQRSC, SSHRC defines research-creation not as a method of creating and interpreting works of art, but as “an approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation” (SSHRC, 2013a). While FQRSC and CCA understand research in research-creation as an
investment of time and resources for artists to explore and research possibilities “in conjunction with production” (Canada Council, 2011), SSHRC is unique in that it understands research in the context of research-creation as an interdisciplinary process that “fosters the development and renewal of knowledge through aesthetic, technical, instrumental or other innovations” (SSHRC, 2013b). As a newly recognized research category in Canada, it has mobilized the role of the artist as researcher as well as the role of researcher as artist.

As a research category, research-creation “set in place a structure of standardized quality control and an accounting of quantitative results of the kind the arts have historically resisted” (Manning & Massumi, 2014, p. 85). This introduces an interesting tension in the artist’s creative process. In providing an overview of the biggest funding council for research-creation, the goal is to focus on the issues and contradictions of funding artistic research, and how these issues (if critically engaged) can actually enable a creative process—one that leaps out of its time. With this focus on tensions and contradictions, the analysis of the conditions of possibility for research-creation can open up and develop a mode of critical engagement with any funding bodies that make research possible. However, some contextual comparisons will be helpful and perhaps will make more clear how the conditions of possibility of research are at the same time the very conditions that make the research activity impossible.

The term arts-based research originated at an educational event at Stanford University in 1993 as a “process that uses the expressive qualities of form to convey meaning” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, xii), and has since spread into institutions world-wide, especially within the burgeoning PhD programs in studio art (Elkins, 2009). Britain and
Australia, for example, frame this artistic method as “practice as research” (PaR), an overarching term to describe “the knowledge and other outcomes of studio-based inquiry” and to assess “how creative arts research methodologies may lead to more critical and innovative pedagogies in research training” (Barrett & Bolt, 2007, p. xi). These complex forms of creative research have directly contributed to the increase in non-traditional approaches to qualitative research that support alternative ways of knowing and representation. Examples include Narrative Inquiry, Participatory Action Research, Autoethnography, and other unconventional theoretical frameworks that are slowly expanding the options for scholars in the social sciences and humanities. This is particularly evident in the growing number of non-traditional doctoral programs and experimental dissertations that push the literary boundaries of conventional academic prose. Yet, despite the seeming hopefulness of these growing numbers and increasing institutional support, there have been few increases in rhetorical diversity (Belcher, 2009). This could be due to the novelty of such work, and the concerns it raises around assessment, validity and productivity—concerns which produce rather hostile research environments that, if engaged, require a high level of risk-taking.

Arguably, one of the most complex risks that a creative researcher is called to take is to engage with the inherent contradictions—the conditions of possibility—that makes their research possible. Funding is a necessary component to engaging in creative research. At the same time, it is the very component that requires the researcher to assess and validate the creative project in advance. How can we take experimentation as a vehicle for new knowledge seriously if we are asked to produce a research plan beforehand and feel the constant pressure to produce results? Although SSHRC recognizes the
importance of funding the creative process as a means for producing critically informed work, as a funding body, it inevitably produces mechanisms of measurement evidenced in the criteria for programs and initiatives which fall under research-creation (ex. Talent, Insight, Connection). These criteria code the research activity as being “designed to assist the research community in its efforts to promote effective research training and career development,” which is further understood to do the following: 1) “build both academic (research and training) competencies and general professional skills, including knowledge mobilization, that would be transferrable to a variety of settings;” 2) “include international and/or intersectoral opportunities wherever possible and applicable;” 3) “include specific, effective mentoring and institutional support” (2013b). Partly, the contradictions that the creative researcher must engage with are those of rhetoric, but mainly it is the contradiction of engaging in the logical fallacy of the application process that asks the researcher to have her research formula worked out before engaging with the creative process. It is this contradiction that sets up a different kind of requirement for the creative researcher: the willingness to manoeuvre around the risky business of engaging with the conditions of possibility and reshape the terms that define them.

Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuck (2012) explore the historical roots of research-creation in order to flesh out what it takes to engage in “epistemological interventions into the ‘regime of truth’ of the university” (p. 6). According to the authors, “the development of larger and more refined vocabularies for discussions around research-creation is paramount if we are to develop the concept’s methodological and critical potential” (p. 8). The way to do this, they contend, is to resist defining research-creation as something opposite to ‘traditional’ methods. This only reinforces the binary
thinking “that is at the root of the state of affairs they are lamenting” (p. 12), which reifies traditional scholarship and holds back the term’s methodological potential. Instead, they offer an approach to research-creation that sustains its interventionist character that challenges academic standards and criteria makers. They do so by taking a theoretical approach that explores different methodologies of research creation as “family resemblances.” Drawing on Wittgenstein’s exploration of the processes of articulation, they expose the ontology of research-creation as a concept with blurred boundaries. They do so by calling our attention to the conjunctive moment of research and creation: the moment when we articulate research as creation and creation as research. In offering four articulations that point to this moment—“research-for-creation,” “research-from-creation,” “creative presentations of research,” and “creation-as-research”—the authors expose the ontological dimensions of research-creation that bring into being the very phenomenon it seeks to explore. More importantly, these four articulations offer a vocabulary for assessing research-creation projects, helping peer-reviewers to assess these works outside of normative academic regulations, and to develop a “rigorous flexibility” (p. 23).

Erin Manning is another scholar whose work contributes to understanding research-creation as more than what funding agencies have in store for it. In her recent essay “Against Method” (2015), she situates her work within the discourse of research-creation, arguing that philosophy itself is a practice of research-creation. As a “practice that thinks” (p. 53), it refutes initial categorization and therefore resists the categorizing mechanism of method. For Manning, method is “a making-reasonable of experience, fashioning knowledge as a static organization of pre-formed categories” (p. 57).
Accordingly, research-creation as an area that is by its very nature under redefinition needs to rethink method in relation to its capacity to produce knowledge. What Manning is proposing is a “rigour of experimentation” that does not need new methods as it is a movement that interests itself with what escapes the stultification of method. To be against method is to “take a stand in the midst” where process is created. As a conjunctive moment, to be against method asks “how the thinking in the act can be articulated...asking what that thinking might be able to do” (p. 63).

While Manning claims that research-creation does not need new methods, I am compelled to point out that to “ask how the thinking in the act can be articulated” is a method. Being against method is a method in itself—this is the methodological dilemma. Not attending to this tension, Sawchuck and Chapman (2012) warn us, could render research-creation a stand-alone justification that takes refuge in an “art for art’s sake” attitude (p. 23). While being against method shares an ethos of leaping in its intention to move past tired justifications towards the production of something new, it does not attend to the contradictions that provide the platform to do so. If being against method produces moments of articulation and perhaps new research questions, how might this be captured? How is this capturing not methodical? These questions are still underdeveloped in the context of research-creation, allowing us to take into consideration how this self-reflexive research category can build fertile platforms for methodological explorations and develop modes of capture that play on the limits of representation.  

4.2.1 Untimely interlude: Research-creation and a teaching time

Considering the hoax of/as an undisciplined movement, as an inventive medium that resists normative modes of capture and consumption so that it can be consumed differently and with difference, is an untimely feat. Inventing a method for a different mode of consumption, for consuming with difference, reaches out of its time. As a call from elsewhere, it waits for response. At stake in the medium of the hoax is its **conjunctive moment** when and where the medium teaches us something about being touched by untimeliness and about learning out of sync. To account for this conjunctive moment, I explore the avant-garde revolution of representation and its subversive method of liberating technologies of capture from their hidden *dispositifs* (Foucault, 1975/1977; Agamben, 2006/2009), that is, from their mechanisms of representation. Considering the conjunctive moment as the moment when the medium exposes its hoaxter sensibility, I account for the ways in which this exposure creates a new logic.

This new logic is relational and out of its time as it waits for a response from an elsewhere. Conditioned by a possibility of a future response, the hoax always necessarily arrives too late, or perhaps, never at all. The untimeliness of its arrival suspends the conjunctive moment within a quantum leap, accounting for an exchange that gets ahead of itself, or put differently, accounting for an exchange that precedes the hoaxter and hoaxed.

This quantum paradox exhibited in the conjunctive moment is an untimely collaboration and inherently indeterminant. What is at stake in these encounters is an
ability to respond. Providing opportunities for response becomes the ethical imperative of the hoaxer. This begins with being accountable for a mode of communication that interacts with an elsewhere. This untimely pedagogy disrupts linear and causal understandings of pedagogical relations and encounters, and moves towards a rigour of experimentation that can hold us in a conjunctive moment that teeters on the cusp of possibility and impossibility. This pedagogy of untimeliness is at the core of research-creation, where the conjunctive moment of coming-to-know demands a different relationship to knowledge production, when and where we articulate research as creation and creation as research. As a research category that engages with the enabling constraints of its particular dispositif, research-creation shares a hoaxer sensibility in its ability to subvert its enabling technology of description by accounting for an untimely relationship of the research process.

4.3 Pedagogical slippages: Teaching for the posthumanities

The process of entering into untimely mediations and conjunctive moments has a particular movement of thought and analysis, one that moves-back-through (Zaliwska, 2016) undisciplined movements that locates their newness not within a break from other discourses, but rather, understands it as a reflection on and reworking of concepts and terms that were long taken-for-granted (Fannin et al., 2014).

Central to these return(ings)s is (re)attending to the dimensions of experience and the situatedness of inquiry and to (re)consider once more the affective and embodied nature of research. This concern for a return is motivated by a similar tonal shift and crisis in feminist scholarship that seeks to map itself out of its apocalyptic state towards a
“radical openness of the future” (Grosz, 2010). The 2014 special section of Feminist Theory entitled “Work, Life, Bodies: New Materialisms and Feminisms” attended to this return in order to highlight the qualitative shift in how feminist scholarship approaches its subjects of inquiry: a shift in focus from “documenting patterns of exploitation and oppression” towards being actively engaged with “creatively and imaginatively developing new ways of being in the world” (Fanin et al., 2014, p. 262). This “shift” is not understood as a progressive development out of the dualisms that have long been the focus of feminist critique, but rather, is a gesture that revisits concepts of materiality in order to gesture towards what might be gained. What is central to this issue is the way in which each author shows the process and gesture of revisiting feminist critique. This showing/exposing/retelling is at once a confrontation with issues of temporality and historicity, and a rethinking of causality as something more than a familial understanding of change through time (Roof, 1995). This active reflection is a generative response to the so-called “passing of feminism” (Segal, 2000; McRobbie, 2003) in particular, but can also be felt across the humanities and social sciences as an attempt to “uncover the narratives and logics at play within particular histories and analyses which allow particular stories to be told (and others to remain untold)” (Adkins, 2004, p. 430). In this context, generative response is understood as a reflection that does something out of difference and moves us towards a new consciousness and attunement. This movement (as I have argued for “in the past”) is not a break from discourse, but rather, intra-acts with discourse in a way that felts new experiences, experiments and observations.

In her essay “Imaginary Prohibitions” (2008), Sarah Ahmed seeks to understand what makes new materialism “new.” Her motivation behind her exploration, which she
admits to the reader, comes from her frustration with the reductive ways in which new materialism approaches past academic feminist production. According to Ahmed, the point of entry for the founding gesture of new materialism “is the critique of past feminism for not engaging with matter, as such” (p. 32). This narrative of a “forgetful feminism” makes the argument that ‘matter’ is what is missing from feminist work, and thus according to Ahmed, is a narrative that returns to old binaries between nature/materiality/biology and culture that fetishize matter. In claiming the return to matter, in depositing our hope in the category of ‘the new,’ “we might then be losing sight of how matter matters in different ways” (p. 36). With this critique, Ahmed stresses that this return is a matter of ethics that “describes what it is that we do and considers how it is that we arrive at the grounds we inhabit” (p. 36).

In a similar tone, Claire Colebrook’s (2008) essay “On not becoming of man: The materialist politics of unactualized potential” challenges new materialism’s appeal to “traditional and conservative vitalism,” of thinkers such as Huserl and Bergson, a vitalism which affirms “an expressive and creative life force” (p.56). According to Colebrook, this affirmative understanding of vitalism does not take into account “a matter that fails to come to life” (p. 59). These claims to the new, to transformation and “the inventive,” risk a linear temporality that derail the “emphasis on the performativity of our ways of observing, describing and intervening in the worlds we are part of” (Coleman, 2014, p. 42).

In their critiques of new materialism, both Colebrook and Ahmed point to the importance of temporality, resisting the progressive and affirmative rhetoric that threatens new materialism’s radical potential, and refocusing instead on a temporal
displacement that allows for a space of/for duration. This, I argue, requires a principled decision to move through discourse at a different pace, opening up both time and space to build on and develop-out-of contemporary debates through an intra-active engagement with the complexity and labor of past scholarship. Hughes and Lury (2013) enact this discursive gesture in their development of an ecological methodology, one that re-thinks the concept of situatedness in ways that “take into account that we live in relation to, and are of, a more-and-other-than-human world” (p. 786). In re-turning to feminist methodologies, the authors take into account the performativity of methodology, thinking about discourse as a technology of practice, “not only concerned with how the social world can be investigated, but how they may also be designed for capture and for care, that is, how they may be attentive to how the social world may be engaged” (p. 787, my emphasis). Their attention to the ways in which methodology performs, and their commitment to materializing the method of re-turning, is an example of what I am calling moving-back-through, a gesture that makes discourse matter.

The method of moving-back-through resonates with Lyotard’s (1987) notion of working through in that it puts forth the proposition that disciplinary turns (for example the turn from the modern to the post-modern) are not so much breaks from as they are a working through of “the meanings or events that are hidden not only in its prejudice but also in projects, programs, prospects, and the like” (p.3). Turning the pro of these terms against themselves, gestures of moving back through could focus on re-jects, re-gr-ams and re-spects. This attunement to the social fabric of discourse has the potential to reveal the conditions of possibility of language and agency, exposing the unanticipated ecology of our work/life and reanimating the concepts, ideas and thoughts that have reluctantly
(and unavoidably) settled into a representational logic. This asks for the slow and particular work of describing (Carini, 2001), paying close ethnographic attention to forms of attachment (Stewart, 2007), and perhaps most importantly, resisting academic codes of “rigor” and “productivity” that often times overlook the materiality of discourse. This is different from traditional discourse analysis in its double movement—it is both ontological and methodological—and in its movement through familiar ways of being and understanding towards the uncertainty of untimeliness, that is, being out of time (Grosz, 2010, p. 48). It is a movement that situates us in what Massumi (2011) calls a semblance, a “leading edge, in the present, of future variation, and at the same time a doppler from variations past” (p. 49).

While new materialism tends to be used more as a tool for analysis, there has been little attention to what it could do for the representation and dissemination of our research activities. What would happen if we considered the “final” stage of showing our research as yet another way of being situated within the ecology of our research, as being entangled within a different kind of social fabric? I took the opportunity to flesh out this performative space that is always on the move during a 2015 panel presentation on new materialism at AERA (American Educational Research Association). My paper returned to the crisis of representation in the social sciences and humanities as a way to think through what a working representation—representation as a process of negotiating the tensions and contradictions entangled in fieldwork—might do to the presentation of our work. While reading—which is always already a performative act—I projected a multi-framed video that I co-composed with my two furry companion species during our technologically entangled walk. Using iMovie, I collaged the three GoPro videos into one frame: Nemo
cam on the top left, my cam on the top right, and Lou cam on the bottom. The three videos were time synched, mimicking a live account of our moving bodies through the technological eye mounted on our chests. Each moving frame had a unique point of view perspective produced by the intimate relationship that each moving body had to its surface: Nemo’s short herding legs produced circuitous close-ups; Lou’s tall hunting body provided galloping movements between the horizon; and my two-legged body offered the academic voyeur the relief of familiar and uninterrupted sightlines. The frames worked together-apart, creating a moving image enmeshed in hermeneutic labor and play (Haraway, 2008), a visual mess of competing scales, morphing topologies, and ranging magnifications. With this working representation, what came to matter was not the question of who has semiotic agency in this hermeneutic labor, but rather, the action in contact zones—the coming together and the setting apart of the frames. This matter of representation, I argue(d) through Haraway, is a matter of our ethical obligations to remembering research, an enactment of moving-back-through that events research. Agency then is something that we can recognize as happening and mattering between spaces that would otherwise be forgotten or simply ignored. To be in the presence of the mattering of agency demands speculative invention and demands a particular kind of work. It is not enough to code these relations with new materialist discourse, but rather, to do the required work of responding to that which we take/took for granted. To work the ruins (Lather, 2007) of what is left creatively behind is full of ontological risks as it is always in relation to impossibility. This has great implications for the representation and dissemination of educational research as well as the growing discourse of new
materialism: what would signification and coding mean in terms of movement and the coming together in composition?

Borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis on art as the creation of new space-time, Parikka (2011) puts forward that media are an environment of relations in which time space and agency emerge. Therefore, he suggests that we think about media not simply as a matter of communication, but as a milieu of engagement. Media as method can create new material dimensions of relationality and new means toward describing, actuating, or multiplying the powers of an element within a composition. Relationality, explains Parikka, “becomes not only an ontological fact of assemblages, but also a tool for excavating the arrangement of relations” (p. 39). Similar to Haraway’s understanding of relationality as material-semiotic dance, relationality according to Parikka is less a matter of communicating content than a weaving in and out of scales and incorporating them into assemblages. In showing this project while reading my paper, my intention was to perform yet another contact zone, another element of composition within the research event. But how does this fleshing out manifest itself? According to Haraway (2008), nobody can know this in advance. This active sense of mediating competes with a consciousness of mediating: how do we recognize something as medium?

This section is both a product and continuation of a particular event where I experimented with what it means for qualitative research practices to be in this onto-epistemological mediation. In writing this section, I am representing and situating my research practices which are always already in the midst, engaging in a discourse that justifies why this kind of experimentation matters, and thinking about how this approach might contribute to pedagogies for the humanities to come. To that end, this section is a
research event in its own right, a being-in-the-midst and a coming-into-being. In a way, I am perhaps working the ruins of the ruins, searching for an assemblage that I would have otherwise missed, trying to articulate methodology out of practice (Lather, 2007). Furthermore, this section asks: can such an experimental mediation be taught?

While I am fortunate enough to have an academic advisor who supports experimental work and has taken collaboration with her students seriously—as a contact zone for mutual analysis—the dis-ease and discomfort of doing research in this way is at times unbearable, creating more road blocks than breakthroughs. To bear the unbearable, to live in impassivity (Berlant, 2011), requires that we move-back-through ahistoricizing logic of negative emotions towards a pedagogy of discomfort (Boler, 1999) where we can gain a method that helps us move beyond a fear that separates our relations to the mattering world. Such a method is an endurance of sorts, what Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) call an “affective Athleticism.” An endurance of this kind is not about passively staying put long enough for something to happen, but rather, an active stillness where “we learn to pay attention, have transference with, those moments of suspension in which the subject can no longer take his continuity in the material world and contemporary history for granted, because he feels full of something ineluctantly promising” (Berlant, 2011, p. 36). This something, Colebrook reminds us, is not always affirmative, but moreover, is a product of our attentive engagements with matter that fails to come to life. 7

If we consider the intermedial zone of impassivity as training grounds for an anticipatory ethics, where would we build the strength to endure the discomforts of surrender? Why can some people endure more than others? What are the anchors that we can hold onto? Who is allowed to do such work and can it be taught? One place to begin to explore these questions is through the pedagogical slippage of teaching untimely methods. As an invited lecturer to both sections of the Elementary Visual Arts course in the Masters of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I was confronted with such an untimely challenge. In many ways, I entered into the seminar as a stranger. A newly minted Doctoral Candidate at the first leg of my dissertation journey, the confidence resulting from a successful proposal defense quickly became short lived, untenable in the face of unknown expectations that took place. As an “invited” lecturer for the last class of the semester, I felt more like a gatecrasher, an unnecessary guest at best, and interloper at worst. Considering the subject matter of the lecture and the subsequent activity, as well as the repetitive nature of the event (there were two performances in two separate classes), the strangeness of our encounters mattered—in an untimely way.

Tied to my dissertation proposal, I approached the lecture as a research-creation event, considering it a micro event within a larger research project. The setting and the taking-place-of the research-event mattered in more way than one. Teaching teachers to teach is a complex field of mediations with disparate moments of becoming. Adding to this assemblage is the subject matter of teaching as an artistic medium. Mediating between teacher education and research in education, the purpose of the lecture was to experiment with the possibility of a conjunctive pedagogy: what happens when teaching
as artistic practice meets teaching teachers about teaching as artistic practice? What is lost and what is gained? In the first part of the lecture, I offered an introduction into socially engaged art, rooting the medium between Fluxus, Happenings and more recent work that responds to the pedagogical turn in curatorial practices. Framing the medium through the Fluxus term social sculpture (Beuys, 1974/2006), my introduction aimed to encourage the students to think about teaching as an artistic practice, as a creative means of transforming the ways we communicate, our cooperative practices, and our relationship to curricula. In the hopes of extending this focus, the activity that followed the introduction experimented with social sculpture through a directive-based exercise, exploring the relationship between breakdowns in communication and processes of interpretation. While everyone seemed engaged in the exercises and a couple of students expressed curiosity during the 20-minute discussion portion at the end of class, the impossible task of “wrapping-up” the event into a coherent whole was met with a desire to simplify the complex process of “understanding.” While as an event of “data collection,” the abundance of documentation including photographs, audial recording and residual paraphernalia would have made the lecture appear as a “success,” the unfinished and consequently absurd quality of the lecture felt like a failure. This feeling only intensified the second time around.

Remembering the strangeness of this event matters more than representing it under the category of method and data collection. Confronting the pedagogical slippage forces a serious reconsideration of the expectations of teaching and learning in the classroom, one that takes into account the untimeliness of pedagogy. In this instance, Maxine Greene (1973/2001) reminds me of the experience of anxiety and anguish as a an
event of not being sure “that the person one chooses oneself to be at one moment is the same as the one he will be at a later time” (p. 104-105). Anguish, she reminds me, “is the expression of the nagging desire for completion—without any guarantee that the completion sought will be valuable when it is achieved” (p. 105). Anguish signals a pedagogical slippage, a process of inquiry that produces unbearable doubt as well as “profound boredom…drawing all things together in a ‘queer kind of indifference’” (p. 105). Responding to this slippage always comes too late. These negative emotions sound a defensive alarm, causing us to reject, postpone or forget the critical potentiality of such emotions. In her highly influential treatise on the politics of emotion, Megan Boler (1999) differentiates between two instances of feeling power: “feeling power” and “feeling power” (xx-xxi). The first instance refers to “how we learn to internalize and enact roles and rules assigned to us within the dominant culture” (xx). Power in this context is felt through “learned emotional expressions and silences” (xx). Feeling power refers to the power of feeling. Power in this instance is a pedagogical event of feeling our way though our “inscribed habits of inattention” (p. 20) in order to un/learn emotions as a site of social control. Feeling power is an event of unlearning feeling power. Unlearning in this context is a deconstructive event that inhabits what it attacks, rearranging the assemblage of the dominant and habitual structure. Between the two modes of learning power, a pedagogical slippage occurs. The embedded contradiction in feeling power that causes us to slip on the edges of our skin is in many ways discursive. In other words, we slip because we cannot escape the trap of representation, that which makes up our humanness. A pedagogical slippage is untimely because we cannot say before hand who we may be when feel power. Furthermore, the impossible challenge of knowing who is
slipping in the event of its occurrence places this critical practice in a risky territory, where the event of discomfort is not met with a timely response. Pedagogy slips. The untimeliness of a pedagogy of discomfort recurs, moves us back through pedagogical slippages in the hopes of re-membering the ambiguities of experience as a “complex cry for recognition and care” (Boler, 2004, p. 116). Responding to pedagogical slippages then is perhaps more about returning, remembering and moving back through than about being “present” within pedagogical mediations. Boler (2004) offers critical hope in her return to a pedagogy of discomfort, considering the process as ongoing, as a “movement in search” (Freire in Boler, p. 126). The untimely event of slipping holds what Greene (1999) calls a “wonderful incompleteness” and “a consciousness of unrealized possibility” (xi), an event that returns us back through moments where and when we could not respond, perhaps teaching us “to open ways of understanding that do not rely only on words” (Boler, 2004, p. 129).

To live affirmatively within pedagogical slippages requires that we both shatter our dominant habits of being, thinking and acting and begin the work of creating a force or movement to return our shattered sense of being to life—but with difference. Returning, reflecting and remembering are movements that reconstitute our sense of place over and over again, grounding a past which was never present. Like the hoaxer, teaching an untimely ethics positions our actions towards a beyond. While the hoaxer is often characterized as an expert who holds an artful ability to create a deconstructive structure, it is also worth considering the ways in which the hoaxer deconstructs normative understandings of expertise. This begs another question: does the hoaxer need to be an expert in order to subvert its own expertise? And what kind of expertise would
this be? If the hoaxer mirrors the practices of what it attacks, then an a priori relationship with the deconstructive structure is assumed. In other words, the hoaxer is methodical and has a compositional understanding of the elements of the structure that she critiques. The success of the critique, however, does not rely on this methodical expertise. What makes a hoax successful is that it eventually exposes itself. This revelation has the potential to create new means of describing and actuating the elements of the original composition in ways that were not intended by the hoaxer. Thus, expertise becomes a “movement in search” (Freire in Boler, 2004, p. 126), a committed engagement with untimely possibility. Teaching such an untimely method requires a different kind of curricula, one that keeps on working and carries on beyond the bounds of its course.
“Here it is a book seen from the outside. A book is only a book when seen from the outside. Seen from the inside, a book is not a book, but a train ride at night” (Goulish, 2000, p. 20).

Can a dissertation be about the search? How can such a wandering be represented, and what could it do to research? In an early dissertation meeting with my advisor, I presented this question as the subject of my inquiry and outlined the ways in which each chapter would play with form and research categories, and how this attention to research might allow me to discover what is worth researching. Inspired by the artist and educator Jorge Lucero, specifically his method of “testing the pliability” of something that seems immovable (Lucero & Lucero, 2014; Lucero, 2015), I imagined my dissertation as a cache, as a temporary storage space for future use—at least, this is how I remember it in this moment. Thinking about the insufficiency of documentation in capturing the ephemerality of conceptual art, I wanted to structure my dissertation as a collection of paraphernalia, a collection of representations of the event-based movement of research.

Lucero (2015) puts to work his notion of pliability in rethinking the materiality of modes of presentation and representation at the Žižek Studies Conference. Responding to the call “what can a creative practitioner illustrate about the work of Žižek,” Lucero (2015) asked “how can we make more pliable what surrounds a highly venerated, cited, and even lazily generalized philosopher, while also testing the parameters and structures
of the conference” (Lucero, 2015, p. 1)? Considering the ephemeral quality of academic presentations with the etymology of the word *conference* as “together” “bearing,” Lucero reflects on the materiality and the potential pliability of conferencing. Through a digital grid arrangement of four video recordings of Žižek’s keynote (“one of Žižek’s forehead, one of myself listening to Žižek, one of Žižek’s table, and one of Žižek’s left shoulder video-taped from an angle that peeked at him from behind the two listeners that were sitting in front of me” (p. 2)), Lucero captures a mediated experience that is about rupture, the kind of rupture that happens when being confronted with Žižek himself.

Reflecting on this digital mediation, Lucero develops a work narrative, that is, “the story that accompanies, follows, and perpetuates the work” (p. 4). The form of the work narrative takes on meaning as it is being enacted, repeating the ruptures of the mediation, grounding a past which was never present. These recursive mediated ruptures are always incomplete, on the edges of failure, awaiting the observer or audience who are put in the position of having to choose what to pay attention to and what to ignore. The work narrative tests the pliability of something that seems unmovable, opening up the materiality of the work towards untimeliness where and when a relational complexity awaits. The work narrative is about labor as much as it is about servicing the work it narrates. Can this labor and service be the work of a dissertation?

Being an artist and educator herself, this line of questioning and concern for form was hardly new to my advisor. In her own doctoral research, Springgay (2005) asked a similar question, asking what would thinking through bodies do to art education and curriculum studies. She theorizes a phenomenology of touch in order to challenge visual perception and the dominant mechanisms of knowledge and power tied to the privileging
of this sense. Touch offers a relational and contiguous understanding of phenomenology, altering the ways we perceive objects and subsequently offering different ways of knowing that “brings the body inside the visible such that the boundaries between interior and exterior become porous and folded” (Springgay, 2005, p. 10). Body knowledge, or embodiment, pays attention to these boundaries as processes of “transition (movement and displacement) and translations (a form of encounter that is different and independent of the origin)” (p. 11). Such “proximinal relations” (p. 11) cannot be captured or contained, therefore paying attention to such excess involves producing “different knowledges differently” (p. 11). Weaving together philosophical and conceptual analysis of theories of intercorporeality, her artistic practice, and the artworks and conversations collected from a six-month research study with a group of secondary school students, Springgay’s dissertation felts out of a relationship between the role of the artist, researcher, teacher and artistic research methodologies. This methodical felting allows a performance of language that disrupts traditional metaphors of objectivity in arts-based educational research, reforming research as a living inquiry “where the primacy of gesture and the rhythmic sensuality of the body underscore the instability, un/certainty and un/familiarity of identity” (p. 14-15). In other words, through an entanglement of different sign systems or discourses (art, teaching, theory, research), her dissertation generates a different form of inquiry differently.

As a methodologist, Springgay embraces the dilemmas of form and representational ruptures in qualitative research for their potential to generate new methodologies. Through her development of and experimentation with A/r/tography (Springgay, 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Springgay, Irwin & Kind, 2005), a minor methodology
(Springgay & Freedman, 2012), research-creation (Zaliwska & Springgay, 2015; Springgay & Rotas, 2014) and more recently propositional methods (Truman & Springgay, 2016; Springgay & Truman, 2017), Springgay understands research as an event of becoming where methodology is not about meaning making, but rather, is about the doing of research, the production of theoretical spaces “where seemingly disconnected ideas come together in provocative and inventive ways without ever becoming resolved” (Springgay, 2008a, p. 6).

Therefore, in many ways, I was confident that my proposition to structure my dissertation in such a way as to enable the work to be about the search, to test the pliability of what is worth researching, would be met with encouragement. Instead, the proposition slipped. Firstly, it was pointed out to me that beginning with form is problematic as it prioritizes structure over the search. Form and method in the context of what I am theorizing always comes too late, therefore to impose form before writing would not only be disingenuous, but more importantly, the search would be bound to fail. Secondly, time was a matter of concern. There simply was not enough of it. Already at the end of my fourth year, beginning an alternative dissertation format simply was not realistic, especially within the neoliberal context in which humanities students are expected to finish their degree in four years. Instead, I was encouraged to focus on a particular question that echoed throughout my proposition in different variations, the question of untimeliness in (post)qualitative research methodologies.

Specifically, I had proposed approaching the literature review as untimely, as a document that weaves sources in an anachronistic way in order to open up the review as a document that is “not yet used up in its pastness, it still has something to offer that
remains untapped, its virtuality remains alluring and filled with potential for the present and the future” (Grosz, 2010, p. 48). Based on a research-creation project that involved forty-five contemporary scholars in the field of education, the literature review was meant to explore a collaborative and experimental method of reviewing that encourages more intimate relationships with sources and to possibly invent new ways of writing and teaching in the humanities and social sciences. The literature review was meant to act as a work narrative that would accompany and further perpetuate the research-creation project and the ephemera that the event generated. This chapter alone, my advisor pointed out, had enough components to build a whole thesis around. Encouraged to focus on the many moving pieces that the literature review proposed, I created a new outline around an untimely methodology. Almost a year later, and a series of ruptures, interventions and vertiginous questioning, I am faced with the impossible task of concluding outcomes, significance and contributions that are always yet unnamed. I would therefore like to approach the conclusion as yet another attempt at felting out the materiality of untimeliness that makes up pedagogical slippages and the event of unknowing. In the following “concluding” section, I return to and re-member the research-creation project that on many levels sparked and continuously generated a joyful discontinuity throughout the process, while also holding me accountable to a community that is in proximate distance from me.

5.1 Untimely Methods: Ruminatus and a Community-to-Come
In the spring of 2015, I sent out invitations to all of the contemporary scholars whose work I reviewed in my dissertation proposal to collaborate with me on a research-creation event that I was calling *Ruminatus*. Taking inspiration from Nietzsche’s notion of rumination in his philosophical novel *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, I invited the participants to consider Nietzsche’s observation that modern man has forgotten how to practice reading as art, and to entertain his suggestion that we must learn again to digest literature the way a cow digests food: with multiple stomachs and through a repetitive process of swallowing, regurgitating and rechewing their feed. Each participant was invited to return to their selected publication, and to ruminate on their published work through a list of directives. The directives were short and to the point. Similar to the directives created by Fluxus artists, the simplicity and playfulness of the instructions were meant to move participants into complexity. The list had ninety-two directives in total, and the participants were invited to select as many directives as they liked or needed to help with their ruminations. Examples include:

- What does the article set out to do? Perform the opposite
- Based on your keywords, create keysounds
- Create a map of your paper from memory
- Seek out a noisy place. Whisper your paper
- Seek out a quiet place. Yell your paper
- Ask a stranger to read you paper. Take notes
- Explain your abstract as a conclusion
- Take your piece for a drive
- Create a plot twist
The participants were asked to document their ruminations (in whatever format they saw fit) and to return the ruminants to me for further chewing. By the end of the summer, I received fifty ruminations from forty-five participants. The formats varied from sound files to video files, from written reflections to email exchanges. Jorge Lucero created a video montage out of five directives. Alberto Aguilar composed a soundscape titled “Loose Structure,” the reverberating voices creating an uncanny echo chamber. Matthew Goulish narrated a sleepy childhood memory. Janet Miller conversed with her autobiographical ghosts and drew a map of her response to Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández’s essay “Towards Creative Solidarity in the ‘Next’ Moment of Curriculum Work.” I conversed with Jan Jagodzinski about the ways in which my project “simply encourages an immersion into more forms of neoliberal capitalism” (J. Jagodzinski, personal communication, June 24), and he shared with me his notion of self-refleXion and an “avant-garde without authority.” John Derby wrote a generous letter of withdrawal, which pointed to the impossibility and perhaps the presumptuous gesture of my request:

Hi Zofia,

I want to apologize for blowing you off—it certainly hasn’t been my intention. In the last few months, I’ve tried at least three times (about once a month) to do something with my piece, and I just keep drawing a blank. The last time I tried to come up with something clever about drawing a blank … only to draw a blank. I think part of it is the nature of the piece—it is a tangent that was headed in a different direction from that of my research agenda. Now an established scholar, I spend little time thinking about anything other than my narrow channel of research I have forged, except for the very broad “bread and butter” of lesson planning, which I regularly teach. Really general, really specific, not much in
between. It’s the nature of the beast. I haven’t produced a single artwork in five years, either, and my hobbies and interests have been whittled down to the two I care about most. Maybe I’m getting old, or perhaps jaded. I’d like to think it’s the former—I’m not the person I was, and I almost feel like I’m being asked to revise someone else’s work, someone whose incredulity I both despise and envy, and because of that, I don’t have a right to comment. How could I possibly be unbiased? I’m sad to say that if you are successful in your career, you may experience the same fate, unless your job somehow involves art—actually doing something with art making, teaching studio, curating shows—that sort of thing. Maybe it’s different in Canada, I don’t know. I’ll earn tenure this year, after which my plan is to quietly resign and return to the trenches of K-12 art teaching, where I can work a sustainable number of hours (less than 70), have less stress, and live somewhere that offers the lifestyle I want (skiing, mountain biking, trail running, and similar activities). Higher education has been almost as difficult for me as graduate school—frankly, it has been over a decade of consistent stress and disappointment on several levels, despite my success on paper (good publication record, good teaching evaluations, taking on kinds of service that I enjoy). The last thing I truly enjoyed was teaching design drawing as a graduate student, and that was eight years ago. I wouldn’t recommend the professorial gig to my worst enemy. (Too late for you!) But I know that others really like it … at least they claim to … and I hope you are one of them.

Anyway, I feel really bad that I haven’t been able to help you. I think your dissertation is very interesting and that others, particularly ambitious graduate students and young assistant professors, will find it motivating, fresh, and inspiring. When you try to publish it, you may encounter curmudgeons who will say that your desire for shaking things up, which is warranted, does not realistically lend itself to the revisionary tools you have generated. That’s how I feel—and, given the unorthodox nature of the piece you asked me to reflect upon, it is unsettling that I couldn’t muster something to re-spark the flame that I once shared with you. To that end, I think you’re onto something really important (using art to expand the emerging trend of unorthodox research “articles”), and if your research continues to focus on unorthodox publication, it could have an impact on the field.
In the unlikely event that this letter of apology can be considered fulfillment of your task—which it isn’t intended to be, but in a way it kind of is—then feel free to use it. Either way, I wish you the best, the greatest possible success in your project.

My best,

John

By late Fall, I was faced with the crippling question of what to do with it all. Realizing that no theoretical framework could hold together the intensity of the ruminations, and that no form, category or chapter could contain the relational complexity of the exchanges, I put the project “behind” me. Some of the files live in my external hard drive. Some of the ruminations are beginning to make their appearance on my research website, while others live their own secret lives behind the doors of my office closet, cocooned in their original packaging. Months were able to go by without thinking about, remembering or considering the ephemera. And then moments of nausea would come over me, and the ruminations would once again begin to pulsate, like strangers entreating entrance at the edges of my skin.

*Ruminatus* never reached its planned destination. Instead, it was kept at an irreducible distance, a reminder of failed encounters and growing tumuli. In the context of this conclusion, I am compelled to remember, or perhaps to commemorate, the vibrations that continuously speak to the ear of the future. Turning to Rancière’s *Emancipated Spectator* (2008/2009), I am urged to recount and thus reposition the project’s uncanny distancing in the place of a radical communion. Rancière explains this radical communion as the distance inherent in the event of distancing.
between artist and spectator. This distancing distance is not the transmission of knowledge or inspiration to the spectator, but rather, it is an autonomous thing “that is owned by no one, whose meaning is owned by no one, but which subsists between them, excluding any uniform transmission, any identity of cause and effect” (Rancière, 2008/2009, p. 15). The redistribution of the distancing distance through remembering (through the creation of a work narrative) involves “the invention of new intellectual adventures” (p. 15) and a new form of communion between narrators and translators. This task is endless, always in translation and rendered uncertain. This effect of such uncertainty cannot be anticipated, but to recognize this uncertainty as a distancing distance can perhaps change something of the world we live in.

Charles Bingham (2001) offers a pedagogy of self-reformulation to explore why such radical communions are not tolerated in schooling and institutional pedagogy, and how this indigestion belies self-radicalization. Reflecting on Nietzsche’s demarcation of mass education as a “derivative activity” that cannot sustain his radical view of human subjectivity, Bingham explores what it is about education that Nietzsche cannot stand and what this line of demarcation can say about his theory of education. Questioning Nietzsche’s demarcation, Bingham shows how his intolerance to schooling reveals a contradiction in his philosophizing. Bingham locates contradiction in Nietzsche’s humanist and subject-centered description (and prescription) of subjectivity, the very mannerism that he later comes to reject. While this contradiction is made up of a juxtaposition between Nietzsche’s early educational criticism and his later genealogical work, Bingham suggests that the bulk of what makes up his inconsistency is Nietzsche’s failure to grapple with the self-production that mass education carries out. This oversight fails to recognize mass education as precluding “the sorts of self-destabilizing growth that Nietzsche wants to advocate in his critique of democratic education” (Bingham, 2001, p. 341). Ironically,
this oversight exposed through contradiction signals the difficulty of thinking genealogically, of thinking the history of the present.

Contradictions bring us closer to recognizing radical communions and can teach us to translate our encounter with “somewhere else” (Derrida, 1997/2001, p. 38).

Remembering Ruminatus translates the project into something that failed to come to life, but nonetheless, has a life. Following Claudia Ruitenberg (2009), translation as a philosophical method “is not a method of arriving at the truth of language, but rather,… a method of raising questions that might not otherwise have occurred” (p. 427). Translation thus is a method for touching distance, for being “affected by the foreign tongue” (p. 426). As a conceptual method, translation “serves the purpose of disrupting the complacent belief that one understands one’s own thoughts and the language in which one formulates one’s thoughts” (Ruitenberg, 2009, p. 426), and thus unlike conventionally conceived translation which artfully conceals the translator, the philosophical operation of translation “deliberately and noticeably insinuates itself between the reader and the text, in order to disrupt the apparent familiarity of the text” (p. 433). There is thus an untimeliness to the quality of this disruption, a trickery that performs in the translational space between “being apart” and “being together” of a new community. Where and when the two meet cannot be calculated, expected, or fully understood.

This dissertation opened with the medium of time, priming the reading for twisting, bending and stretching. Through a series of rememberings, returnings, slippings and leapings, the dissertation performed on the precipice of habitual systems of thought. Testing the pliability of an untimely methodology requires constant intra-actions where and when we meet each other time and time again. Writing for the ear of the future, for a community-to-come, it is my hope
that the text has arrived at a fragile place that challenges our all too human modes of being and reinvents our ethical relations and obligations to one another.


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