

# 6

## Ten Propositions for Research-Creation

*Erin Manning*

### 1. Create New Forms of Knowledge (Embrace the Non-Linguistic)

- Research-creation generates new forms of experience; it situates what often seem like disparate practices, giving them a conduit for collective expression; it hesitantly acknowledges that normative modes of inquiry and containment often are incapable of assessing its value; it generates forms of knowledge that are extra-linguistic; it creates operative strategies for a mobile positioning that take these new forms of knowledge into account; it proposes concrete assemblages for rethinking the very question of what is at stake in pedagogy, in practice, and in collective experimentation.
- Research-creation proposes new forms of knowledge, many of which are not intelligible within current understandings of what knowledge might look like
- Consider that new processes will likely create new forms of knowledge which may have no means of evaluation within current disciplinary models.

### 2. Practice Thinking (Don't Be Afraid of Philosophy)

- How might a resituating of research-creation as a practice that thinks provide us with the vocabulary to take seriously that 'philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object. It is no more abstract than its object. It is a practice of concepts, and we must judge it in light of the other practices with which it interferes?' (Deleuze, 1989: 280, *translation modified*).

- This will mean opening thought beyond its articulation in language toward ‘the movement of thought,’ engaging it at the immanent limit where it is still fully in the act.
- Consider that making is a thinking in its own right, and conceptualization a practice in its own right.
- Think of philosophy not as that which frames an already completed process, but as that which has a history of launching its speculative apparatus in relation to modes of knowing beyond its purview such as artistic practice.

### **3. Make Beyond the Object (Work the Work)**

- Take art in its medieval definition as ‘the way.’ If ‘art’ is understood as a ‘way’ it is not yet about an object, about a form, or content.
- Consider that research-creation is less about an object than a mode of activity that is at its most interesting when it is constitutive of new processes. To be constitutive of new processes it is necessary that potential be tapped in advance of the work’s alignments with existing disciplinary methods and institutional structures (this includes creative capital).
- Take seriously that generating new forms of knowledge implies generating new forms of experience for which there are no pre-given methodologies, for which there is no pre-determined value. What research-creation can do is propose concrete assemblages for rethinking the very question of what is at stake in pedagogy, in practice, and in collective experimentation.

### **4. Dwell in the Transversal (Keep Moving)**

- The unquantifiable within experience can only be taken into account if we begin with a mode of inquiry that refutes initial categorization
- Instead of holding knowledge to what can already be ascertained (and measured), let us, as William James suggests, find ways to account not only for the terms of the analysis, but for all that transversally weaves between them.
- Let us be up to the challenge of radical empiricism as that which begins in the midst, in the mess of relations not yet organized into terms such as ‘subject’ and ‘object.’ James calls this field of relations ‘pure experience,’ pure understood not in the sense of ‘purity’ but in the sense of immanent to actual relations. Pure experience is on the cusp of the virtual and the actual: in the experiential register of the not-quite-yet. It is *of* experience in the sense that it affectively

contributes to how experience settles into what James calls 'knower-known' relations.

- Note that to reorient the real to include that which can be experienced (rather than known as such) is to profoundly challenge the notion that knowledge is based on quantification. [Return to Proposition 1]
- This is the force of radical empiricism, that it gives us a technique to work with the in-act at the heart of experience, providing subtle ways of composing with the shifting relations between the knower and the known, keeping in mind, of course, that the knower is not the human subject, but the way relations open themselves toward systems of subjectification.

## 5. Be Speculatively Pragmatic (Enjoy the Process)

- Speculative pragmatism is key to this process.
- Speculative pragmatism is an approach that is interested in the pragmatic force of the conditions of the here and now, while simultaneously remaining oriented to the as-yet-unknown.
- A speculative pragmatism takes as its starting point a rigour of experimentation. It is interested in the anarchy at the heart of all process, and is engaged with the techniques that tune the anarchical into new modes of knowledge. It is also interested in what escapes the order, and especially in what this excess can do. It implicitly recognizes that knowledge is invented in the escape, in the excess.
- Keep in mind that a speculatively pragmatic approach never begins with a pre-formed subject.
- A speculatively pragmatic approach takes the event, not the subject, as its point of departure. Its pragmatism is that it remains interested and engaged with all that the event can do, which includes how it positions itself in the field of relation. Whitehead's notion of the 'superject,' the subject of the event, is useful here. The superject emphasizes that the occasion of experience is itself what proposes knower-known relations, resulting in a subject that is the subject of the experience rather than a subject external to the experience. Experience, it reminds us, is not constituted first and foremost of human relations.

## 6. Invent Beyond Technique (Activate the More-Than)

- An account of method is inextricably linked to a belief in reason. In this account, reason functions as an apparatus of capture – it

diagnoses, situates, organizes, and ultimately it surveys, judges and understands. Though methods are always open to change, their task is to reasonably safeguard against the ineffable - that which cannot be categorized cannot be made to account for itself, and so falls by the wayside. Conscious knowledge is privileged over the prelinguistic and the preconscious; writing is privileged over speech and certainly over all other kinds of making. Method, however open it may seem in a given context, serves to define knowledge to its core, disciplining the very question of what constitutes knowledge.

- Whitehead seeks to go beyond a Kantian definition of reason toward what he calls 'the function of reason.' Whitehead sees reason not as a content to be allied to a method, but as a cut that reorients the field of experience. Reason, he suggests, is the process's appetite for difference. It is what pushes occasions of experience to distinguish themselves from the welter of activity; it is the 'counteragency which saves the world' from mere life. This cut is not an endpoint, not the capture of a process. Reason here no longer belongs to Kant - it has appetite. The cut is operative, it activates potential and sets things in motion. Method, on the other hand, works as a stilling, as an endpoint. 'The birth of methodology,' Whitehead writes, 'is in its essence the discovery of a dodge to live' (1929: 18).
- What we need are not methods for curating life-lived, but techniques for life-living.
- Consider technique as propositional, where method is positioning.
- Define technique as what tunes the field of resonance of a system in the making. Think technique as the act-in-repetition that hones the system, bringing rigor to it.
- A technique has to be invented for each process, and as the process changes, so does the technique. Technique builds repetition and difference into the act, opening a process to its potential to differentiate itself as this or that.
- Technique is necessary to the art of thought - to thought in the act - but it is not art in itself.
- The key is to go to the heart of technique - close reading, engaged exploration of material, repeated daily practice - and then to go further still.
- Techniques become methods if they are not outdone. Technicity is the outdoing of technique. It is the modality for creating out of a system of techniques the more-than of system, the experience of the work's opening itself to its excess, to what cannot be captured by repetition.

- Technique and technicity coexist. Where technique engages the repetitive practices that form a composing body – be it organic or inorganic – technicity is a set of enabling conditions that exact from technique the potential for co-composition. Think technicity as the process that stretches out from technique, creating brief interludes of the more-than of technique, gathering from the implicit the force of form.
- This quality of the more-than that is technicity is ineffable – it can be felt, but is difficult to articulate in language. [Return to Proposition 1]
- What research-creation can do is make technicity palpable across registers. It can work, as radical empiricism does, in the complex field of conjunctions opened up by the transitions in experience, transitions which attune to the more-than. [Return to Proposition 4]

## 7. Metamodel (Make It An Event)

- What the conjunction between research and creation does is make apparent how modes of knowledge are always at cross-currents with one another, actively reorienting themselves in transversal operations of difference, emphasizing the deflection at the heart of each conjunction. The conjunction is at work, actively adjusting the always immanent coupling of research and creation, asking how the thinking in the act can be articulated, and what kind of analogous experience it can be coupled with, asking how a making is a thinking in its own right, asking what that thinking might be able *to do*. [Return to Propositions 1, 2, 4 and 5]
- A reorienting of thought as a practice in its own right is part of the creation and evaluation (or, better said, valuing) of new forms of knowledge.
- In the final pages of his account on the function of reason, Whitehead writes: ‘the quality of an act of experience is largely determined by the factor of the thinking which it contains’ (1929: 80). Challenging the habit of situating facts above thinking – ‘the basis of all authority is the supremacy of fact over thought’ – Whitehead inquires into the tendency to place thought outside experience. This, he suggests, is what is wrong with method. How might the fact of this occasion – what it does, how it feels, where it moves – be separated out by its thinking when thought itself ‘is a factor in the fact of experience’ (80).
- Thinking in the event suggests that the machinations of appetite are at work, and that they have thoroughgoing effects.

- The transversal activation of the relational fields of thinking and doing is what I am calling research-creation.
- Research-creation does not need new methods. What it needs are techniques that enable modes of valuing the process, techniques that enable the tuning to technicity of a practice.
- If nonlinguistic practices are forms of knowledge in their own right, as research-creation makes apparent, and if knowledge has the habit of being valued according to the standards of language, how might research-creation assert its value, valued not for what it leaves behind but for its appetite to always begin anew.
- Guattari's concept of metamodelling may be a place to start.
- Metamodelling makes felt lines of formation, starting not from one model in particular, but actively taking into account the plurality of models vying for fulfillment. Metamodelling is against method, active in its refutation of pre-existing modes of existence, meta in the sense of mapping abstract formative conjunctions, in continuing variation, across varying deflections.
- Metamodelling shouldn't be thought as that which frames a process. It is radical empiricism in action. It is a technique for activating the lived abstractions in the event, for making felt the thinking at the heart of the doing.
- As Guattari writes: 'metamodeling de-links modeling with both its representational foundation and its mimetic reproduction. It softens signification by admitting a-signifying forces into a model's territory... What was hitherto inaccessible is given room to manifest and project itself into new and creative ways and combinations. Metamodelling is in these respects much more precarious than modeling, less and less attached to homogeneity, standard constraints, and the blinkers of apprehension' (2008, n.p.).

## **8. Render Formative Forces (Create a Platform for Relation)**

- An event by definition activates the field of relation. An event is how an ecology comes to be known as such. There is nothing outside the event.
- An event's relational force cannot be reproduced. It remains, always, a singular movement. It has a velocity, uniquely played out from the initial conditions at hand. It is potentializing, and renders potential. It follows the arc of a tendency working itself out. [Return to Proposition 6]

- Tendencies are as singular as an event's generative force. They can be iteratively reactivated, to variable effect. But each event will activate its own tendency. [Return to Proposition 5]
- If you follow the technicity of singular tendencies, you will be eventually setting into motion a metamodelling of emergence. [Return to Proposition 7]
- A tendency, modeled, is an incipient assemblage (a platform for relation).
- Consider that meta-modellings of generative process are deterritorializing. They move tendentially across institutionalizations, and morph them. An event of metamodelling must be self-expiring. It must creatively find ways to affirm its generative power in its passing.
- Invent techniques that assist in allowing the event to move toward and beyond its formative forces. Follow them to see what they can do. [Return to Proposition 4]

## 9. Create Altereconomies of Value (Value Emergence)

- We remain held by existing methods because we remain incapable (or unwilling) to evaluate knowledge on its own incipient terms, or better, to engage productively with new concepts of valuation. [Return to Proposition 1 and 7]
- In a formal economy, valuation is quantitative, and is derived using conventional measures.
- Monetary economy can mean only one thing: the capitalist economy. The capitalist economy taps into all other formal and informal economies in a continuously varied attempt to annex them to itself, which is to say, to its particular forms of formal valuation and indexing. The capitalist economy is not only a universal process of subsuming all forms of value to monetary valuation. It also formally builds into its definition of value an imperative to quantitative value-adding. Capital is by definition money that grows more money. The capitalist economy is formally dedicated to quantitative growth, over and above all other values. Capitalist techniques of relation are without exception mechanisms of accumulation.
- There are also informal economies. These revolve around assessments of value that are directly qualitative in nature, and therefore vaguer and less easily indexed. This kind of valuation is often called prestige-value. A formal economy also generates its own prestige-value as a spin-off of its quantitative valuations, or it captures prestige-value, a

value produced by informal economies the formal economy taps into and annexes to itself.

- All of this matters for the experimental practice of research-creation because the universal subsumption of all other economies, formal and informal, under the capitalist economy amounts to a capture of every species of event – including their respective fields of emergent expressibility, the heterogeneity of their co-composing polyrhythms, their improvisational power to repeat singularly with variation, their tendential arcs, their cresting expression on social surfaces of recording that constitute evolving genres of co-activity.
- When the capitalist economy subsumes all other economies, it is not just capturing monetary value. It is capturing processes of individuation. It is capturing entire fields of emergent relation. It is capturing powers of becoming. Capitalism endeavors nothing less than the universal capture of *forms of life*. It subsumes them, sometimes gently, more often brutally, to techniques of relation dedicated to quantitative value-adding and accumulation.

## 10. Activate New Forms of Life (Invent at the Interstices)

- It is important not to mistake this capture for a homogenization. The forms of life captured by the capitalist process produce value by distinguishing themselves from each other. Capitalism is as *singularizing* as it is subsuming. The issue is that the singularization is subject to competition in a way that foregrounds quantitative measures of success over the richness of qualitative diversity. The heterogeneity of forms of life are important only to the extent that they add capital value. Although the capitalist process creates the conditions for the singular emergence of forms of life, and feeds off their heterogeneity, it ultimately attributes no value to them as such. It is supremely indifferent to the qualitative richness that animates its field.
- If capitalism is a universal process of capture, there is no simple way out. All activities are at some point, in some way, taken up in it. But if capitalism is also singularly inventive of new forms of relation, then despite this complicity there are emergent forms of life always on the make which might come to assert greater autonomy. The result can be leakage in the system – lines of flight toward a non-capitalist future.
- An altereconomics of research-creation, understood as a practice of the event, is informal. It is unquantifiable. Its valuations directly concern qualities of life. But the affirmation of qualities of experience



refuses to settle around prestige-value. Its process is autonomous in the sense that it is self-propagating. What propagates is an evolving form-of-life that partners thinking and making at the emergent level where they already come co-causally together. This is a polyrhythmic economy of germinal forms attuning – of *forces of life* finding new collective expression not for what it leaves behind but for its appetite to always begin anew.<sup>1</sup>

- Emergent life, lived less as value-adding than *as a* value in itself.
- Research-creation: the value produced is the process itself, is its very qualitative autonomy.

## Note

1. Propositions 9 and 10 are taken almost verbatim from ‘Thought in the Act’ in Erin Manning and Brian Massumi *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minnesota University Press, 2014).

## Bibliography

- Deleuze, G. (1989) *Cinema 2: The Time Image* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
- Guattari, F. in Genosko, Gary and Murphie, Andrew “Metamodels” in *Fibreculture Journal*, 12, (2008). [www.fibreculture.org](http://www.fibreculture.org)
- Manning, E. and M., Brian (2014) *Thought in the Act: Passages in the Ecology of Experience* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).
- Whitehead, A.N. (1929) *The Function of Reason* (New York: Free Press).