



Peer-reviewed paper

MAPS: Living, moving, emerging assemblages

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This research narrative tells the story of a Māori immersion early childhood centre's engagement with the performing arts. In this research, and fundamental to this narrative is the provocation that came from the drama based Community Artist who, joining the centre, listened, shared, planned and lived drama arts practices with the children and teachers. This activity rests within a more extended arts based teaching and research learning initiative (TRLI) known as Move, Act, Play, Sing (MAPS), which also involved provocations from music and dance Community Artists. Drama and storytelling are the focus of the encounters shared here, particularly what might be understood as a 'walking performance' linked to a local mountain, which featured in the children's lives and the life of the centre becoming-Māori. What emerged throughout the overall project was an affirmation of the intricate ties to lived experiences, sensations, encounters, interactions and intensities that are present in children's work. Drama as 'real' or living is supported within the imaginary, where Deleuze identifies 'real' as both virtual and the actual (1988). Attention is drawn to the movement or leakage between virtual and the actual, enabling another of Deleuze's concepts to operate, namely, the rhizome (Sellers, 2013). This research also draws on Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) concept of assemblages of desire invoking the imaginary as a new means of expression affecting unexpected relations and connections, and it is within these emergent, unexpected, yet still anticipated potentials that this article seeks new possibilities for drama in early childhood education.

Au milieu – starting in the middle – telling a narrative within a narrative

A story from Te Puna Kohungahunga's hiko walking performance:

"Kia tupato ki te ahi," called out the kuia as the tamariki ran eagerly to join in her, standing in the long grass away from the kaiako.

There were no flames in the sense that one first imagines, hearing this cry, and the kuia, who stood pointing to a place away from the 'fire' who was many decades younger than the wise elderly Māori women who are usually given this title. This did not matter to the young three and four year olds, who were entranced in what this might reveal, fully embodied in the events taking place,



their imaginations connecting through their belonging/becoming in the assemblages of desire. Their teacher had transformed from her role as kaiako to kuia, and it was to the wise kuia in this space that they were now connected.

The kaiako becoming-kuia was exploring movement in this creative space. With their newly present kuia, the tamariki were opening up to an intimate sensing of themselves and place, playing with their own cultural desiring machine, keeper and passer on of Māori ways. This dramatic space could also be seen to be creating space for alternative narratives of curriculum, narratives that expressed intensities and productive desires to shift and change the fixedness that brings stasis to Māori aspirations.

Our kaiako becoming-kuia indicated a circular area to sit amidst the long grass. The presence of the maunga is sensed, and that of the place that holds stories in this collective becoming, living as Māori, even as this maunga in the city transversed children's everyday urban experiences. It is an emerging hybrid of flows in which many different potentials and multiplicities are actualised...

The use of Te Reo Māori, Māori terms, and concepts will appear throughout this narrative, not always with an accompanying translation. A glossary follows the references to help follow our text.

Move, Act, Play, Sing (MAPS) aimed to document emergent pedagogical concepts and learning pathways in the performing arts. We are telling this story of Te Puna Kohungahunga's engagement with drama arts practices as a dual narrative, we being Jacoba Matapo and John Roder, tertiary lecturers and members of the MAPS research team, participants, at times, who were treated as part of the centre's wider whānau community, but also coming from a foreign space outside of the centre. Initial relationships between researcher(s) and centre involved Kaupapa Māori protocol, Mihimihi to welcome us and to allow us, as researchers, to position ourselves with and within the centre context. Within any project involving tertiary researchers and practitioners as researchers, there will be ethical tensions. We have been very conscious of this across all the sites involved in MAPS and particularly aware of this in the case of a Māori early childhood setting. We discuss aspects of these tensions throughout, whilst also acknowledging that this will still appear limited within the constraints of the current narrative. We have, to some degree, also been encouraged to think together, with our participants, of the ethical and political issues, whilst creating partnership practices that evolve flexibly and emergently planning for 'strategic uncertainties' (Coombes, Danaher & Danaher, 2004, p. 1). Also within the ethical mix, it should be noted that there was a prior relationship between John, as lead researcher, and the Māori immersion centre. This introduces further ethical issues, whilst also helping shared decisions and partnership to be fostered across all those involved. We believe it is the richness of these relationships, including the Community Artists, children and whanau, which have helped foster the multiple story lines appearing within this article.

Within the ethos of this research, there has been an ongoing project to collapse the separation between adults and children, between adults and other adults, whether kaiako and Community Artists, or kaiako and tertiary researchers (see Jovanovic & Roder, 2013). Teachers across the centres involved in MAPS took on roles as research-practitioners in the project, and those involved in the music



and drama experiences at Te Puna Kohungahunga, but will be referred to here as the kaiako within Te Puna.

There were times when both of us (Jacoba and John) were present during the events described involving Community Artists, kaiako, tamariki and wider whānau of Te Puna. We have collectively reflected on what the experiences we describe have connected with. There will also be moments within this writing where individual reflections are shared, where it has been important to situate ourselves as Jacoba or as John. Whether it is our collective voice or an individual, rather than hide behind the anonymity and homogeneity of 'the researchers', and where this is made obvious, what we attempt to 'produce' are insights linking to what each of us brings to the rhizomapping of relations across these MAPS related events. We are attempting this writing as a dialogue following some characteristics of a duoethnography (Norris & Sawyer, 2012), but not all, and do not claim it as the research method. There is some movement throughout between more traditional prose and this dual or duo narrative.

Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the rhizome (1987, p.7) and nomadic science (p. 326), our 'method', as such, is more a rhizoanalysis (MacNaughton, 2005) or rhizomapping (Sellers, 2013). Following this characterisation of the rhizome, our narrative does not attempt to be linear in the traditional sense of an ordered text. This image of thought eschews arborific structures with a central trunk and neatly arranged branching. We favour, instead, a continual splicing and bifurcating with no beginning or end. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 21) suggest that a rhizome "is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows." Our reasons for this will become clearer by way of a reading that we hope provokes oscillating movement, and at the same time, maps this movement in the 'in between' spaces of the many assemblages constituting the MAPS milieu. We start au milieu, in the middle, and invoke the rhizomatic, which "ceaselessly establishes connections..." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 21).

Te Puna Kohungahunga

Te Puna Kohungahunga is a full immersion Māori early childhood centre, one of three case study centres in the wider MAPS project. It is a Kaupapa Māori based centre, founded on Kaupapa Māori principles, values, beliefs and practice. Kaupapa Māori was clearly embedded within the culture of the centre and this became evident in the encounters between Community Artist, teachers, children and whānau. The teachers, children and parents (kaiako, tamariki and wider whānau) in this centre worked for some months with the drama Community Artist from the project, Molly Mullen from England, who had a background in applied theatre. Molly was undertaking drama education work and doctoral study in New Zealand. As with the whole MAPS endeavour, our research team was concerned that there was a risk of colonising centres, bringing new 'truths' to the teachers and their practice. With Te Puna, this is amplified by the history of research and Māori, which Molly was very well aware of. To begin with, Molly was particularly tentative in her relationship with the Te Puna community because she was unsure how she was going to be able to respond appropriately, given broader cultural intentions and differences. After much negotiation whilst still holding some space for provocation, a space for her



in the role of partner, sounding board, animateur, enabler and facilitator emerged, opening up spaces for becoming. Becoming in an open and fluid (Deleuze, 1994) responsive approach, becoming-storyteller, introduced drama frameworks that allowed for improvisation and story ideas to emerge from the children with the kaiako and wider whānau associated with the centre. In regard to the whānau, note that, whilst this can refer specifically to families, it can also refer to all those who have a relationship together, in this case, the community growing and being part of the centre.

Ko maungawhau toku maunga – Maungawhau is my mountain

Te Puna has a special relationship with Maungawhau, their maunga. Each day, children at the centre repeat 'ko maungawhau toku maunga' (Maungawhau is my mountain). Children have walked this mountain many times, with teachers, friends, with whānau before their music, sound, and drama engagement in MAPS.

How children in Te Puna Kohungahunga introduce themselves formally as members of the centre involves the learning of their own pepeha. This includes their name, the names of their mother and father, and where they are from. For some, it goes much further. A key part of this in te Ao Māori, that is, seen within a Māori view of the world, is the link to the local area of one's whānau made clear through reference to the mountain and the water of that area. Maungawhau as the mountain that children see from the centre is key to these children's collective emerging Māori identity, their sense of place in the here and now. Whaea Lovey (personal communication) makes the point that, when locating oneself as part of their own whānau 's, history their maunga may be Hikurangi or somewhere far away from the local Maungawhau, but when locating themselves as part of Te Puna, the protocol will be the centre's pepeha. What she goes on to point out is that children will show their connection to Maungawhau and include it in their own pepeha, even when it is not from their own whānau 's historical area. She believes this is not about correctness or incorrectness, but more significantly about forms of respect, reflecting the lived connection tamaraki have with Maungawhau. Many manifestations produced by intensities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) appear throughout the life of the centre and the relational landscape MAPS contributed to. One such intensity during the hikoi 'walking performance' emerged when a couple of children were noticed spontaneously stepping away from the group happenings and looking over to the crater and beginning to sing Ko Maungawhau toku maunga to the mountain. Over the time, children that attended Te Puna Kohungahunga came to understand the place that Maungawhau has in their lives as members of the Puna. In singing, pepeha and other shared rituals, a Māori sense of belonging is invoked. Important relational messages are here for the arts in connecting with one's sense of place and the local. *Te Whāriki* captures the importance of this through its commitment to 'belonging' as a strand in the Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996).

Jacoba's reflection

I recall, on my first visit to the centre and being Samoan *non-Māori*, I was mindful of my presence within this space and sensitivity towards Kaupapa Māori



beliefs and values. As I was invited to join the morning mat time, I first heard the children exclaim 'ko maungawhau toku maunga' and I thought I understood what this meant. However, my understanding at that time was only the literal translation, which was far from how the mountain affected...was sensed, opened to and received by the children and teachers within the centre. I had not yet understood the deeper connections that each individual in the centre had with Maungawhau. It was only after several visits that I was able to recognise how this mountain is alive in actual and virtual forms (Bergson, 1988) for each child and teacher.



Being present through this experience and later revisiting the video footage, I sensed there was a story within the story. I began to see the unwritten story, the unwritten virtual potentiality within the space. By connecting through relationships and sharing in the lived experiences with the Kaupapa Māori Centre community, I could see emerging through children's, teachers' and my own stories: the breath; the life force; the past; present; future; and mauri inseparable, in openings to affect and to be affected.

John: In thinking about desire as a productive life force (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987 p. 166), a theme we come to later, I was excited when (in the process of mapping connections) there was a line of flight that escaped our Western framework and created a new connection to/through the Māori concept of the mauri. Whaea Karen described the mauri each individual has as an essential life force. Whaea Dahlene elaborated further, telling us about how a child visiting the maunga with their mauri out of balance is open to being affected by the mauri of the maunga and of the group collectively engaging in this creative event. Here, I learn how it is not only human and animate objects that have this life force, a mauri, but also inanimate objects, the river, a village and, of course, a maunga.

Jacoba: I can sense this. I felt this up on the maunga with the whole whānau. I know we are not saying that Deleuze's desire is the same as mauri, but I think there is some commonality, and more than this, there is a space created when we bring these together. It is helping me, in my acts of creation, to rhizomap in this way, to be open to emergence...relating...receiving...

John: Indeed. Alecia Youngblood Jackson (2013) talks about desire as the Deleuzian method of connecting assemblages one into another to see what is produced, what works. Jackson goes further, suggesting data-as-machine, asking what might happen when data from research narratives are connected to Deleuzian concepts. She says: "I allow the data to contaminate Deleuze's theory in its own act of becoming. The plugging in is an activity to provoke, explain and elaborate the assemblage. Data-as-machine positions data as fluid, multiple..." (p. 114).



This seeing what is produced is quite different to a coding process that risks a fixing of meaning, something Maggie MacLure warns us about when addressing the 'offences of coding' (2013, p. 167). This juxtaposition is intended as an act of creation, allowing the data to 'glow' (p. 173). Deleuze and Guattari liken this to a method of construction for keeping oneself open (also talked about as a body without organs) (1987, p. 165), that is, a body that is fixated on overcoding structures. In this process of our own constructing-openness, there was resonance with the Deleuzo-Guattarian concept of desire and of affect.

Jacoba: It's a statement on the obvious, but within a Māori philosophical space, I see these beliefs about the mauri, about desire, life force, flows and intensities as insights that have been around for centuries. In that regard, this is not new, but this does resonate today within *Te Whāriki*...

John: ... and this resonates within the recent trajectories and edge of Western thought, as our journey with Deleuze also helps uncover. In a way, throughout much of the recent postfoundational, posthumanist research in early childhood education, they are very new. I'm thinking here of Liselott Marriett Olsson, Hillevi Lenz Taguchi, and closer to New Zealand, Marg Sellers, Jenny Ritchie and others...and now MAPS. And I agree we often look elsewhere, importing our thinking, as if we were to reproduce it, rather than be creative in our construction. I am reminded of how it was often mentioned by teacher-researchers across all centres involved in MAPS that 'We don't do Reggio', as we are in Auckland, we may be Māori, we are part of New Zealand, where we have created *Te Whāriki* as our curriculum for early childhood education. But we are influenced by (allow for being affected by) many concepts, from Reggio, from our culture and so on.

Jacoba: This is a kind of pragmatism affecting becoming-other processes (Semetsky, 2006), and we are still in the middle here, au milieu.

John: I am wondering here about what it is that emerges and is constituted in the milieu of assemblages that has a capacity to affect and also have an openness to be affected. In our hikoi walking performance, this sense of openness to ongoing flows of emergent potentiality affecting the environment itself, the tamariki, kaiako, and Community Artist, enabled them to question how curriculum works and sense their power-full-ness (Sellers, 2013, p. 177), by being power-full players (p. 23) able to contribute and to affect and to be affected. This experience was reflected on after the event as very positive and affirming for all those involved. More recently, Whaea Dahlene (personal communication) spoke of the dramatic experience on the maunga, bringing the tamariki's mauri back into balance. I feel somewhat in awe, as we have felt these Māori concepts speak to our Western philosophical framework, but I am also very conscious that to go any further, at least in writing about what we are learning here, needs to be much more of a working partnership involving Māori voices, thinking of Whaea Dahlene, who lived out the becoming-kuia, along with others, where we would write about this Māori Pakeha juxtapositioning together.

Jacoba and John: In this next section, we will be relating the productive potential of the performing arts journeys in MAPS to some Deleuzian concepts, plugging them in to the research narrative to see what is produced. One of the challenges we have experienced in adopting a Deleuzian way of thinking is the



way this approach stretches language and our usual sense of a familiar concept to see how it makes us think and feel creatively. A good example of this can be seen in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'desire', or more fully, what we are reading about as assemblages of desire. We will attempt to open this up as an emerging theoretical space that MAPS has found productive in relating the performing arts context with particular early childhood settings, with environments, space and culture, and with broader aspirations and visions of early childhood education.

Jacoba: Self-questioning and producing

John, you have found the concept of 'desire' an epiphany, and this has helped me, too, as I try to follow and map more of the relationality in the way I had been thinking about assemblages as in-between in the assembling. I think my epiphanies have come in stages and include the big shifts from our traditional focus on 'being' and what 'is' to one more envisioned, in terms of 'becoming'. I am thinking much more about multiplicities, rather than traditional foundational ideals. Especially important for me has been Deleuze's concept of time and the virtual as real.

John: On reality and the 'real'

Similarly for me, following Deleuze's thinking of the virtual as part of the real, along with what is actual, has led to fresh insights around potentiality and becoming. In my work on elearning, the term virtual is commonplace. Here, virtual is an abbreviation of virtual reality and is usually conceived as an opposite, in some way, to the here and now physical analogue reality, analogue reality being what we find in the material world quite removed from the digital virtual. Even in contemporary digital culture, I believe we need to critique this separation as artificial, with increasingly blurring boundaries between the real world and the virtual world. This, however, is not where the power of Deleuze's concept-creating-constructing lies. Virtual, in Deleuze's thought, is not opposite to real (whether digital reality or any other form of real), but along with what is actual(ised), constitutes the real (see Deleuze, 1988, p. 42-43).

Jacoba: I noticed this connection, recently, between drama, as it was being encountered within events at Te Puna and another of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, the rhizome and potentiality. I am wondering how helpful it is to see drama as an encountering of the 'real' or living, supported within the imaginary, which identifies 'real' as both virtual and the actual (Deleuze, 1988). As Marg Sellers draws attention to in her work on children becoming curriculum, this movement or leakage between virtual and the actual enables a rhizome to operate (2013).

John: We should come back to this when we explore more of the event on Maungawhau and the drama provocations taking place back in the centre that preceded the hikoi onto the maunga. Whilst we are laying out the theoretical background, I would like to return to desire here, and Deleuze and Guattari's comment that there is no desire without assemblage... "no desire but assembling, assembled, desire" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 399).

I have been very aware of the talk about deficit and credit approaches to curriculum in early childhood education. It has seemed to me that this contrast of perspectives is helpful, but risks oversimplification. Expanding and complexifying the credit view, as I am coming to understand, resonates with potentiality,



openness, emergence and multiple possibilities in a child's learning, and as Liselott Marriet Olsson (2009) shows in her project, ambiguously titled *Movement and exploration in children's learning*, that children do not have fixed identities. Rather, multiple identities emerge and form within the broad educational milieu children are part of (p. xxii).

Jacoba: Just before you continue with Deleuzo-Guattarian (re)visions of desire, I think it is important to acknowledge how the Māori view of children includes their whakapapa, their history, and their future (their potentiality, their reality) and seems to fold it into the present, what is actualising now as though the future is already present. There seems to be some alignment with the Deleuzean virtual. I am interested in how the various assemblages that the MAPS drama encounters were related to affect this uncertain and fluid potentiality. I think our method has been a rhizomatic mapping of this potentiality. I recognise that I have been situated for some time in more traditional Western thinking, including my view of research, and now I, myself, am emerging into a constellation of networks and potentiality that is the rhizome.

John – Desire as lack, and desire as affirmative flows and intensities

Okay then. We are told by Deleuze and Guattari that desire, as we know it in the traditional sense, is framed as a lack of something, a fantasised object. From this view, it is located in the individual, and this is important as part of the contrast in perspectives. In early childhood education, I think this could have been interpreted as pertaining to what teachers or children want or need—their psychological motivation and intention. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari see desire as made in assembling processes, not located in the self: “Desire has nothing to do with a natural or spontaneous determination; there is no desire but assembling, assembled desire” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 399). Assemblages of desire also reveal the affective dimension of the body's capacity to affect and to be affected as part of a wider relational milieu. The body, here, can be understood to include a collective, as in the social body, the political body. Seeing this relationally in the case of MAPS desire is machined-constructed-produced. As an assemblage, it affects, affecting and becoming affected by the productive energy of the child, performing arts expression, the maunga, culture...and event together.

Jacoba – On the virtual as part of the real

Bringing in the Deleuzean virtual then, what is produced, and what is actualised is always contingent on the processes of becoming that comes into play, and these processes project multi-dimensionally, affecting further potentiality. This requires a non-linear view of time, and reflecting more critically further demonstrates the challenge for contemporary curriculum that is only focused on fixed future points and actual outputs. Since MAPS was also influenced by the beliefs and ethos of Reggio Emilia, we can also see this shift towards potentiality (becoming) as being revealed in the rich image of the child's multiplicities, in contrast to a fixed future, which we see as captured by a normative and limited universal ideal. As Marg Sellers (2013) has pointed out, our New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, seems to both support this sense of emergence, becoming and multiplicity, whilst also slipping into the fixed learning outputs, and normative ideal child.

I think MAPS has successfully challenged traditional curriculum narratives and invoked what you have been talking about, here. Another crossing would be



productive here, a return to our rhizomapping of the learning involving storytelling and drama performances, which takes us back where the drama provocations began. There were multiple events on the mountain, culminating in one that was called 'the community event' and that was planned somewhere between structure and emergence and was meant as a temporary closure to the arts and drama in the wild, to rhizomatic lines leaking out on the maunga. A jump, now, and we are back in time *and* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) back in the centre, giving a conventional record of other related events.

Encounters with Community Artists: The sensing of drama in Te Puna Kohungahunga

Across all of the MAPS project, Community Artists (CAs) visited each of the centres fortnightly, each time making connections to previous experiences shared with children and teachers. This connecting through interactions and talk was an important practice between teachers and CA. For each of Molly's visits as CA to Te Puna Kohungahunga, there would often be a teacher working alongside her, observing, listening and engaging in the drama/storytelling provocations that took flight as part of embodied learning in their conversation. Over the two week period (in the in-between weeks of Community Artist visits), teachers would work alongside children to observe, document and provide further provocations for children within their dramatised play. Observing the children, it became clear that physical space was important, and together with children, spaces were chosen to be part of an unfolding narrative. This was indicated by masking tape in a rectangular shape, using tape on the floor. Although this technique was quite minimal in its appearance (taped lines to the floor), the presence of a stage created a 'space' for children and teachers to see difference in the way children's stories were told in the form of drama.

Shared by a kaiako in the centre who worked alongside the Community Artist, the point of 'difference' in drama making was acknowledged: "- I am building confidence to do things differently. I can see continuity in children's play, their experiences and stories. I see things differently about drama in children's play. Children take initiative, recreate stories shared by other children" (teacher voice, June, 2013)

On one occasion, the Community Artist invited children to share their stories of Maungawhau as a provocation for further 'dramatising' within the children's dramatic play area. This experience was in response to prior visits to Maungawhau, where children collected stories to bring back to the centre. Here, the Community Artist documented, word for word, the child's own story. Once the story was documented, the Community Artist repeated the story in its exact form, word for word, back to the child. Once approved by the children, the Community Artist invited the children to lead in their own retelling of their story. This interaction is not production driven, as in we can write and produce an object, but an opportunity for children to experience their stories in a different realm.

Community Artist: Let me capture your story; tell me your story and I will write it down.



Child: Hiding in boxes, looking at trees, looking at the volcano in the rocket ship...the end... wait - oh and monkeys, and the camera, the end. (video footage, June, 2013)



Imaginary as living: Seeing difference

Through this sharing of stories, the child's own perception of Maungawhau is brought to light. In this story, there are traces of previous stories, 'hiding in boxes', and the camera filming is brought into the plot. As this story of Maungawhau unfolds, intricate connections to past and present open in unexpected ways, providing new possibilities for the child in their story making. Sellers (2013) describes imaginary, challenging an imaginary seen as representation or reproduction of something already familiar. "Imaginary function in spaces of transitions and transactions, as unstable and contingent, opening (to) possibilities for creating a different kind of work and for thinking and writing differently, this becoming the work of 'explor[ing] possibilities...'" (Sellers, 2010, p. 559). The imaginary involving multiplicity embodied the emotive conditions that makes something live for us (Williams, 2010). An imaginary is fluid and moves openly, connecting and relating to other concepts rhizomatically, unlike the notion of imagination, which is governed by determinations based upon thought, reason, judgement, taste and aesthetics (Knight, 2013).

Consider the child's story in the perspective of imaginary. With no particular outcome in mind, the provocation provided by the Community Artist and teachers opens the territory for connections to be made within the child's story making. A rocket ship and a monkey could have easily been interpreted or rationalised by an adult as 'making no sense' within this story based upon Maungawhau. Osberg and Biesta (2008) describe this as an emergence, moving away from familiar (re)presentation that disrupts rational thought. The story can be seen as 'living', both virtual and actual for the child, where s/he freely develops something new related to the past and present. Drama as 'production' or re-enactment is thus challenged by this practice.

Finding our stories on Maungawhau – the hikoi

Throughout the MAPS project, as we have seen, the centre engaged in regular visits to Maungawhau. These visits were an integral part of the centre culture, strengthening relationships between children, teachers and whānau with their mountain. Later on, as part of a MAPS discussion between teachers and the Community Artist planning for a community event, the suggestion was made to



visit Maungawhau with the intention of capturing the children's stories, to later revisit with the children. And so, an event was planned in response to the children's ongoing stories and connections with their mountain, Maungawhau. The wider centre whānau were involved throughout, with many joining the kaiako and tamariki on the hikoi.

The following excerpt shares the Community Artist's thoughts reflecting the challenge of documenting children's stories in such an open approach. We noticed the sense of respect for emergent learning and difference in the journey of story making made possible through delicate movements in responsive partnerships between kaiako, whānau, tamariki and Community Artist.

...It was also important to be attentive to when stories were emerging, or being found, and finding ways to collect them without 'squashing' them. I was inspired by the amazing work of the teachers who completely made this task their own. ... Here are some story images collected by the children using my camera. (M. Mullen, Moodle post, May 6, 2013)

In the overall MAPS project, we were fortunate to also have a professional videographer capturing many of these moments within these arts practices and our learning together. The camera, the videographer himself and all its assemblages affected what emerged in these spaces between tamariki, the arts, pedagogy, place and environment. Affording space for revisiting is only one such in-between space, not only as a record of what has past, but providing more mapping of actualisation from all possible becomings.

Assemblage: Connectivity of Stories

The walk on the mountain opened lines of flight, intensities and assemblages (moving, spilling in and out) for children in their story making. The lines of flight map rhizomatic connections (Honan & Sellers, 2008) intersecting from virtual and actual, how the mountain was received and sensed by children. All this influenced but did not limit interactions with the mountain, impressions within the physical space, engagement with the elements, wind, sun and rain, and the presence of relationships. New conversations arose, deterritorialising story lines and changing characters (Sellers & Chancellor, 2013). A teacher with her group of children describe the experience of story gathering and making on Maungawhau:

Child: "That's a water tree"

Kaiako: "Where? ... Oh! ... It is?"

Child: "That's a bubble tree and that's a water!"

Kaiako: I still have a puzzled look on my face. There are quite a few trees surrounding us, and as we sit, our tamariki are drawing their pictures and telling us their stories of what they are drawing. K. is sliding off her water tree and jumping onto the bubble tree. M. is jumping on his bubble tree and hopping onto the water tree. It was refreshing to experience their story telling. The way I was looking though was in a literal sense of what was in front of me and not in the (imagination). Once I shifted my thoughts, then I gained a pass through to their world of storytelling, where I was able to



jump and fly from tree to tree. It was actually quite cool!! (Kaiako voice, Moodle post, May 10, 2013)

Attentive to the children's words, the teacher captured their story, as well as her own. Bubble tree and water tree captured 'my' attention, and for this moment, a new means or another plateau was awakened. Attached to all actual and virtual intensities within this story, the imaginary opens lines that shift away from familiar territories, deterritorialising and freeing any fixed points (striations) or closed systems. Deterritorialisation movement or change appears, and like this story making, connects to the bubble tree and water tree where there is freedom to move away from the rational and produce another reality, whereby the new plateau is sparked (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). When this new plateau is formed, 'reterritorialisation' becomes a new means of formal expression within the new imagescape. The reterritorialisation within this story making becomes an assemblage (of many), which is open to be revisited with all its feelings of intensities, virtual and actual. Assembling, a "complex constellation of objects, bodies, expressions, qualities and territories that come together for varying periods of time to ideally create new ways of functioning" (Livesey, 2010, p. 18).

Jacoba: I was interested to see how this teacher's openness to children's new means of expression permitted her to conceive new and different images of the child 'flying from tree to tree'. In this assemblage, tying together, projecting and receiving these children within this experience, Olsson (2009) would say a new way of meaning making was provoked. I felt they received the space at that time and existence with which they do not represent, but present to themselves within the milieu. The middle or milieu, a continuous rhythm, elaborates new understandings of young children and their workings (Sellers, 2013).

John: So could we think of education (and even more so of care) located within the milieu, where new assemblages of desire get to emerge, for desire to leak, to flow, to intensify. We started out in the middle, on a hikoi, up on the maunga, near to an imaginary fire, in the middle of a performing arts event, a dramatic walking performance. We have travelled through Deleuze and Guattari, plugging their concepts in to see what creative thought might be produced. We have had epiphanies when Māori concepts and beliefs spoke to our not very traditional Deleuzian philosophies. It has been a rewarding journey. I see the arts as having elicited space for a more collective recovering of creative potentiality. It has seen a shift from a record of the past towards an openness seen in the virtual and in becoming, rather than what is...being fixed and static in time. Openness, as an affective dimension within assemblages of desire that sit alongside our understanding of emergence, has been a critical insight for me in my becoming. What is becoming in MAPS is not a destination, but a pedagogy of desire that relates, pervades, flows and affects. Within the project, we have moved some way from the original Reggio influence, but the Reggio concept of a 'pedagogy of listening', which I have found helpful, thinking of it as a 'pedagogy of sensing', is still very present in our sensing of a pedagogy of desire (see Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 2012). This is another example of our juxtaposing, of assemblages leaking and affecting, even when we think we are in some new territory. What are some of your thoughts about this, now?



Living drama in ECE: What I have received (re)conceived

Jacoba: My involvement with MAPS research is enabling me to see capacity for difference in children's dramatic play in meaningful and interconnected ways. What has changed is my perspective of drama as delivery of curriculum or 'doing' drama. Thankfully, I see drama differently, drama as 'living' both within the virtual and actual, with all the intensities and sensations. The approach to drama in this research engages provocations where children's experience becomes the flow of emergence in and out of lived experiences and relationships. The partnership with teachers strengthens the continuity of the interactions with the Community Artist. This partnership stems from an intentional practice – to ensure the provocations did not impose upon children or take away from their lead in story drama making. In one of my interviews with a teacher in Te Puna, I learned how she saw children within the context of the drama and how, for one boy in his story making, "he was feeling his thinking". This feeling thinking arrives as: intensities; imaginaries; de-(re)territorialisation; milieu; and assemblage, all of which are moving in rhythm, intersecting, projecting, sensing, receiving all-at-once, feeling and thinking inseparably. These concepts have provided new perspectives for researchers and teachers within this project to strengthen a pedagogy of desire that is more concerned with open possibilities for children in drama than the closed product (performance) based outcomes, which Janet Mansfield (2010) notes are often associated with the arts in education.

Jacoba and John: So we have told stories within stories. They have been about the arts and about Deleuze and Guattari and assemblages of desire and maybe even a pedagogy of desire. We hope that our research narrative is something of a counter-narrative in its attempts to break with traditional academic writing, and whilst dealing with quite challenging concepts, have made them more accessible in the manner of the telling. Rather than remove the challenge, we hope that our rhizomapping and movement among many middles, whilst unsettling at first, will also have been more productive in helping to stir movement and exploration in your thinking (as in you who are readers, teacher-researchers, desiring, becoming-other than you already are). We come back to some of our opening statements. What emerged throughout the overall project has been an affirmation of the intricate ties to lived experiences, sensations, encounters, interactions and intensities that are present in children's work. We feel that drama as 'real' or living is supported within the imaginary. We owe a debt to Deleuze for identifying the 'real' as both virtual and actual, and to his collaboration with Guattari for the concept of the rhizome. We have seen how movement or leakage between virtual and actual enables nomadic rhizomatic movements and brings more fluidity to our practice. We drew on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of assemblages of desire, to invoke a shift from static entities and product to relationality, producing, becoming, and the spaces between, for the imaginary as a new means of expression affecting unexpected relations and connections. It is within these emergent, unexpected yet still anticipated potentials that we seek new possibilities for drama in early childhood education.



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Glossary of Māori terms	
hau ora	wellbeing
he mauri	Life force Essential character or nature
hikoi	march, walk
Kaiako	teacher
Kia tupato ki te ahi.	Watch out for the flames.
kuia	elderly woman, grandmother, female elder
maunga	mountain
Mihimihi	A basic introduction to let people know a little bit about yourself. It tells people where you are from and who you are, linking you to the land (and mountain), river, sea, tribe, sub-tribe, whakapapa (genealogy) and marae (sacred meeting place).
mokopuna	grandchildren (also in the collective sense in a centre)
pepeha	a short speech identifying oneself and one's family and place of origins
tamariki	children
te Ao Māori	Māori worldview
te reo Māori	Māori language
Whaea	mother, aunt, aunty (used here as title for ECE teacher)
whānau	Family. Can also refer to the collective that one is part of, as in centre community