

(Re)Storying Dolls and Cars:
Gender and Care with Young Children

by

B. Denise Hodgins
B.A., University of British Columbia, 1994
M.Ed., University of Victoria, 2007

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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University of Victoria

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

Feminist theorising has been instrumental in efforts to challenge gender hierarchies and conceptualize care as an ethic of relationality and interdependence, and has influenced visions of pedagogy as a relational, ethical and political endeavour. While these pedagogies importantly challenge simplified, uncontextualized, apolitical notions of both gender and care, they do not necessarily attend to the increasing complexity of children's heterogeneous commonworlds. Following a theoretical and methodological framework aligned with material feminism and post-qualitative research, in particular thinking with feminist scholars Barad and Haraway, this research questions what an engagement with human-and non-human relationality might do to complicate conversations about gender and care. Employing pedagogical narrations through a post-qualitative lens, this inquiry explores how children, educators and things become implicated in gendered caring practices. A diffractive analysis is put to work wherein gender and care are analyzed with/in several child-doll and child-car encounters, and are diffractively read through other doll and car stories near and far from the classroom. This analysis illuminates the political and ethical embeddedness of early

childhood pedagogies, and the understanding that gendering and caring emerge with/in a complex web of many relations. Material feminism loosens ties that bind simplified constructions of gender as explanations for care and vice versa, and instead puts forward that gender and care performatively emerge through intra-action. As such pedagogical and research practices need to pay careful attention to that which is always already on the verge of becoming.

Key words: gender, care, material feminism, early childhood education, pedagogical narrations, post-qualitative research, dolls, toy cars

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the many children whom I have worked with over the past 25 years, for all that you have taught me about care. And to my children, Lauchlan and Muirrean, for the greatest lessons in care that I could ever have dared to imagine or hope for.

Chapter 1: Curiosities, Stories and Thoughts that Make the Study

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. (Haraway, 2011, p. 4)

Curiosities

The seeds for this particular research study were planted long ago with my interest in father involvement; an interest that led to a Master's thesis (Hodgins, 2007) and other writing (Hodgins, 2011a), an interest highly connected to my own personal parenting dance, long engagement with feminism, and professional experience in early childhood education (ECE). This inquiry is guided by my overarching *curiosity* in how conceptualizations of gender and assumptions about and practices of caring for children are intra-actively related (Barad, 2007). Curiosity underpins the entire research project. Pearce and MacLure (2009) suggest that curiosity, as “a condition for philosophy” (p. 252) raises questions as to “what philosophy might do in educational research in general and methodological texts in particular” (p. 252). They draw on Strathern's (2007) view of curiosity as,

the great asset of the human species . . . the ability to be interested in many things all at once, indeed as many as come into view. We are in peril if we do not cultivate curiosity in what is around us. (as cited in Pearce & MacLure, 2009, p. 253)

Haraway suggests that, “curiosity – the beginning of fulfilment of the obligation to know more as a consequence of being called into response – is a critical axis of an ethics not

rooted in human exceptionalism” (in Gane & Haraway, 2006, p. 143). It was my intention in this research project (and it continues to be in my ongoing work) to think and act with curiosity from the perspectives that Pearce and MacLure, and Haraway illuminate: to know more as an ethical and political obligation, to consider many things (human and nonhuman) at once, to cultivate curiosity in that which is around us. I am drawn to Haraway’s (2008) view of curiosity “as one of the first obligations and deepest pleasures of worldly companion species” (p. 7), yet acknowledge, as does she, that much harm has and can come from being curious, “a difficult and often corrosive practice” (n6, p. 305).

When I began this study, I was curious to explore with the children and educators whom I collaborated with what ideas of care are being constructed and reconstructed in early years practices and the relationship these have to constructions of gender. My experience in childcare settings made me wonder about how young children regularly engage in acts of caring (both real and imagined) through their engagement in these spaces with materials, other children, and educators. Both research and my practice experience told me that acts of caring for young children are often guided by particular beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about gender (see the literature review in Chapter 2). Feminists have shown us for many decades that both care and gender are not simply personal issues but they are political as well (see Gilligan, 1993/1982; Held, 2006; Ruddick, 2002/1980, 2004/1989; Tronto, 1993, 1995). As a political issue care takes many forms and is in constant transformation. Consequently, Held (2006) points out, our understanding of care also needs reimagination (p. 29). I take this suggestion, that care is a political issue in need of constant reimagining, to practices with young children. A rethinking, reimagining, and redefining of care emerges through this study that positions

children, educators and researchers as gendered caring subjects that are always becoming, never outside the politics and ethics of our being of the world.

This study's focus on the relationship between gender and caring practices is timely given the increasing attention paid in research, practice and policy development to gender in both education (e.g., boys' and girls' academic performance and social conduct, the feminization of education, the recruitment of male educators¹) and in parental caregiving practices (e.g., parental leave, work-family balance, initiatives to increase father involvement²). It is also timely given the call for early childhood educators in BC to help facilitate children's development of social responsibility and respect for diversity as described in the BC Early Learning Framework (Government of British Columbia, 2008a). This study is predicated on the argument that we need to complicate the gender and caring conversation, in order to open up possibilities for understanding, engaging in, and facilitating multiple, diverse practices of caring for children. In Dolk's (2009) review of gender equity approaches in Nordic preschools she suggests that it might be necessary for a "move toward gender diversity rather than somewhat simplified notions of 'gender equity'" (p. 6). Further, she comments that, "instead of a pedagogy that compensates gender I would like to see a pedagogy that complicates gender" (p. 6). I borrow from Dolk's suggestion, as well as Pinar's (2004) conceptualization of curriculum as a "complicated conversation", in my assertion that we need a complicated gender and

¹ Regarding gender and school performance/conduct, in particular the association of "boys "being left behind" and the feminization of schooling, see Burman (2005), Kimmel (2006), Johnson (2011), and Mulvey (2009). For commentaries on the recruitment of male educators/caregivers see Johnson (2011) and Cameron, Moss and Owen (1999).

² See Allen and Daly (2007) for a summary of father research, Hodgins (2011) for a critical overview of father involvement initiatives, Levey's (2010) UN report on work-life balance and gender equity, DeGeer, Humberto, Minerson, and White Ribbon Campaign's (2014) recent study on father involvement and gender equity, and overviews from Borrell, Palència, Muntaner, Urquía, Malmusi and O'Campo (2014), Lero, Ashbourne and Whitehead (2006), and Marshall (2008) on gender, parenting and social policies.

caring conversation. Pinar's conceptualization of curriculum as a complicated conversation draws on Oakeshott's (1959) characterization of conversation as a "meeting-place of various modes of imagining" (Oakeshott, 1959 as cited by Pinar, 2004, p. 190) rather than as that which "conform[s] to a predetermined end" (p. 190).

Gender and Care Conversations with Pedagogy

Early childhood pedagogies have been influenced by feminist critiques to dominant biological and social theories of gender, theories that tend to reduce gender to a simplified conversation of universal difference between male and female, masculine and feminine, men and women, boys and girls (see Chapter 2 for further explanation). Challenges to the conceptualization of gender as an essential, fixed, internally produced characteristic or trait, and disruptions to the notion that gender develops in a natural and inevitable way have greatly complicated the gender care conversation (in ECE research and practices see Blaise, 2005, 2010; Blaise & Taylor, 2012; Boldt, 2011; Cameron, Moss & Owen, 1999; Davies, 1989, 1993; Davies, Dormer, Gannon, Laws, Rocco, Lenz Taguchi & McCann; Dolk, 2009; Eidevald, 2009; Johnson, 2011; Kamler, 1999; MacNaughton, 1996, 2000, 2005, 2006; Taylor, 2008; Taylor & Richardson, 2005; Walkerdine, 1981, 1989, 1990, 1999). Feminist theorising has been instrumental in efforts to challenge gender hierarchies and conceptualize care as an ethic of relationality and interdependence (see Gilligan, 1993/1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005; Ruddick, 2002/1980, 2004/1989; Tronto, 1993, 1995). They have also helped to thicken gender care conversations and have been influential to visions of pedagogy as a relational, ethical and political endeavour (see Cameron et al., 1999; Dahlberg & Moss,

2005; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005).

While these pedagogies importantly challenge simplified, uncontextualized, apolitical notions of both gender and care, they do not necessarily attend to the complexity of children’s increasingly global, mobile, technological worlds (see Blaise, 2013a, 2013b; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014, forthcoming; Prout, 2005, 2011; Taylor, 2013; Taylor & Blaise, 2014; Taylor, Blaise & Giugni 2013; Taylor & Giugni, 2012) as they are stuck in individualistic human-centred accounts and strategies. These accounts and strategies are grounded in a humanist ontology that positions humans as separate from (superior to) a finite nature, and a humanist epistemology informed (haunted) by Descartes’ *cogito*: “the modern subject of knowledge—the unified, conscious, coherent, stable, rational and knowing individual who exists ahead of knowledge and culture (St. Pierre, 2012, p. 486). Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) point out that these humanist understandings and our “habitual and anthropocentric ways of seeing” (p. 527) impact pedagogical and research practices in terms of what and how we document (e.g., children), what we pay attention to in our analysis (e.g., what children do or say), and our consequent actions (e.g., individual intervention plans) (as Chapter 3 will further detail). Taylor (2013) suggests that a recognition of childhoods as “embedded, emplaced, and above all relational” (p. 120) within naturecultures creates a pedagogical shift from knowing *about*, to learning *with* (see the following section A Diffractive and Materialdiscursive Project for an explanation of the term “naturecultures”).

This research study has aimed to *unstick* early childhood pedagogies from these individualist and child-centred pedagogies, and to rethink the apolitical and

developmental logics that underpin them. My intention is to politically reposition these pedagogies within a relationality framework in which pedagogies *emerge* through relations in order to open up possibilities for understanding, engaging in, and facilitating multiple, diverse practices of caring for children. My research questions are:

1. What might an engagement with human-and non-human relationality do to complicate conversations about gender and care?
2. How might children, educators and things become implicated in gendered caring practices?
3. How might a post-qualitative methodology complicate gender and care conversations and make visible new ways of knowing and being?

I argue that taking seriously the things that children (seem to) take seriously might teach us something about our pedagogies, our taken-for-granted knowledges, and ultimately about our becoming of caring gendered subjects. It might lead us, as Haraway (1994) says, to become worldly or to make our pedagogical choices and practices *of* the world.

Gender and care with Young Children Study

The research study that I report back on in this thesis took place in a small urban city in Western Canada at a childcare program with 10 children aged 18 months to three years, and with four full-time early childhood educators. All four of these educators participated as co-researchers. The study is a sub-study of a larger research project that engaged several early childhood educators in practitioner action research to implement and disseminate pedagogical practices and innovations, particularly the tool of pedagogical narrations, as outlined in the *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* (Government of British Columbia, 2008a). I adopted pedagogical narrations as my

methodology for this study (see Chapter 3 for an overview) to explore what an engagement with human-and non-human relationality might do to complicate conversations about gender and care and how children, educators and things might become implicated in gendered caring practices. Through pedagogical narrations we engaged in a process of observation, documentation, interpretation, dialogue, and (re)interpretation, wherein the educators, children and myself worked collectively to experiment with interpretations and questions that emerged from our collaborative work (for pedagogical narrations as a methodology see also Hodgins, 2011b, 2012; Hodgins, Kummen, Pacini-Ketchabaw & Thompson, 2013; Hodgins, Kummen, Rose & Thompson, 2013; Hodgins, Kummen & Thompson, 2011, 2012).

Over the course of a month, the educators and I documented moments of practice through photographs, videos, and written observations. These became tangible traces of moments in practice, artefacts that we could visit and revisit together as “a provocation to curiosity” (Haraway, 2008, p. 7). We shared our initial and ongoing (re)interpretations of the artefacts with each other and the children in several ways (e.g., photographs printed and displayed in the classroom, videos and photographs projected on a classroom wall, informal conversations on the floor, email and written notes, scheduled recorded meetings). These dialogues occurred that initial month within the classroom and the two months that followed (see Chapter 3 for more details).

A Diffractive and Materialdiscursive Project

A Post-qualitative Study

This study follows a post-qualitative research perspective (see Davies, de Schauwer, Claus, de Munk, Van de Putte, & Verstichele, 2013; Lather, 2013; Lather &

Pierre, 2013; MacLure, 2013; St. Pierre, 2011, 2013) that has emerged from postfoundational theoretical positions that have troubled such assumptions as Truth, generalizability, and essentialisms. These postfoundational troublings have led to a reconceptualization of qualitative research methods (Lather, 2007; Law, 2004; St. Pierre, 2011). A rethinking of humanist ontology has been particularly important for post-qualitative research imaginaries (Lather, 2013; Lather & St. Pierre, 2013). Of significance is the recognition that matter is agentic (see Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010), and that matter and discourse are *co-constitutive* (Barad, 2007). Paying attention to what Bennett refers to as “the force of things”, flattens human and non-human hierarchies and challenges the anthropocentrism of much Anglo-Western theorizing and researching methodologies. Recognizing the discursive and the material as co-constitutive is of utmost importance for re-imagining gender care understandings and practices, which I will illuminate further in the proceeding chapters. It also challenges humanist conceptualizations of observation and representation, which impacts both the understanding and practices of qualitative research methods. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the impact that postfoundational theories have on my understanding of pedagogical narrations and how I put pedagogical narrations to work as a post-qualitative methodology in this study.

Thinking with Haraway and Barad

The study is deeply influenced by the work of Haraway (1988, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012; Gane & Haraway, 2006; Haraway & Goodeve, 2000) and Barad (1998, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012; in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012). Both conceptualize “life as we know it” as a knotted practice and break apart bounded, pre-

existing categories (e.g., nature, female, time, knowledge) where humans are pre-eminently centered. One of the ways that Haraway and Barad visually represent this breaking apart of bounded categories is through their serious and purposeful play with language, their resignifying of words. This is something that I employ throughout the writing in these chapters. At times a slash is employed “where the slash is indicating an active and reiterative (intra-active³) rethinking of the binary” (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 19), such as dis/continuity (Barad, 2010). The hyphen is used to join words together to indicate their relationship in an effort to avoid privileging one over the other. For example, material-discursive (Barad, 2007) and material-semiotic (Haraway, 1994), “emphasize the absolute simultaneity of materiality and semiosis” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 137). It can also be used to refocus or differently align attention on the meaning of a word. For example her recent (Haraway, 2012) use of *response-ability* emphasizes the “response” element, an actual doing, within the notion of responsibility. In this spirit, one of the ways in which I play with language is with term *pastpresents*⁴(presence). Connecting the words in this way is an effort to highlight that pasts and presents, as in “time”, as well as presence, as in *being* “there”, are intra-active in their iterative becoming. Removing the hyphen takes the visual representation of relatedness further, marking the words (phenomena) as not simply connected but inseparable (e.g., Barad’s (2007, 2011) use of spacetime and spacetimemattering, and Haraway’s (2008, 2010) use of naturecultures and materialemiotic). Throughout the

³ Barad’s (2007) term intra-action “*signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies*” (p. 33, italics original). She further explains that, “in contrast to the usual ‘interaction’, which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action” (p. 33).

⁴ Haraway (2010) uses the term *pastpresents* as one word, which I play with here in my term *pastpresents(presence)*.

chapters I use the terms naturecultures, materialemiotic, and materialdiscursive to indicate their inseparability.

My thinking throughout this project is indebted to the concept of situated and embodied knowledges (Haraway, 1988) – “partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibilities of webs of connections” (p. 584) – and I use the term *situate* throughout this dissertation. Both Haraway and Barad write with an explicit concern for situating practices and illuminating the materialdiscursive, historical, political and ethical embeddedness of being in/of the world. Their work is a resounding call for attending to common worlding (Haraway, 2008) or what Barad (2007) calls an “*ethico-onto-epistemology*” (p. 185). This call, “to do the *work* of paying attention” (Haraway, 2008, p. 82, italics in the original) to the “enact[ment of] what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 148), has been highly influential to the literature (re)search and its presentation in Chapter 2, my methodological approach to this study (Chapter 3), my analyses (Chapters 4 and 5) and my discussion of this study’s implications for practices (Chapter 6). In particular, their use of diffraction as an optical metaphor has provided an analysis model for producing non-representational accounts in line with post-qualitative research perspectives of *how* practices come to matter (see Barad, 2007, 2011; Haraway, 1992, 1994, 1997). Chapter 3 provides a detailed description and explanation of diffraction, which I put to use as an analytical strategy in my literature review (Chapter 2) and data analyses (Chapters 4 and 5).

Gender and care entanglements. Working within a post-qualitative research perspective and with Barad and Haraway, I am not interested in gender and care in terms of belonging to an individual autonomous subject but rather in terms of entanglements (a

term that I frequently use in this dissertation) and the materialization of naturecultures.

Barad (2011) writes:

Entanglements are not intertwinings of separate entities but rather irreducible relations of responsibility. There is no fixed dividing line between ‘self’ and ‘other,’ ‘past’ and ‘present’ and ‘future,’ ‘here’ and ‘now,’ ‘cause’ and ‘effect’.
(pp. 148-149)

This inseparability, spacetimemattering, that figures throughout Barad’s and Haraway’s work, is of profound importance for rethinking how gender and care are always already “in the making”, both “built into practice” (Haraway, 1994, p. 67). With Barad and Haraway, materials, educators, children, gender, and care cannot be conceptualized as bounded entities or as causally related. This perspective helps to unstick constructions of gender and care from social/biological binary explanations, as well as loosen the ties that bind gender constructions as explanations for care and vice versa. Considering “what gets to count as nature and who gets to inhabit natural categories” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 50) is of upmost importance for pedagogies of care working to attend to the complexity of our increasingly technological, mobile, and global worlds. This is not to say that human bodies are unimportant in (re)constructions of gender and care but rather, as Puig de la Bellacasa (2010) suggests, “living in naturecultures requires a perspective on the personal-collective that, without forgetting human individual bodies, doesn’t start from these bodies but from awareness of their interdependency” (p. 167).

This is also not to say that attending to *how* (*which*) materialdiscursive practices come to matter will result in a utopic consensual agreement of “best practices” and ways forward. Complicated conversations do not have predetermined outcomes nor

(necessarily) smooth, harmonious relating and mattering. “When all agree, conversation stops, and the world is flat” (St. Pierre, 2012, p. 497). Writing of Haraway’s relational ethic, Taylor and Giugni (2012) suggest,

On the one hand, this relational ethic retains hope in the generative possibilities of children’s relations with more-than-human others. On the other hand, it appreciates the political imperative to grapple with the dilemmas and tensions that inevitably arise when we co-inhabit with differences. (p. 113)

Taking inspiration from Saldanha’s (2006) exploration of the materiality of race, we need stories about what happens to complexities in practices that will proliferate differences, “multiplying racial [/gender/caring] differences so as to render them joyfully cacophonous” (p. 21). In this study, pedagogical narrations offered “meeting-places” where we (the co-researchers) worked to resist predetermined explanations in our efforts to engage in complicated conversations about gender and care. Our collective dialogue and my retelling of that journey is a form of storytelling, “a fraught practice for narrating complexity in such a field of knots or black holes” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64). And the storytelling matters, as Haraway (2011) has asserted: it matters what stories we tell, what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. I tell many stories and tales in the chapters that follow. Both words can refer to narratives, accounts of events, fictions, legends, and falsehoods. (See Chapter 3 for a further discussion on storytelling.) Materiality in storytelling “is a knot of the textual, technical, mythic/oneiric, organic, political, and economic” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64) and the stories I tell pick at these knots in relation to gendering and caring with young children. It is through sharing (making public) stories of complexities in practices that new knowledges are generated for the

actualizing of new material realities (see Berger, 2010, 2013; Lenz Taguchi, 2010, 2011; Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2012; Mol & Law 2002).

Significance of the Study

The originality and contribution of this research study lies in both the topic area and the methodology. Thinking with the work of Barad (1998, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2012), and Haraway (1988, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012) this study offers a (re)conceptualization of care in early childhood practices that loosens its tie to dominant bounded conceptualizations of gender. Material feminism (see Chapter 2 for a description) offers childhood studies a way to: (1) recognize that discourses and the material world (i.e., human and non-human bodies) intra-act in complex and varied ways to produce constructions and practices of both gender and caring; and (2) extend a critically conceptualized ethics of care by taking seriously materialdiscursive phenomena in the generation of “a praxis of care and response – response-ability” (Haraway, 2012, p. 302). This conceptualization has impacted me, and the educator participants, in terms of our research and pedagogical practices (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and has the potential to impact the knowledges and practices of a broader “audience” (i.e., parents, ECE community, academia). An extended critically conceptualized ethics of care opens up possibilities for caring practices, with the potential to impact policy and program development, ECE and parent training. Material feminism, with post-qualitative understandings, also shifts how pedagogical narrations are conceptualized and practiced. This study has demonstrated that this shift brings tremendous potential to pedagogical narrations to be a methodology for producing knowledge differently. This study introduces pedagogical narrations as a post-qualitative methodology to open up spaces

for both ethics and the political within childhood studies and practices, an effective avenue to onto-ethico-epistemological inquiries (Barad, 2007).

Dissertation Overview

In this chapter I have provided an introduction to the research study: *Gender and care with Young Children*. I began with a brief explanation of the rationale that led to this inquiry focus. I provided an overview of the study, including the research study questions, and a description of the material feminist theoretical and post-qualitative research framework that guided the study. In particular, the significance of thinking with Haraway and Barad in relation to considering practices of gender and care was discussed. The introduction concluded with a summary of this study's significance for research and practice.

The research study is further situated and explored in the following five chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review to ground the study's research questions and theoretical framework. I do so through sharing three tales - A Tale of Development, A Tale of Resistance, and A Tale Materialization. The intention of each tale is to curiously approach the inheritance of work that has attended to paying attention to early childhood, gender, and care. I begin that chapter by presenting my understanding and use of the term material feminisms. In Chapter 3, I detail the research study's design and implementation. I describe the methodology used and its rationale, as well as the analysis strategy employed. The chapter concludes with an exploration of tensions and ethical considerations in regards to the inquiry and methodology. Chapter 4 provides an analysis of thinking with dolls wherein gender and care are analyzed with/in several child-doll encounters that emerged in the study and considered diffractively with other doll stories

near and far from the classroom. Chapter 5 provides a similar diffractive story telling as Chapter 4 through thinking with cars. Just as the study's documentation and dialogue provoked us (the co-researchers, the participants) during the inquiry and our/my analysis, in these analysis chapters, traces of the study (narratives and photographs) are offered to the reader as a provocation. Rather than consuming "findings" of a study, my aim is for readers to be provoked by what emerged. The final chapter summarizes how this study has generated complicated conversations about gender and care and added to the growing body of work refiguring ontology in ECE. I discuss pedagogical narrations as a post-qualitative methodology and conclude with some considerations as to what this kind of care/full attention might mean/do for practices and for growing *response-abilities*.

Chapter 2: Knots, Tangles and Tales

“Theories are not mere metaphysical pronouncements on the world from some presumed position of exteriority. Theories are living and breathing reconfigurings of the world” (Barad, 2012, p. 207).

“Perhaps cracking open possibilities for belief in more liveable worlds would be the most incisive kind of theory, indeed, even the most scientific kind of undertaking” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64).

Introduction

As Chapter 1 indicated this research study took up questions that considered gender and care, as related to young children, early childhood educators, and ECE practices. These aspects (i.e., ECE, researching/understanding young children and education, care, gender) each have a long, complex, and imbricated history and theoretical positioning. Material feminism, the theoretical framework that I employ in this study, is not the dominant (or historical) theoretical perspective associated with these aspects of the inquiry (i.e., within early childhood education, within childhood studies, within qualitative research in general, or within theorizing gender and care). In this chapter I endeavour to present my understanding and use of material feminism and how it is positioned with/in these more dominant “pronouncements on the world” (Barad, 2012, p. 207). To do so, I tell a few tales. They are incomplete tales and all-too-brief. In (spite of) their partiality, I aim to story the complexity of theorizing/practicing gender and care, and attend to the mattering of some “knots” and “black holes” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64). Through A Tale of Development, A Tale of Resistance, and A Tale of Materialization I highlight the materiality of theory, reconfigurings of the world in practices related to

gender and caring for/with young children. Within these I work at “ways of beginning to pull the sticky threads where the technical, the commercial, the mythical, the political, the organic are imploded” (Harway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 110). “Cracking open possibilities for belief in more liveable worlds” (Haraway, 1994, p. 64) is one connective thread that knots these tales together. This chapter concludes with a summary that situates my study with/in these knotted tales. I first begin with an explanation of my choice/use of the term material feminism for my theoretical framework.

Material Feminisms

This study is situated within theoretical positions that attend to the material and discursive as co-constituted. Some refer to these theoretical positions as post-humanism (Åsberg, 2013; Braidotti, 2006, 2013; Hayles, 1999), some call them new materialisms (e.g., Coole & Frost, 2010; van der Tuin, 2008), and others label it as material feminisms (e.g., Alaimo, 2011; Alaimo & Hekman, 2008; Taylor & Invinson, 2013). In Chapter 1, I put forward that this study has been deeply influenced by the work of Haraway (1988, 1991, 1992, 1994, 1997, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012; Gane & Haraway, 2006; Haraway & Goodeve, 2000) and Barad (1998, 2003, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012; in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012). The figures of materialsemiotic inseparability they illuminate and their careful attention to practices as both an ethico-onto-epistemological project and an ongoing becoming (which I describe further in this chapter’s final tale), have been instrumental to my curiosity to complicate gender and caring conversations and take seriously the mattering of care. I also suggested that my theoretical position sits within material feminisms, a term that neither Haraway nor Barad actually concretely identify themselves with (though they both are included in Alaimo and Hekman’s (2008) edited

volume *Material Feminisms*). (Re)categorization and (re)naming is not without troubles; the terms I have listed are all contested. MacLure (2010) suggests that every:

definition⁵ is problematic, if not downright disreputable, as far as postfoundational theories are concerned. This is because definition, as a practice, assumes a secure distinction between words and the things or concepts to which they refer. . . . Definitions falter, meaning shifts. The impossibility of defining theories, and knowing the precise difference between one and another, is not therefore a fatal error but an unavoidable issue. (p. 279)

Haraway (interviewed in Gane & Haraway, 2006) points to the danger in the term posthumanism and the readily appropriated take-up of a human/posthuman binary. Of posthumanism, Barad (2011) reminds that:

In particular, the “posthumanist” point is not to blur the boundaries between human and nonhuman, not to cross out all distinctions and differences, and not to simply invert humanism, but rather to understand the materializing effects of particular ways of drawing boundaries between “humans” and “non-humans. (pp. 123-124)

St. Pierre (2013) has cautioned the notion of a “material turn”, a quick sweep of condemning researchers and theorists from the 1970s and 1980s as “too discursive” without acknowledging the attention paid to *the material* by many of the “post” thinkers of the “discursive turn” (see also Hekman, 2010). Like St. Pierre, Ahmed has (2008)

⁵ Even seemingly obvious identity categories like “woman”, “man”, “mother”, “father”, “child”, “educator”, and “research”, terms that I use regularly throughout the chapters of this thesis, are impossible to completely define and know. In Taylor and Blaise’s (2014) provocation for queer worlding childhood, they write: “Whether it be girl, boy, nature, culture, child or dog – things always seem to exceed our attempts to know them, to get them right, to bifurcate and pin them down as ‘this’ or ‘that’” (p. 13). My use of these identity terms is with a postfoundational view as heterogeneous, always unfinished, never fully knowable, categories with porous boundaries.

criticized what she has perceived as a lack of careful reading of early feminist writings by new materialism writers. Van der Tuin's (2008) response to Ahmed includes:

I call this new materialism a third-wave materialism. I have chosen to do so, not because I want to set up another (feminist) progress narrative, but rather to signify the non-dualistically organized epistemic realm to which Rosi Braidotti has alluded. This is the feminist epistemic realm where we do not find the constitution of a (historical) materialism 'proper' or the uncritical celebration of feminist standpoint theory, nor do we find feminist biologies of the past. What we find here is feminist generation. (p. 415)

While I applaud Ahmed's call for *careful reading* (as well as St. Pierre's), and her pointedly observed comments about *which* writers get particular, deep, thinking with, I believe her critique is overly simplified, albeit important. Barad (whom Ahmed takes to task in her critique, pointing perhaps *un-carefully* to pieces of her earlier writing rather than her most current work at that time) is also cautious of the take up of the term "new" (see Barad, 2007; Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012). Drawing on Jones and Kawehau Hoskins (2013), Taylor and Invinson (2013) provide an important reminder that the "perception of 'newness' is . . . conditioned by culture, history and place" (p. 665). Like van der Tuin (2008), Barad is interested in the generation of new knowledges, *not* as a "breaking with the past, but rather a dis/continuity, a cutting together-apart with a very rich history of feminist engagements with materialism" (in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). She further explains:

As I discussed in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, diffractive readings must therefore entail close respectful responsive and response-able (enabling response)

attention to the details of a text; that is, it is important to try to do justice to a text. It is about taking what you find inventive and trying to work carefully with the details of patterns of thinking (in their very materiality) that might take you somewhere interesting that you never would have predicted. It's about working reiteratively, reworking the spacetime-mattering of thought patterns; not about leaving behind or turning away from. (And surely not about making a caricature of someone's work and knocking it down, which unfortunately has been a form of engagement in some objections to "new materialist feminisms". Caricaturing does epistemological damage: when epistemological care is not exercised there is an unfortunate and unhelpful obscuring of the patterns of difference, and in this case, the obscuring of crucial issues regarding the deconstruction of binaries.) (p. 13)

It is with this perspective, *thinking with care* (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012), that I engage with theoretical insights and troublings, both recent and previous, from within feminism, science studies and early childhood education and research⁶. The three tales that follow are not an attempt to nail down precise differences between theories or caricaturize someone else's work, but rather as Barad suggests, they are an attempt to pay attention to the details (of texts, of histories, of theories, of stories), *to be responsive and response-able*. I recognize that telling these tales one after the other also runs the risk of them being viewed as separately contained (hi)stories, as linear progress narratives - good, better, best. But as pointed to in Chapter 1, I have employed diffraction as an analytical strategy in this literature, therefore the tales have been written (and are intended to be read) diffractively (see Chapter 3 for a further explanation). "Diffraction,

⁶ See also Lykke for her generous articulation of what she terms "post-constructionism" as her methodological tool, and her efforts to "genealogically recognize both continuities and discontinuities in relation to feminist de/constructionism" (p. 132).

both as methodology and as physical phenomenon, does not traffic in a temporality of the new as a supercessionary break with the old. On the contrary, diffraction is a matter of inheritance and indebtedness to the past as well as the future” (Barad in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). With MacLure’s (2010) caution about defining in mind, I have labeled my theoretical framework as material feminism because I appreciate the explicitness, all the while slipperiness, of both words: “material” and “feminism”. Both words matter (to me). My theoretical framework is shaped by inheritance and indebtedness to the past as well the future (of critical feminist theory, science studies, and early childhood education and research). In the tales that follow, I walk with many others in my exploration of incisive theories and scientific undertakings that theorize/research/practice gender and care for/with young children. Reading their stories through each other has taken me “somewhere interesting that [I] never would have predicted” (Barad in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). Perhaps the reader of these tales will find the same.

A Tale of Development

As indicated in Chapter 1, one of the research questions for this project, *Gender and Care with Young Children*, was in regards to how gender and care emerge in ECE practices. The classroom where this project took place, our collective childcare “expertise”, and the care that families entrust to educators with that expertise in those classrooms all have entangled pastpresents(presence) with/in science, psychology, educational theory, institutions, policies and practices. As also indicated in Chapter 1 and in the previous section, this study sits with/in a material feminist approach therefore my developmental tale will *not* layout developmental theories of gender and care as they do

not guide my research questions (though they are addressed in the tale to follow, *A Tale of Resistance*). Instead my development tale tells some stories about how it is that we (a group of co-researchers/educators) could be in this place (an ECE classroom) to ask questions about gender and care. It is a tale of indebtedness to a Western evolution of paying careful attention to children. There is some risk that the stories I tell will romanticize this evolution and that they will be taken up as matters of fact. My intention is to illuminate the materialization of developmental theory - theory bred institutions, intuitions bred theory – as well as highlight through selected stories the always already gendered (and racialized, and classed, and heterosexualized) aspects of this materialization. In the sections that follow, I offer several stories related to paying attention to children as matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011). Puig de la Bellacasa argues, “staging and representing a sociotechnical assemblage in this way can provide a better account of a thing, but it also gives ethico-political significance to particular socio-material practices by generating care for under-valued and neglected issues” (p. 94).

Paying Careful Attention to Children

Darwin (1877) wrote *Biographical Sketch of an Infant* based on observations of his first-born son that he diarized from 1839-1841 (Freeman, 1977). This publication is sometimes regarded as the beginning of childhood studies. Though this “origin” is contestable (see Smuts, 2006), it is generally agreed that Darwin’s work was instrumental in generating a “wave of interest in child development in the form of the Child Study movement” (Prout, 2005, p. 45). Darwin’s work can be situated in a time and place where the demand for scientific legitimacy, which had evolved from the Enlightenment, dominated in all fields. As Cannella (1997) points out, within Western contexts this

consequently shifted perspectives from being dominated by the religious, philosophical and intuitive to the more secular, rational and positivist. The scientific method developed in the early 1600s by Descartes for the natural sciences was now readily applied to the study of social phenomenon (Lather, 2007). This application is evident within the spectrum of Darwin's work and writings - from coral reefs, barnacles and climbing plants, to Man's origin, emotions, and social descent (see Darwin, 1859, 1872; see Freeman, 1977 for a bibliography). When I first read *Biographical Sketch*, the carefully observed, documented and followed-up on details were apparent, but my critical interpretation of them only recognized the (as I perceived it to be) detached scientific method application. Perhaps in my first reading and interpretation I "failed the obligation of curiosity" (Haraway, 2008, p. 312n29) in my zeal for challenging (even if only in my mind) the mattering of scientific methodologies⁷.

With respect to vision, - his eyes were fixed on a candle as early as the 9th day, and up to the 45th day nothing else seemed thus to fix them; but on the 49th day his attention was attracted by a bright-coloured tassel, as was shown by his eyes becoming fixed and the movements of his arms ceasing. It was surprising how slowly he acquired the power of following with his eyes an object if swinging at all rapidly; for he could not do this well when seven and a half months old. At the age of 32 days he perceived his mother's bosom when three or four inches from it,

⁷ In reference to the critique she received for her *Primate Visions*, Haraway (2008) comments that when she wrote it, "I think I failed the obligation to of curiosity. . . . I was so intent on the consequences of the Western, philosophical, literary, and political heritage for writing about animals – especially other primates in the so called third world in a period of rapid decolonization and gender rearrangements – that I all but missed the radical practice of many of the biologists and anthropologists, women and men both, who helped me with the book, that is their relentless curiosity about the animals as a rigorous scientific practice and not a romantic fantasy" (p. 312n29). The tales that I tell in this chapter are investigated and written with an effort to be curious - to know more and consider many things at once as an ethical and political obligation. With Haraway, my previous (simplified, albeit important) critical lens (i.e., in regards to: gender, care practices, science) moves instead (I hope) to "generous suspicion" (p. 312n29).

as was shown by the protrusion of his lips and his eyes becoming fixed; but I much doubt whether this had any connection with vision; he certainly had not touched the bosom. Whether he was guided through smell or the sensation of warmth or through association with the position in which he was held, I do not at all know. (p. 286)

Yet, when I re-read *Biographical Sketch*, thinking with Haraway and Barad, previously apparent categories (scientist, objective, observation) begin to blur with other *seemingly* separate categories (father, subjective, engagement. Words like “perfection” and “warm soft hand applied to his face” (p. 285) begin to conjure different images for me. They evote an intimacy threaded through Darwin’s account (e.g., a mother breastfeeding her child, a father’s finger held by his infant son’s grasp), a reminder that these initial observations occurred in his home (Darwin worked and wrote from their family home, *The Nature of Things*, 2010), in moments of watching but also engaged interaction.

The first sign of moral sense was noticed at the age of nearly 13 months: I said "Doddy (his nickname) won't give poor papa a kiss, - naughty Doddy". These words, without doubt, made him feel slightly uncomfortable; and at last when I had returned to my chair, he protruded his lips as a sign that he was ready to kiss me; and he then shook his hand in an angry manner until I came and received his kiss. Nearly the same little scene recurred in a few days, and the reconciliation seemed to give him so much satisfaction, that several times afterwards he pretended to be angry and slapped me, and then insisted on giving me a kiss. So that here we have a touch of the dramatic art, which is so strongly pronounced in most young children. (p. 291)

Biographical Sketch was produced within a tangle of (among other things) scientific method (legitimacy), Darwin's emerging theory of evolution, and fatherly love (a dangerously indefinable term that perhaps says more about my reading than Darwin)⁸. While this example illustrates that theory and practice emerge with/in/through intra-active entanglements (see *A Tale of Materialization* for more), it also challenges the iconic image of the detached Victorian paterfamilias. Broughton and Rogers (2007; see also Petrie, 2006) provide several accounts that complicate the notion that "involved fathers" are late 20th and early 21st century invention (for media and website coverage of the "new father" see Beck, 2005; Brott, 2006; Canadian Press, 2003; Fathers matter, n.d.; Hoffman, 2005; Involved dads feeling invisible, 2006; Lorinc, 2002; Nyhan, 2006; Owens, 2006). Beginning this tale of development with a few threads from Darwin's *Biographical Sketch of an Infant* points to a very careful attention paid to children that would burgeon into a field of child studies that would reach/influence/spawn many disciplines. It also points to the importance of paying careful attention to *whom* is paying attention to children, and *how* this attention is defined (*A Tale of Resistance* will take this up further).

Fathering pedagogy⁹ and care. As mentioned, Darwin's influence on child studies was profound and by the late nineteenth century, child study societies and associations had begun to emerge in Europe and America (Bradbury, 1937; Burman,

⁸ Another example of this entanglement is found within the biographical accounts that suggest the death of his oldest daughter Anne Darwin in 1851 was a significant impetus that Darwin needed to finally move toward publishing *On the Origin of Species* (Darwin, 1859) (see Krulwich, 2009; *The Nature of Things*, 2010).

⁹ The point of this sub-section is not to provide the reader with a full account of the history of education and care in North America. While a "complete" account is arguably always an impossible task, a detailed genealogy is beyond the scope of the parameters of this Tale. The point here is to highlight key figures that relate to the establishment of ECE discourses and practices today, to trace the materialization of their theories. For more detailed accounts of the history of formal ECE in Canada see Prochner and Howe (2000) and Howe and Prochner (2012).

2008; Cannella, 1997). Paying attention to children (as in how to care for, how they develop, how to educate them, etc.) does not simply/only emerge in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as examples from Ariès' (1962) *Social History of Family Life* and Lascarides and Hinitz's (2013) *History of Early Childhood Education* both illustrate. Seventeenth century British philosopher John Locke and eighteenth century Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his *Émile ou De L'éducation* (1762) both had played parts in the how, who, when and why of paying attention to children (see Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2007; Prochner, 2000; Smuts, 2006). However, what would grow through this time significantly changed the understandings and practices of (Western) pedagogy and care. A few stories about particular "fathers" (for there are other stories and "fathers" not told in this tale) who have come to be known as integral to this evolution of paying attention to children will continue to situate this study's research in ECE. Traces of these stories shaped (continue to shape) these (gendered care) practices (which will also be considered further in A Tale of Resistance that follows).

Swiss pedagogue and educational reformer Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, has come to be known by many as the Father of Modern Pedagogy or the Father of Public School¹⁰. Pestalozzi applied the enlightenment spirit of *equality of opportunity* to the classroom. As his writings suggest, he was influenced by Rousseau and saw the child as a "seed" with potential, [therefore the] educator 'takes care that no untoward influence shall disturb nature's march of developments'" (Pestalozzi as cited by Kilpatrick, 1951, p. ix). The chief work on his educational principles was *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children* (first published in 1801, translated into English in 1894, see Pestalozzi, 1973). The main

¹⁰ See Downs (1975) for an early example of referring to Pestalozzi as the Father of Modern Pedagogy, and Compayré (2013/1907) for an early example of him being referred to as the Father of Public School.

problems with education that Pestalozzi articulated were: (1) the poorest children were excluded from education; (2) education focused on recitation not understanding; and (3) children were blamed for their educational failure rather than the teachers (Kilpatrick, 1951; Krüsi, 1895). Pestalozzi's (1951, 1973/1894) values regarding the care and education of children had always included both parents and educators, and continue to resonate in many care/pedagogical practices.

A report by Victor Cousin (originally written in French in 1831, translated into English in 1833) about the success of the Prussian schools and seminaries (i.e., teacher education/training, which in North America would come to be called Normal Schools) that had evolved from Prussian educators who had studied with Pestalozzi, seemed to have greatly impacted the dissemination of Pestalozzi's methods. The Prussian schools become part of the American education reform 1830-1860 and according to Kilpatrick (1951) "from this source came our first normal schools" (p. xi). A critical figure in the American education reform movement was Massachusetts born Horace Mann, often crowned the Father of American Education¹¹. Krüsi (1895) points to the influence of Cousin's report (which he cites a Mrs. Austin for the translation, p. 231) on education reformists and that during Mann's European tour of schools in 1843, it was the Prussian schools so inspired by Pestalozzi that had the greatest impact on him. Mann wrote about his tour in his impactful Seventh Annual Report to the Massachusetts Board of Education; "probably no educational document in this country has ever had a greater circulation, or created so deep a sensation" (p. 235). Mann was an advocate for the reformation of public education, the establishment of Normal Schools for teacher

¹¹ A Google search for Horace Mann pulls up many references to him as the Father of American Education, The Father of American Public School Education, and the Father of the Common School Movement. See the PBS documentary, *Only a Teacher*, and their online resources (Harris & Neiman, 1992).

training, and the push for the recruitment of women to be trained as pedagogues. By the mid-1800s, Normal Schools¹² were recognized as “becoming centers for the dissemination of new ideas concerning [the standard of education]” (Krüsi, 1895, p. 236).

Pestalozzi’s methods were also very influential for Froebel, well known in Western ECE worlds as the Father of Kindergarten¹³. Froebel grew up during the early German romanticism period and similarly to Pestalozzi, had a romanticized egalitarian vision of education. “I wanted to educate men to be free, to think, to take action for themselves” (Froebel, 1828, as cited in Lilley, 1967, p. 41). Froebel studied and observed at Pestalozzi’s Institute at Yverdon between 1808-1810 (Kilpatrick, 1951). Blow (1908/1894) writes that there are points of resemblance between Pestalozzi and Rousseau, and points of resemblance between Pestalozzi and Froebel, but for Blow, there are only differences between Rousseau and Froebel. Bowen (1916) also points the differences between Rousseau and Froebel, particularly in terms of seeing children’s development in need of social relationships (placing children with other children in a kindergarten) and guidance (with trained adults to “guard, guide and help” the children’s development) (p. 93). Yet Dewey (1915b) points to similarities between Froebel and Pestalozzi in their “zealous” efforts to “reduc[e] inspiration from Rousseau into the details of schoolroom work. They took the vague idea of natural development and translated it into formulae which teachers could use from day to day” (p. 61). Like

¹² The standardization of teaching children also emerged in Canada at about the same time. Varga (2000) puts the first Normal School in Canada Toronto Normal School in 1847, followed by Fredericton Normal School in 1848, Saint John Normal School in 1849, Nova Scotia Normal School in 1855, Charlottetown Normal School in 1856, McGill Normal School in 1857, Ottawa Normal School in 1875, BC Normal School in Vancouver in 1901 then another in Victoria in 1915, Saskatoon Normal School in 1912, and finally the Newfoundland Normal School in 1921.

¹³ For a few examples, see Elkind (2011), Fox and Berry (2007), and Woodard (1979). Allen (1982), Gestwicki and Bertrand (2012), Santrock, MacKenzie-Rivers, Malcomson & Leung, (2011) are among the many who refer to Froebel as the “founder” of kindergarten.

Pestalozzi, Froebel's theories challenged previous pedagogical practices by insisting that children's learning should occur through direct interaction and engagement with materials in play and hand-work, building on Pestalozzi's notion of *Anschauung*, or "object-lesson" (see Bowen, 1916/1892; Dewey, 1915b; Meyer, Froebel, & Spencer, 1879; Peabody & Mann, 1877/1960). Also like Pestalozzi, Froebel's philosophies were aimed at the training of both parents (in particular mothers) and educators, and its take up was particularly devoted to promoting the *value* of motherhood (Allen, 1982). Like Locke, Rousseau and Darwin before, these "fathers of education" turned their careful attention (gaze) toward children, educators and parents with the hopes of bettering the lives of children (for the sake of mankind/society) with their (particular) belief in the possibility of creating more liveable worlds (for some). A Tale Resistance will address some of the important issues that arise from this particular attention, but the legacy of the theorizing and advocacy work of these "fathers" is embedded in questions about care in ECE practices today. How do children (and which ones) come do be in these practices? How have we come to define what this care is (and for whom it is offered/regulated)? How do the spaces, materials and practitioners of care (so taken for granted in our neighbourhoods today) come to be "there"?

Mothering pedagogy and care. The establishment of early childhood programs in Canada and the US¹⁴ during the nineteenth century was highly influenced by these European philosophers (e.g., Locke, Rousseau, Darwin) and education pioneers (e.g., Pestalozzi, Mann, Froebel) as well as by the early care and education advocates who had begun to establish crèches and day nurseries (e.g., Adelaide de Pastoret and John Frederic

¹⁴ While Canada's smaller population, less urbanization and slower (later) migration west than the US certainly contributed to a different ECE evolution, both countries took up European ECE traditions and also influenced each other through border crossing of both bodies and ideas (Dixon, 1994; Prochner, 2000).

Oberlin in France, and Robert Owen, James Buchanan, and Samuel Wilderspin in the UK) (Prochner, 2000). As suggested, the legacy of the educational theorists described in the previous section was instrumental to the development of current ECE pedagogy, but the spreading of their ideas and the “on the floor” action that materialized them was due to the work of many others, including many women¹⁵. Diffractively reading the histories of these educare legacies with/through my feminist leanings, I want to highlight that these ideologies (male educators/theorists whose names are typically remembered) were more often than not, actualized by women (educators/theorists/advocates whose names are far less common place). Telling a few of these “mother” stories illuminates *their* (often unnamed) legacy, because “it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with” (Haraway, 2011, p. 4). Again, the intention is not to romanticize the work they engaged, the ideas they helped spread, and the legacy they helped to leave. Everything comes with problems (which *A Tale of Resistance* and Chapters 4 and 5 help to illuminate).

Writing of the early establishment of charitable care for young children in Canada, Prochner (2000) points to the role (white, wealthy) women had in advocating, establishing and running said care. One of the first Canadian infant schools was opened in Montreal in 1828 “by several ladies of the city” (Montreal Infant School Society, 1831 cited by Prochner, 2000, p. 20). Infant schools as charitable organizations continued to open in Canada (e.g., Charlottetown, Halifax, Quebec City, Toronto, Kingston, Madras schools in Nova Scotia) through the mid-1800s. There were few privately funded infant schools and as Prochner suggests,

¹⁵ From the education “fathers” I have described, ECE will also be intensely influenced by the birthing of ideas by several other “fathers”: G. Stanley Hall, the Father of American Developmental Psychology; Sigmund Freud, the Father of Psychoanalysis; Jean Piaget the Father of Cognitive Development; John Watson, the Father of Behaviourism; B.F. Skinner, the Father of Operant Conditioning (see Berk, 2012; Santrock et al., 2011).

by the 1870s, most [privately funded infant schools] had succumbed to a maternalist ideology that called for mothers to be in sole charge of early education and that held the belief that young children were harmed by the overstimulation of their fragile minds. The few remaining infant schools, mostly run by charities in the Atlantic provinces, were joined by an alternative form of early education, Froebel's kindergarten. (p. 22)

Prochner's story points to the tangle of care and education, pedagogues/caregivers and parents in nineteenth century Canada, as well as the arrival of Froebelian philosophies and practices to Canada. Perhaps the most important figure in disseminating Froebel's educational philosophy was Baroness Berthe von Marenholtz-Bülow and her active campaign to spread the kindergarten idea throughout Germany and other countries (Allen, 1982). Champions that helped spread the kindergarten movement to North America included: Henrietta B. Haines, Maria Kraus-Bolte, Bertha Meyer, Elizabeth Peabody, Mary Tyler Peabody Mann (Elizabeth's sister and Horace Mann's wife), and Susan Blow. As letters, books, meeting records, newspaper clippings, and magazine and journal entries indicate, each of these women contributed to the Froebel movement through their advocacy work as well as their writing (see Blow, 1908/1894; Meyer et al., 1879; Mann & Peabody, 1876, 1877; Peabody, 1862, 1875). They described in *great detail* the specificities of the environment, materials, and program of the Froebelian kindergarten and the Kindergartner's practice. Margarethe Schurz is believed to have opened the first kindergarten in North America in 1856, in her home in Watertown, Wisconsin (Prochner, 2000). Elizabeth Peabody opened a private kindergarten in Boston, in 1860, and Susan Blow opened the first public kindergarten in St. Louis, in 1873

(Baylor, 1965). Adaline (Ada) Marean, who trained at the Normal School in Albany New York and worked under former Froebel pupil Maria Kraus-Bolte, opened a private kindergarten in 1877 in St. John, New Brunswick, and then the following year one in Toronto upon her move there (Dixon, 1994). Due in large part to advocates for free kindergarten education, the first public kindergarten in Canada opened in Toronto in 1883 under the direction of Ada Marean (Dixon; Prochner) and by 1895 there were 45 kindergartens in public schools in Canada (Prochner). Today (kindergarten is an assumed practice and the field of ECE is growing; the majority of Canadian children engage in/with these practices in some capacity (Friendly, Halfon, Beach & Forer, 2013). Commonplace everyday practices can render invisible not only that these ideas and practices actually emerged from somewhere but that these are (then and now) politically and ethically charged¹⁶ (which Chapters 4-6 will address further).

The science of pedagogy and care. By the late nineteenth century the ongoing evolution of early childhood care and education was concurrent (entwined) with the emergence of child study societies and associations in Europe and America. The origin of the child study movement in North America is typically associated with G. Stanley Hall and his work at John Hopkins University (1882-1888, where he was the first professor of psychology in an American university) and Clark University (1888-1920) (Bradbury, 1937; Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009; Clark, Gleason & Petrina, 2012; Smuts, 2006; Varga, 2011). For Bradbury (1937), the child study movement in the US began in 1883 with Hall's study *The Contents of Children's Minds on Entering School*. Hall was deeply

¹⁶ Kindergarten and pre-school have become (perceived) normal requirements of childhood informed by developmental theory that has become hegemonic (see Cannella, 1997; Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, 2007; MacNaughton, 2003, 2005; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Pence, 2005). Issues of governance and regulation will be considered a later section, A Tale of Resistance.

influenced by Darwin's theories of evolution (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009; Goodchild, 2012). With the philosophical romanticism of Emerson, Haeckel's theory of recapitulation "which seemed to Hall a scientific rendering of both Emerson's and Darwin's ideas" (Goodchild, 2012, p. 64), and Spencer's educational philosophy, Hall developed his own explicit interpretation of a Social Darwinist scientific pedagogy (which Goodchild (2012) puts forth as Hallianism) dedicated to "the reconstruction of psychology in order to encompass the study of children of all ages" (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009, p. 252). According to Hall (1910), the child study movement was "devoted to the collection, diffusion, and increase of the scientific knowledge of childhood" (as cited in Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009, p. 252). Hall's efforts to systematically collect and diffuse information, to move from single accounts (e.g., Darwin's) to larger questionnaires, helped burgeon the belief that pursuing childhood studies is worthwhile and laid the foundation for what would become applied developmental psychology. Though his observational and questionnaire methods would eventually be criticized in regards to reliability and validity (see Bradbury, 1937; Varga, 2011), his work - as a researcher, writer, and teacher - was instrumental to establishing pathways for paying careful attention to "the importance of childhood *per se*" (Bradbury, 1937, p. 36, italics in original). Hall was also instrumental to spreading the science of childhood to parents, providing child rearing advice and urging mothers to pay attention to scientific information (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009; Smuts, 2006).

Bradbury (1937) ascertained that before Hall, serious consideration of children had really only occurred through "educational theorists" and "philosophers" but she claims that with Hall, paying attention to children had begun to move toward (legitimate)

science. According to Bradbury,

The founding of the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station in 1917 marks the close of the child study movement as here we find for the first time an emphasis laid on the scientific value of the study of children rather than upon its educational value. Its founding heralded the dawn of a new day in the study of childhood. Childhood had come into its own as a problem of major scientific interest to be studied not by the parent, the teacher, the philosopher, or the educator, but by the scientist. (pp. 34-35)

Of course parents', teachers', philosophers' and educators' interest in children and childhood in no way disappeared, but Bradbury's comment speaks to the overtaking of (a particular kind of) science to understand children's development and teach that understanding to others. The belief (hope) that scientific knowledge of the child would "contribute advice about childrearing or individualization, normalization, and socialization processes" (Clark et al., 2012, p. 33) was in part an attempt to "solve and prevent social problems that challenged growing cities across North America" (p. 32) (see also Smuts, 2006; this will be taken up further in *A Tale of Resistance* that follows). Though the seeds of social concern and *paying attention to children* were planted much earlier, "child sciences were institutionalized and professionalized in dramatic developments in the decade and a half following the end of World War I¹⁷" (Smuts, 2006, p. 1), and significantly contributed to the propagation of scientific motherhood (Apple,

¹⁷ Along with the Iowa Child Welfare Station approach to child study, in the US the interwar years evolution of the scientisation of paying attention to children also included approaches through the child guidance clinics (the first opened in Chicago in 1909) and the United States Children's Bureau (founded in 1912) (Smuts). By the end of the 1920s in the US there were approximately 80 child research clinics, the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station being the most noteworthy (Clark et al., 2012). Despite lack of support, they survived the Depression and guidance clinics actually grew in numbers (Smuts). In Canada, 20 other (other than Blatz's at U of T) centres were established in the 1960s and 1970s (Clark et al.).

1995; Smuts, 2006) and fatherhood (see Comacchio, 1997; Griswold, 1993; LaRossa, 1988, 1997; Pleck & Pleck, 1997). Again women would play a significant role in these innovations, building on the advocacy and actions begun by suffragists and social feminists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries¹⁸. For Smuts, “in these efforts women were innovators, while male scientists were quick to cooperate with them” (p. 3). (Clark et al. point out that by the late 1910s there were more women researchers in psychology than any other discipline outside of domestic science, and that through the 1920s women authored scholarship on the study of children and baby and preschool test authors were predominantly women.) Drawing on Prochner (2000) and Varga (1997), Clark et al. (2012) surmise that:

Day care, nursery schools, and kindergartens were coincident with and shaped through the practices of child research or child science inasmuch as through the policies of child-rearing, child saving, and reform; scientization and domestication converged as potent forces in early childhood education and the lives of preschoolers, parents, and teachers. (p. 33)

An important avenue for these forces was the university affiliated laboratory school, one of the most famous of which emerged under the direction of John Dewey. Dewey had been a student of Hall’s while obtaining his PhD in philosophy from John Hopkins University (completed in 1884) under the supervision of Sylvester Morris. Following his mentor Morris, Dewey taught at University of Michigan in their philosophy department form 1884-1894 (save for one year, 1888-1889 when we was at

¹⁸ For example, Cora Bussey Hillis organized a persistent campaign with mothers to create the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station. Women philanthropists like Ethel Dummer (who called herself a “radical feminist”, Margaret Olivia Sage, Anna M. Richardson Harness, Lizzie Merrill-Palmer, and Laura Spelman Rockefeller were instrumental to the funding and advocacy of aid toward women and children (Smuts).

the University of Minnesota), beginning his career at University of Michigan as an instructor and ending as a professor and the chair of the department (Eames, 1969). In 1894 Dewey left the University of Michigan for the University of Chicago, then just four years old, to head their Department of Philosophy (Harms & DePencier, 1996). While Dewey's pedagogical theories were beginning at University of Michigan to move from traditional Hegelianism to the form of pragmatism he is associated with (Eames), it is his work at University of Chicago Laboratory School that is considered most instrumental in shaping progressive education ideals about children and education. Both Hall and Dewey "recognized the limitations of laboratory science" and shared "romantic views of the importance of discovering and liberating the natural, uncorrupted child" (Smuts, 2006, p. 43), but their scientific pedagogy differed in important ways. Comparing Hall and Dewey's take up of social Darwinism (Dewey's being a moderate acceptor of Darwinian thought), Goodwin (2012) suggests that, "Dewey conceived an educational pragmatism focused on the societal and community dimensions that greatly outdistanced Hall's more deterministic individualist pedagogy" (p. 70). Influenced by Pestalozzian ideals of education, Dewey's pedagogic creed included: "I believe that the school must represent present life - life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground¹⁹" (Dewey 1897, Article II). His educational theories were put to the test in his experimental school, founded in 1896 as The Dewey

¹⁹ How fascinating it is (to me) that so many practices, materialities, in Canada that we take for granted today, are otherwise assumed and invisible, emerged from the sociomaterial-technological matterings at the turn of the twentieth century.

The first movement to establish public playgrounds and recreational opportunities for children and youth came in the 1880s. During the next four decades it swept the nation. Between 1880 and 1920 municipal governments spent over one hundred million dollars for the construction and staffing of playgrounds. The renaissance of play stemmed from two sources: the sorry plight of children who had only city streets for playgrounds and new psychological theories asserting that play was neither frivolous nor harmful but rather was essential to healthy development. (Smuts, 2006, p. 66)

School²⁰, where he, unlike Hall, “tested children in a learning situation” (Smuts, 2006, p. 40). Shortly after 1900, The Dewey School began to be referred to as the Laboratory School and their educational principles (e.g., no break between home activities and first contact with the school, children’s learning should be for living in the present not preparing for future adulthood, learning is led through/by a child’s curiosity, the child is the center rather than the subject matter, the teacher’s job is to select the most appropriate avenues to stimulate child curiosity based on theory abilities and interests) had begun to attract considerable national attention (DePencier, 1996; Harms & DePencier, 1996).

Progressive education (often referred at the time as the New Education movement) challenged the Froebelian dominance at the turn of the century. Executing Froebel’s precise pedagogy was reportedly becoming difficult in larger class sizes in urban schools (Prochner, 2000) and was increasingly publically critiqued as being restrictive (e.g., *not* actually child-centred) (see Dewey, 1915a; Caroline Pratt as seen in Hauser, 2002; Pratt, 2008/1948). Keeping in the spirit of naming “fathers” related to the fathering of ECE practices today, Dewey is often regarded as the Father of Progressive Education (sometimes in the running with Colonel Francis Parker). Aldridge, Kilgo, Jepkemboi and Ruto-Korir (2014) provide an very interesting and important expansion to the (typical) (his)tory of progressive education by including the foundational work of Julia S. Tutwiler (1841-1916), whom they term a “forgotten Caucasian mother” and Booker T. Washington (1856-1915), “an African American father” (p. 125). Their review speaks to the marginalization (erasure) of bodies/ideas due to race and gender and details

²⁰ The school was founded with 32 pupils aged 6 through 12 (DePencier, 1996). There was not the financial means to include four and five year olds until 1898, at which time enrolment had grown to 95 students, 20 of whom were children under the age of six. Today there are five schools supporting over 1770 pupils from nursery through high school (<http://www.ucls.uchicago.edu/about-lab/index.aspx>).

examples of Washington and Tutwiler's integration of ideals associated with progressive education *prior* to Dewey.

They were both presidents of successful institutions that have developed into 21st century accredited universities with extensive undergraduate and graduate programs. Both Washington and Tutwiler implemented practical applications of progressivism at their respective schools before Parker and Dewey began their experiments with progressive education. (p. 131)

Like the Froebelians before, many women educators were instrumental in spreading progressive era ideals and practices (Sadovnik & Semel, 2002). Charlotte Hawkins Brown opened the Palmer Memorial Institute²¹ in 1902 in Sedalia near Greensboro, North Carolina, a school run for and by African Americans. Marietta Johnson's School for Organic Education²² was established in 1907 in Fairhope, Alabama and was one of the progressive schools highlighted in Dewey's (1915b) *Schools of Tomorrow*. Caroline Pratt²³ opened the City and Country School (originally named the Play School) in 1914 in Greenwich Village, New York (Hauser, 2002; Hendry, 2008; Pratt, 2008/1948), also mentioned in *Schools of Tomorrow*. Lucy Sprague Mitchell along with her husband Wesley Mitchell and colleague Harriet Johnson founded the Bureau of Educational Experiments (BEE) in New York City in 1916 and a nursery school the

²¹ The Institute original taught elementary through high school students but by 1937 the elementary and junior departments were closed, focusing instead on college preparation high school education. Through Brown's 50-year presidency of the Palmer Memorial Institute she oversaw more than 1000 students graduate. The Institute closed in 1971, 10 years after Brown's death, but some of the original buildings remain and have been converted into the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum (<http://www.nchistoricsites.org/chb/history.htm>).

²² The School continues today providing education based on Johnson's progressive education ideals to students in pre-kindergarten through elementary school (http://www.fairhopeorganicschool.com/Home_Page.html).

²³ Pratt is often credited with the "invention" of unit blocks used in (pre)schools (Hauser, 2002; Hendry, 2008; Pratt, 2008/1948), though Pratt points to Patty Hill's transformation of Froebel's wooden gifts as her inspiration.

following year; BEE would evolve to become Bank Street College of Education²⁴. Pratt, Mitchell and Johnson worked together for 10 years through BEE and City and Country School as “laboratories” for collecting longitudinal research of children (Hendry). The Dalton School²⁵ (originally called the Children’s University School) was founded in New York City in 1919 by Helen Parkhurst who had originated her Laboratory Plan in 1916 in a high school at Dalton, Massachusetts. In varying ways these educators²⁶ helped to put forward that:

Children should not only learn to participate in a democratic society (the Deweyian perspective), but to create a democratic society through their social interactions learned at the earliest age through play. Play was the embodiment of democracy and became the center of the curriculum-in essence, play was the work

²⁴ Today Bank Street includes an independent school for children, infant through 8th grade (500 children), a graduate school of education (more than 800 master’s degree candidates), a Head Start center, Family Centre Services and Childcare, professional development, and research and policy initiatives (<http://bankstreet.edu/discover-bankstreet/what-we-do/>).

²⁵ Dalton continues today as a K-12 independent school, following the Dalton Plan developed by Parkhurst as its “keystone of the school’s progressive educational philosophy and is now a model for over 200 Dalton schools in other parts of the world” (<http://www.dalton.org/information>).

²⁶ Another school that opened in this era was The Walden School developed by Margaret Naumburg and opened in 1915. The Walden School followed Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis theories, including in the art program. Naumburg would eventually leave the school to develop her work and research in art therapy and in the 1950s developed the first art therapy courses (<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/naumburg-margaret>). The year prior, 1914, Naumburg opened the first Montessori school in the US in New York but left due to conflicting pedagogical beliefs to start her Walden School. Arguably, Maria Montessori is the most famous female educator/educational theorist to emerge from the late-nineteenth to early twentieth century and her name is associated with about 20,000 schools today worldwide, as estimated by the North American Montessori Teacher’s Association (<http://www.montessori-namta.org>). A contemporary of Dewey and a critic of many Froebelian methods, some of her pedagogical philosophies did not align with progressive ideals related to play, materials, and the teacher’s role, though her passion for and belief in liberty for pupils does resonate (see Dewey, 1915b). Her work was part of the growing scientisation of pedagogy and care, paying very close attention to the development of “normal” children. She responded to calls for rational, scientific principles to be applied to education and worked to establish what she called a “scientific pedagogy” (Montessori, 1912). She describes the goal of a scientific pedagogy as: “to raise Pedagogy from the inferior position it has occupied as a secondary branch of philosophy, to the dignity of a definite science, which shall, as does Medicine, cover a broad and varied field of comparative study” (p. 3). For Montessori, a scientific pedagogy includes: pedagogical hygiene, pedagogical anthropology, and experimental psychology. Her ideas about a scientific pedagogy, as well as the specific materials and practices she established, were always rooted in the notion of progress, moving man forward (see Montessori, 1912, 1913, 1917).

of democracy. Relationships emerged through learning through experience which empowered children to see themselves as active agents in shaping their social world. (Hendry, 2008, para. 13)

The closest Canadian equivalent to the University of Chicago's Laboratory School and other child study centres in the US in the 1920s and 1930s was the Child Study Institute at the University of Toronto (U of T) (Rubin, 1975). In the mid-1920s, the establishment of a research clinic and preschool at U of T (originally called St. George's Nursery School) was funded through the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation (along with ones at McGill University, but McGill's only lasted five years (Clark et al., 2012; Wright, 2000). William Blatz received his PhD in psychology from the University of Chicago in 1924 (he already held a medical degree, 1921) and was consequently hired to direct and coordinate research, and as an assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at U of T (Volpe, 2010). With Blatz at the helm as Director from 1926-1964 (Rubin, 1975; Volpe, 2010; Winestock, 2010), the research conducted through its nursery school and parent education program was extremely influential in shaping views and practices related to caring for children in Canada (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005; Strong-Boag, 1982; Varga, 1997, 2000; Wright, 2000).

Sharing Knowledge and Practice

What I have tried to suggest in this tale is that the research project about care and gender that I began in 2013 in western British Columbia within an ECE classroom is connected (indebted) to an evolution of paying careful attention to children. The selected stories that I tell aimed to illuminate that various pathways for both the doing and thinking about caring for children were instigated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As Clark et al's. (2012) summative quotation suggests, these avenues

touched a variety of practices. Kindergartens, laboratory schools, child study institutes, training institutions (Normal Schools), mothers' clubs and societies all *contributed to* and *were shaped by* the growing attention paid to the healthy development of children. Ideas were shared through (international, national, and local) conferences, meetings, symposia, lectures, as well as books and new journals²⁷ aimed at both an academic and "layperson" (parent/teacher) audience (Bradbury, 1937; Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009; Prochner, 2000), all of which continue today as mechanisms for the consideration of childhood care practices²⁸. The following tale, *A Tale of Resistance*, will explore different aspects of this legacy that were instrumental to the way that gender and care were considered in this study. The fathers and mothers of pedagogy and care from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century that I have introduced the reader to (or re-acquainted the reader with) will re-emerge (some by name, all by inheritance) in the *thinking with dolls* (Chapter 4) and *cars* (Chapter 5) that I engage with in the analyses of this study's research questions.

²⁷ Darwin's (1877) *Biographical Sketch of an Infant*, was published in *Mind* only a year after its inception. A journal developed specifically for the promotion of new philosophical ideas within England and from other (European) countries and to "procure a decision of this question to the scientific standing of psychology" (Robertson, 1876). Hall founded the American Psychological Association and launched the *American Journal of Psychology*, in 1891 founded the educational research journal *Pedagogical Seminary* (Goodchild, 2012), and founded *Journal of Applied Psychology* in 1917 (Smuts). *Child Study Monthly* began in the US in 1895, in England *Paedologist* in 1899, in Germany *Die Kinderfehler* in 1896 and *Die Kinderseele* in 1900; and in France in 1901 the *Bulletin de al society lobre pour L'etude psychologie de l'enfant* (Bradbury, 1937). The *Journal of Educational Psychology* began in 1909 "as an organ for the publication of educational researchers, as a forum for the discussion of problems in educational psychology, and as a mediator between the laboratory investigator and practical school man" (Bell, 1919, p. 530). The journals *Infant Care* and *Prenatal Care* were aimed at mothers (and fathers) and launched in 1914 (Smuts, 2006), followed by *Parents Magazine* in 1926 (Brooks-Gunn & Johnson, 2009).

²⁸ Recently one of the co-researchers and I presented aspects of our research about gender and care at the third bi-annual Canadian Lab Schools Conference (Hodgins & Foreland, 2014) and aspects of this research will be highlighted in an article in the *International Journal of Child, Youth, and Family Studies* (Hodgins, forthcoming). While I think with a theoretical and methodological framework that does not align with the developmentalism inherent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century child studies and ECE movements, my work (writing, research, pedagogical support) is immersed in the avenues that these movements helped to establish.

A Tale of Resistance

The previous section, A Tale of Development, aimed to situate the study *Gender and care with Young Children* in terms of the legacy of the growing attention paid to children in the nineteenth and (early) twentieth centuries. But this attention has not been without challenges and resistances, troublings that have led to calls for methodologies, theories and practices that contest universal practice prescriptions which do not attend to the complexity of childhood (Burman, 2008a, 2008b, 2010), pedagogy (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007; MacNaughton, 2004, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011), and research itself (Lather, 2007; Law, 2004; MacLure, 2010; Mol & Law, 2002; St. Pierre, 1997, 2006, 2011). The aim of this tale is to think with these resistances to look more closely at how they impact this study's research questions related to gender and care. As Chapter 1 suggested, my curiosity about gender and care grew out of/within my personal parenting dance, my professional experience in ECE, and my long engagement with feminism. This Tale of Resistance (and this inquiry) relies much on the work/thinking of feminism, that effective (affective) "tool to cross disciplines" (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 37), in its exploration of resistance to single stories of childhood, gender and care.

Childhoods

The paying attention to childhood described in the previous tale helped to establish the dominance of developmental psychology in practices related to early childhood. Based on modernist conceptualizations of science and childhood, these early childhood studies operated with three assumptions that continue to have implications for

childhood research today:²⁹ (1) childhood as a distinct, unfinished state (drawing from Rousseau) constructed in opposition to adulthood can be studied to better understand adult development (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Castañeda, 2002; Prout, 2005); (2) as “there is a normal core of development unfolding according to biological principles” (Burman, 2008, p. 17), scientific research on children can be universalized and used in the surveillance, regulation and control of groups and societies (Burman; Cannella); and (3) social phenomena can be studied compartmentally including the dichotomous separation of the social and the biological (Burman; Cannella; Prout). Essentially through science, the child can be known objectively and the child’s observed natural characteristics, their biologically directed development, can be interpreted as universal³⁰.

The acceptance of 19th-century evolutionary theories proposing a biological link between humans and animals shifted the conceptualization of human development away from it being a series of static events to being a dynamic process

²⁹ Much of early childhood studies are driven by “quantitative approaches with roots in developmental and behavioural psychology” (Hatch, 1995, p. xi). See Spodek (1982, 1993) and Spodek and Saracho (2006) for three editions of *Handbook of Research in Early Childhood* for examples of the dominance of quantitative approaches to childhood studies. Today, psychology continues to be “the dominant academic discipline concerned with childhood” (Prout, 2005, p. 50). As such, developmentalism influences all disciplines concerned with childhood, but most significantly early childhood and education research and practice (Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; MacNaughton, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Prout, 2005). Developmental psychology has been particularly dogmatic in Anglo-US practice but has been, and continues to be, influential worldwide (Burman, 2008). Postfoundational approaches do not make up the dominant discourse in childhood studies, though the reconceptualist movement in ECE has certainly impacted early childhood research (Hatch, 1995). In their review of qualitative studies in early childhood contexts, Hatch and Barclay-McLaughlin (2006) found that “the majority of studies identified were based on postpositivist assumptions” (p. 500), and that “alternative work” (i.e., constructivist, critical, poststructural) were more likely to be published outside mainstream refereed journals.

³⁰ For more detailed explorations, Burman’s (2008) work critically explores the emergence, legacy, and current role of developmental psychology in the field of early childhood studies and practices. Varga (2011) explores the role of early 20th-century child study in the sociohistorical colonization of childhood. Cannella (1997) and Dahlberg, Moss and Pence (2007) provide similar tracings but more specifically planted in early childhood education. Prout (2005) provides an overview from a sociological perspective. Castañeda’s (2002) review of developmentalism and the child in nineteenth-century science lays the foundation for her consideration on how the figure of the child as an entity in the making “plays a unique and constitutive role in the (adult) making of worlds” (p. 1). Taylor (2013) provides a brief genealogy of Western romantic constructions of Nature and childhood and in it traces some of the links to/challenges from scientific rationalism that impact Western secular schooling.

(Wertheimer, 1982). Within this purview, children were the embodiment of a primitive past. (Varga, 2011, p. 140)

Postfoundational³¹ theories have added much to the troubling of a modernist understanding of childhood. Simply put, postfoundational theoretical and political positions problematize what have been assumed to be stable concepts such as knowledge, truth, reason, power, the subject, objectivity, reality, science, normal and so forth (see Lather, 2007; St. Pierre, 2000; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000). “The posts provided extensive critiques of Enlightenment humanism’s ontologies as well as its epistemologies and its science” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 647). Continental European philosophy (e.g., the ideas of Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard, Lacan, Deleuze, Guattari) has been of significant importance to these critiques (see Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006; Lather, 2007; St. Pierre, 2000). (Chapter 3 details the implications of a postfoundational lens on qualitative research methodologies, in particular my use of pedagogical narrations as the methodology I employ.) Guba and Lincoln (2005) suggest that

In the postmodern moment, and in the wake of poststructuralism, the assumption that there is no single “truth” – that all truths are but partial truths; that the slippage between signifier and signified in linguistic and textual terms creates representations that are only and always shadows of the actual people, events and places; that identities are fluid rather than fixed – leads us ineluctably toward the insight that there will be no single “conventional” paradigm to which all social

³¹ In Lather’s (1991, revised in 2005 with St. Pierre) *Postpositivist New Paradigm Inquiry* chart she positions a “break” in-between both Interpretive (what Hatch & Barclay-McLaughlin, 2006, call Postpositivist) and Critical on the one side and Poststructural/Postmodern on the other (as cited in Lather, 2007). She explains that the break “indicates a shift from the modernist, structural, humanist theories/discourses on the left to the postmodern, poststructural, post-humanist theories/discourses on the right” (p. 164). I refer to positions that sit on the “post” side of this shift as postfoundational, which include “feminist, race, critical, queer, and postcolonial theories (theories that work against humanism’s authorizations and its exclusions)” (p. 5).

scientists might ascribe in some common terms and with mutual understanding.

Rather we stand at the threshold of a history marked by multivocality, contested meanings, paradigmatic controversies, and new textual forms. (p. 212)

The belief in and acknowledgement of multivocality and contested meanings is a unifying thread through theories and practices situated within the posts, and one that runs throughout this *Gender and care with Young Children* study (see Chapters 4 and 5). This contestation fuelled what has been termed a reconceptualist movement in ECE (see Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; Iannacci & Whitty, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Pence, 2005). Further, in regards to the “post” scholars, St. Pierre (2012) explains:

We [scholars labeled postmodern] offer critiques that can be used to examine and open up any structure we create, any signifier or metanarrative that becomes totalizing and all-explanatory, such as science. The task of ‘post’ critiques is to take seriously such structures, which are necessarily exclusionary, to examine them so seriously that they deconstruct themselves, reveal their disciplinary goals and lose their innocence. (pp. 496-497)

Dismantling “common sense” assumptions and recognizing the *non*-innocence (the ethical and political embeddedness) of the materialization of theories, questioning very seriously who and what are excluded in/with/through theories and practices (*including our very own*) is another connecting thread through the posts and this research study (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Explorations of the politics and ethics of ECE have been taken up by many (e.g., Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002) and the reconceptualising of ECE has led to challenging/influencing ECE pedagogy and curriculum (e.g., Blaise, 2005, 2010, 2013b;

Dolk, 2009; Duhn, 2010; Jones, Holmes, MacRae, & MacLure, 2010; Jones, MacLure, Holmes, MacRae, 2012; Kummen, 2010; MacNaughton, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Sanchez & Chan, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Pence, 2011; Thompson, 2010; Walkerdine, 1998). These reconceptualisings have, in part, been fuelled by the belief that modernist theory-practices have been (are) marginalizing (devastating) to many. Drawing on Foucault, St. Pierre (2012) has surmised that “the cogito who can produce true knowledge through reason outside human values and ethics, was positioned to do much damage, and, indeed, many believe it has done and continues to do so” (p. 487).

Regulation and governance. Burman (2008) argues that through the nineteenth century, “science, as the tool of reason and progress fostered and harnessed by the modern state, put into practice enlightenment philosophies of protection and care of citizens, the realisation of which presupposed greater monitoring and control” (p. 25). The development of childhood research, which is imbricated with the development of the different forms of psychology, occurs within this modernist science and the state’s use of it in the regulation of its citizens (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Prout, 2005). Drawing on Rose (1995), both Burman (2008) and Cannella (1997) note that the rise of individual psychology occurs in tandem with the social upheaval of the late 19th century, including working class challenges to the working conditions of industrialization and the right to vote, and increased immigration. Individual psychology became instrumental to the comparison, regulation and control of (particular) groups through the development and use of assessment tools and classifications, and the establishment of “norms” (Burman, 2008; Cannella, 1997; Rose, 1998; Varga, 2011). “Even the authors of the early child

studies were quick to move from observation to advice, from empirical ‘fact’ to social application” (Burman, 2008, p. 25) through such practices as childhood education, teacher training, child training and parent education, social welfare/reform, the field of paediatrics, and more broadly public health (Burman, 2008; Clark et al., 2012; Prout, 2005; Smuts, 2006). The establishment of norms and the advice (including pedagogical and parenting) that follows “creates privilege for those who fit that [normalized] vision and places in the margin as deficient, wrong, or abnormal, those who do not” (Cannella, 1997, p. 60).

The positivist view of science that has grounded modernization has taken the child, created by the church, and psychologized and biologized that child. The universal condition of childhood can be described, interpreted, and influenced. The individual is tested, examined, and appropriate experiences prescribed.
(Cannella, 1997, p. 30)

Contesting modernist binaries inherent in the establishment and evolution of child studies (e.g., adult/child, teacher/researcher, knower/known, object/subject, male/female, white/Other) and bringing to the fore issues of power and governance have been taken up in various ECE scholarship (e.g., Hultqvist & Dahlberg, 2001; in relation to colonization see Cannella & Viruru, 2010; Varga, 2011; racialization see Bernstein, 2011; “global” childhoods see Duhn, 2010; Pence & Hix-Small, 2007; through reconsidering quality see Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008). The troubling of universality and generalizability, and the problematizing the governance, surveillance, regulation, stigmatization, and marginalization of (particular) populations that postfoundationalism brought to ECE was also extended to reconsiderations of dominant

(developmental) understandings of gender. The next section highlights moments of feminism and key feminist critiques that contributed to these reconsiderations and this inquiry. Like the stories told in *A Tale of Development*, the feminism stories I tell here are partial and incomplete (for a review of feminist theorizing see Dietz, 2003; for a review of feminist standpoint theory see Harding, 2004).

Gender

Like (first wave) feminism (e.g., the suffragists and social feminists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries) before, second wave feminism was instrumental to the emergence of a new kind of analysis of gender relationships (e.g., Chodorow, 1979; Gilligan, 1982) that highlighted women's ways of knowing and being, based on their experiences (re: first wave feminists see Smuts, 2006; re: second wave feminists see Dietz, 2003). Feminism has also been driven by the desire to eradicate difference and girls/women's underprivileged status through ensuring their access to all that boys/men have access to (i.e., liberal feminism) and the celebration, rather than devaluing, of "the feminine" (i.e., radical feminism) (Davies, 1993; Dietz, 2003; Smuts, 2006). Simone de Beauvoir's (2011/1949) *The Second Sex* was a key text in questioning the essentiality of "woman" and alighting second wave feminism (and Betty Friedan's (2013/1963) *The Feminine Mystique*, certainly helped fuel that fire, particularly in America). With de Beauvoir's infamous assertion "One is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one" (p. 283), previously accepted assumptions of the "naturalness" of gender hierarchy/relations could now be theorized as "a social condition constituted through relations of power, thus open to critique and the possibility of change" (Dietz, 2003, p. 401).

While some second wave feminist accounts continued to build on a biological foundation or essentialist understanding of gender, many were impacted by the rise of social constructivism, though their interpretations of it varied (Dietz, 2003). From a social constructivist point of view, gender is recognized as a social construction rather than a biological or socially prescribed *inevitability*³² (see Lorber, 1994, 2000, 2005; Lorber & Farrell, 1991; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Connell's (1987) highly influential, *Gender and Power: Society the Person and Sexual Politics*, took questions of gender to a macro level, emphasizing the role that social structure plays in shaping gender relations. Connell (1987, 2005/1995) was also instrumental in putting forward the notion that there are multiple constructions of gender, such as *masculinities* rather than *masculinity*, as interpretations of gender are interrelated with other "identity categories", such as race and socio-economic status (SES). Similarly, feminist critiques problematized the notion of a universalized "woman" (taken up in early and dominant feminisms), which does not account for or acknowledge the impact of racialization (e.g., Collins, 2004/1986; hooks, 1981, 2003/1990), sexuality (e.g., Butler, 2008/1990), and SES on gender inequities (Dietz, 2003; MacNaughton, 2000).

Feminist deconstructions of the 'subject' have been fundamental, and they are not nostalgic for masterful coherence. Instead, necessarily political accounts of constructed embodiments, like feminist theories of gendered racial subjectivities,

³² It is important to note that feminist deconstructions challenged the sex/gender divide. For example, Davies (1989) positioned that "sex and gender are at one and the same time elements of the social structure, and something that they create within individuals as they learn the discursive practices through which that social structure is created and maintained" (p. 12). Butler (2008/1990) argued that "gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pre-given sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established" (p. 10). Haraway (1988) discussed the division of sex and gender as problematic in that, just as she sees that nature has been conceptualized as the raw material for man/culture, sex becomes the raw material for gender. "Sex is 'resourced' for its representation as gender, which 'we' can control" (p. 592). This will be commented on further in *A Tale of Materialization*.

have to take affirmative *and* critical account of emergent, differentiating, selfrepresenting, contradictory social subjectivities, with their claims on action, knowledge, and belief. The point involves the commitment to trans formative social change, the moment of hope embedded in feminist theories of gender and other emergent discourses about the breakup of masterful subjectivity and the emergence of inappropriate/d others (Trinh, 1989). (Haraway, 1991, p. 147)

St. Pierre (2000) explains poststructural feminist critiques “destabilize the foundations of liberal feminist projects along with other Enlightenment projects that take issue with the very concept of epistemology since it is enmeshed in a metaphysics that seeks to rise above the level of human activity” (p. 499). The heterogeneous diversity of feminisms (e.g., “various kinds of Marxist feminisms, post-structuralist feminisms, feminist theorizing inspired by symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology, etc., . . . share a commitment to critical analysis of ‘gender’ understood as a historically, socially, culturally constructed and changing category” (Lykke, 2010, p. 132).

Reconsidering gender in ECE. Dominant discourses of gender that circulate in practices related to early childhood are rooted in biological, cognitive and social explanations (Blaise & Taylor, 2012; Burman, 2008; MacNaughton, 2000) and like childhood studies in general, these theories emerged within the dichotomous separation of the social and the biological. Early avenues to explain children’s construction of gender primarily focused on biological disposition and functions (i.e., hormones, genetics, cognition) or on social or environmental influences (i.e., family, peers, community)³³. Poststructuralism brought a conceptualization of gender not as a trait, but

³³ Maccoby’s (1966) edited volume *The Development of Sex Differences* was extremely influential for establishing/maintaining dominant biological, cognitive and social theories of gender development. In that

as relational, where *multiple* femininities and masculinities are constituted *in relation* to each other (Davies, 1993). Walkerdine (1981, 1989) and Davies (1989, 1993) provide early examples of how poststructuralist ideas (e.g., considering language, discourse, power, governance, and subjectivity) were combined with a critical feminist lens to research studies in (early childhood) education settings to “challenge the effects of patriarchy in young children’s lives” (MacNaughton, 2005, p. 3). Their work offered a counter discourse to biological and social theories of gender in childhood studies and has been influential to the work of others who explore gender in (early childhood) education (e.g., Blaise, 2005; Blaise & Taylor, 2012; Boldt, 2011; Davies, 1993; Dolk, 2009; Eidevald, 2009; Francis, 2006, 2010; Kamler, 1999; MacNaughton, 2000, 2006; Ozkaleli, 2011; Reay, 2001, 2006; Renold, 2006; Robinson, 2005; Robinson & Davies, 2007; Sandberg & Pramling-Samuelsson, 2005; Taylor, 2008; Taylor & Richardson, 2005; Walkerdine, 1999; Wholwend, 2013; Yeoman, 1999).

Davies’ (1989) early work considered children’s construction of gender and posited that “children learn to take up their maleness or femaleness as if it were an incorrigible element of their personal selves, and . . . they do so through learning the discursive practices in which all people are positioned as either male or female” (p. x). It

volume early biological (hormonal) explanations appeared in Hamburg and Lunde (1966); for a later example of an evolutionary perspective see Buss (1995). The volume included Mischel’s (1966) application of social learning theory to children’s gender development, building on (in some aspects) parental identification models of gender development (e.g., Freud). The volume also included Kohlberg’s (1966) enormously influential, Piagetian based cognitive theory of gender development which was a significant departure from dominant social perspectives at the time. Maccoby and Jacklin’s (1974) *The Psychology of Sex Differences* followed up eight years later and continued the social/cognitive/biological “discussion” (debate). Bem’s (1977) Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) would prove to be influential and continues to be used a tool to measure gender today despite criticisms (see Hoffman and Borders, 2001). Bussey and Bandura (1999) applied Social Cognitive Theory to theorizing gender development (see also Bandura and Bussey, 2004). For more recent overviews/meta-analyses see Martin, Ruble, and Szkrybalo (2002) and Tenenbaum and Leaper (2002) (on cognitive development), Lytton and Romney (1991) (parental socialization), Martin and Rubble (2009) and Ruble, Martin and Berenbaum (2006) (psychological gender development theories).

is through discursive practices that we are constituted but “not so much a social construction which results in some relatively fixed end product” (p. xi), for we are able to position ourselves within the discursive practices that are available to us in multiple ways, constituted and reconstituted over time (see also Davies, 1997; Davies, Dormer, Gannon, Laws, Rocco, Lenz Taguchi & McCann, 2001). The poststructural subject is “capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices³⁴” (Weedon, 1997, p. 125). Drawing on Foucault’s view of the critic, Butler (2004) describes the critic’s double task in relation to gender as “important not only to understand how the terms of gender are instituted, naturalized, and established as presuppositional but to trace the moments where the binary system of gender is disputed and challenged, where the coherence of the categories are put into question, and where the very social life of gender turns out to be malleable and transformable” (p. 216). Children can be viewed as active in their constructions of gender, rather than passive recipients of socially sanctioned roles or biologically determined traits, able to take up or resist multiple subject positions from discourses that are available to them (see Blaise, 2005; Davies, 1989, 1993; Davies et al., 2001; Eidevald, 2009; MacNaughton 2000, 2006; Walkerdine, 1990, 1999; Taylor & Robinson, 2005). Viewed through poststructuralism, it is the contradictions within discourse and subjectivity that offer the possibility for transformation (Davies, 1993, 1997). “As soon

³⁴ Subjectification through dominant discourses can also render invisible the possibility of multiple and contradictory subject positions. Blaise’s (2005) exploration of heteronormative gender practices in a kindergarten classroom illustrates the challenge to recognize/accept/acknowledge gender practices that sit outside hegemonic constructions of masculinity and femininity. Alan, a young boy quite committed to his performance of hegemonic masculinity, cannot see Penny, a young girl in Alan’s class who is equally committed to “skilfully perform[ing] being a nice and polite girl” (p. 181), as a strong girl even though he has witnessed her successfully climb to the top of the rope in gym class. Similarly, Blaise recognized in herself her own struggle to see Penny’s “feminine gendered performance” (p. 181) in more complicated ways and thus she was often overlooked.

as people begin to have trouble thinking things the way they have been thought, transformation becomes at the same time very urgent, very difficult, and entirely possible” (Foucault, 2000, as cited by Davies et al., 2001, p. 88).

The idea that one “does” gender (West & Zimmerman, 1987) has been very influential, particularly Butler’s (2008/1990) conceptualization of the discursive performativity of gender, whereby “gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence” (p. 34). Within this conceptualization, the subject is not construed as existing “prior to practices of signification” (Dietz, 2003, p. 413) but “rather gender is tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (Butler, 2008/1990, p. 191, italics in original). The (gender) identity that emerges through a repetition of acts is a “constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe and to perform in the mode of belief” (p. 192). Butler attends to the interdependence of gender and sexuality and offers the concept of the heterosexual matrix³⁵ in her exploration of constructed identities. Considerations of gender performativity within/against the heterosexual matrix in ECE practices include Blaise (2005, 2010), Renold (2006), Robinson and Davies (2007), Taylor (2008) and Taylor and Robinson (2005).

As Butler’s theorizing suggests, the take up of maleness and femaleness is not limited simply to discourses of gender but these operate with/in other discourses, such as heteronormativity (see Blaise 2005, 2011; Blaise & Taylor, 2012; Taylor, 2008; Taylor &

³⁵ Butler’s (2008/1990) definition is that of a cultural grid characterized by a “hegemonic discursive/epistemic model of gender intelligibility that assumes that for bodies to cohere and make sense there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality” (p. 208).

Richardson, 2005), the pedagogic discourse of the teacher (see Walkerdine, 1989), childhood and developmentally appropriate practice (see MacNaughton, 2000), class (see MacNaughton, 2000; Reay, 2001, 2006), and racialization (see MacNaughton, 2000, 2005; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nuxamlo, 2010, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nuxmalo & Rowan, 2011). Poststructuralism challenged modernist discourses of individualism that “obscure our recognition of the complex and contradictory ways in which we are continually constituting and reconstituting ourselves and the social world through *the various discourses in which we participate*” (Davies, 1989, p. 6, italics added). As Cannella (1997) asserts, “focusing on the individual child as the social unit masks gender, class and cultural knowledge” (Cannella, 1997, p. 38). Problems rest within the individual therefore solutions rest within the individual; the aim is to fix the individual, not the discourses that create/sustain inequities (see Dolk, 2009; Eidevald, 2009; Kamler, 1999; MacNaughton, 2000). The questioning of how children and educators (and things, which I will explore further in *A Tale of Materialization*) emerge as gendered caring subjects that we undertake in this inquiry is driven by this resistance to individualist discourses and the politicizing of practices; “the commitment to trans formative social change” (Haraway, 1991, p. 147).

Care

I suggested in Chapter 1 that constructions and practices of care are guided by particular beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about gender. What is “natural” and what is (can be) “learned” (unlearned) in terms of gender has been applied to who can care for children, and what that care is defined as. This is implicit in the theorizing and advocacy in Pestalozzi (see 1951; 1973), Froebel (see Allen 1982, Blow, 1908/1894; Meyer et al.,

1879; Mann & Peabody, 1876, 1877; Peabody, 1862, 1875), Hall (see Ellis & Hall, 1896; Bradbury, 1937; Goodchild, 2012; Hall, 1897; Hall & Ellis, 1897) and Blatz (see Blatz et al., 1935) and was applied to both the home front and institutionalized care and pedagogy. Dominant biological and social theories of gender, with their grounding in compulsory heterosexuality (Butler, 2008/1990), do little to disrupt the male/female binary associated with care. Problematizing gendered care assumptions and their consequential regulation (of some more than others) has come from many sources.

For example, challenges to the belief that care is *only* an innate or “natural” ability for women have been taken up by current researchers interested in proving men’s biological predisposition to care for children³⁶ (Gettler, McDade, Feranil, & Kuzawa, 2011; Mascaro, Hackett & Rilling, 2013;³⁷ Mossap, 2010). Psychologists in the 1970s began to challenge mother-centric theories of child development (i.e., attachment theory by Ainsworth, 1967; Bowlby, 1953, 1969) by researching and theorizing fathers as not only capable of caregiving behaviours, but that those behaviours extended beyond role-modeling appropriate sex-type behaviour and were important to children’s development (e.g., Lamb, 1975, 1976, 1977a, 1977b, 1977c; Lamb & Lamb, 1976). The rise of feminism through the 1970s shifted calls for increased father involvement to a push for egalitarian parenting (Pleck, 2004) and a new field of father involvement research (in the US) began to emerge as “an academic response to feminist demands that husbands and fathers share equally in the responsibilities of child raising” (p. 42) (see for example

³⁶ Cultural anthropology provides another avenue to challenge the assumption that men universally are not hands-on caregivers (e.g., Fouts, 2008; Hewlett, 2000; Hewlett & Lamb, 2009).

³⁷ Rilling, one of this study’s researchers (a study that connected day-to-day caregiving behaviours (which was used to assess involvement) and fathers’ testicle size) was reported saying: “It tells us some men are more naturally inclined to care-giving than others, but I don’t think that excuses other men. It just might require more effort for some than others” (as cited in BBC News, 2013, para. 11).

Lamb, Pleck, Charnov & Levine, 1985, 1987). Since then research on/about care as conceptualized and practiced by/through fathers has been influenced by critical perspectives, social constructionism, poststructuralism, and masculinities studies, in particular to recognize and problematize fatherhood as a relationally, socio-culturally, politically embedded practice³⁸.

Critical feminism has (unsurprisingly) been an important source of resistance to gender hierarchies, including gendered constructions of care that deem women the natural carers of others, a construction used to regulate behaviour and opportunities (e.g., de Beauvoir, 2011/1949; Friedan, 2013/1963). It has also provided resistance to the under-valuation of motherhood and child-care (for an early example see Allen, 1982, in regards to the promotion of Froebelian motherpedagogy; see Ruddick, 2002/1980, 2004/1989 in regards to “maternal thinking”). A feminist *ethics of care* (e.g., Held, 2006; Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005; Tronto, 1993, 1995), strongly influenced by Gilligan’s (1982) (feminine) relationality critique of Kohlbergian constructs of moral development, also served to illuminate the under-valuation of care (as both a value and as a practice) in itself. Disrupting the public/private binary was instrumental for considerations of care outside of only personal/individual abilities and affects, beyond the reaches of home life,

³⁸ Contextualizing perspectives within psychology have come from Pleck (1995, 1998, 2007, 2008), (whom I always read as being influenced by feminism), and Marsiglio, Roy and Fox (2005), particularly in regards to situating fathering geographies. Social constructionist accounts include considerations of fathers/fatherhood by Connell (2005/1995), Griswold (1993) and La Rossa (1997). Doucet (2006) offers a symbolic interactionist exploration of fathers as primary caregivers. Deconstructive analyses include Ahlberg, Roman and Duncan (2008), Catlett and McKenry (2004), Gavanas (2004), Hearn (2002), Hobson (2002), Hobson and Morgan (2002), La Rossa (1988, 1997), Lupton and Barclay (1997), Miller (2006) Morgan (2002), Nentwich (2008), and Silverstein and Auerbach (1999). For considerations of the entanglement of SES, racialization, colonization, and gender on fathering discourses and practices in Canada see Ball (2009, 2010; Ball & George, 2006), Esté and Tachble (2009), and Shimoni, Esté, and Clark (2003). For a collection of queer parenting writings from Canada, see Epstein (2009). Hodgins (2011a) draws on poststructural feminism in an exploration of fatherhood initiatives and the (re)construction of hegemonic masculinity. These have contributed to complicating gender care conversations about fatherhood as a sometimes unrecognized, always already regulated, political gendered care practice.

and as an ethic of interdependence that is always already politicized. As Held explains, “the ethics of care as it has developed is most certainly not limited to the sphere of family and personal relations. When its social and political implications are understood, it is a radical ethic calling for a profound restructuring of society” (p. 19). With this lens then, one begins to pay attention, for example, to the political and economic reasons for attaching women to unpaid childcare in the home and men to paid work outside the home, and how these were/are bolstered by scientific theories espoused through medical, psychological and social welfare experts (Burman, 2008). A critical feminist ethics of care also illuminates care labour as not only a gendered project, but one that is raced, classed, and heterosexualized as well (Tronto, 1993, begins to make these connections; Held, 2006, considers these except sexuality; see Mahon & Robinson, 2011, for more global considerations).

An ethics of care steeped in relationality and interdependence, with the recognition that care is at once private, public and politically charged, has influenced pedagogical theorizing that challenges simplified, uncontextualized understandings of care (in ECE see Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; in children’s services and care work see Jones & Osgood, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; in (elementary) schooling see Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005). Another example of problematizing gendered care assumptions and their consequential regulation (of some more than others) comes from institutionalized care work. Pence (1989) utilized a Bronfenbrenner (1979) framework to consider “mother-care” as “an individual and societal belief, *and* as part of a complex socio-economic system” (p. 146) that regulates child day care practices. Cameron, Moss and Owen (1999) also explored the shadow of mother-care in relation to

care work (in the UK), and Boddy, Cameron and Moss's (2006) later work on care work (in the UK) drew more on feminist ethics of care for re-imagining care discourses and practices. Efforts to trouble the calls for (more) male involvement in childcare and education, like those for father involvement, have been influenced by critical perspectives, social constructionism, poststructuralism, and masculinities studies. In particular troubling dominant biological and social theories of gender that help postulate theories of male essentiality in caregiving through discourses of role modeling and difference: i.e., male caregivers are needed to maintain/model "traditional" interpretations of gender care or to reform/transform them (see Cameron et al., 1999; Dolk, 2009; Eidevald, 2009; Johnson, 2011). Johnson (2011) suggests that an "alternative narrative is needed for discussing the male teacher problem that places more of the onus on the cultural values precluding males' participation rather than exploiting stereotypes to make teaching more attractive to men" (pp.259-260). He argues that (and I would assert that this is equally applicable to caregiving, early childhood education, and fathering) a shift is needed, but a shift in *values not demographics*, what he refers to as "an ethos of possibility as opposed to an ethic of balance" (p. 261).

Johnson's argument points to what I believe to be the crux of the "gender care problem": we have yet to really make that shift. The *requirement of attentiveness to care* that such feminists as Tronto (1993, 1995) and Held (2006) demand is unaccounted for in simplified efforts to make care more attractive to men (i.e., in (most) calls for father involvement and calls for more male educators/carers) – or for that matter to educated and privileged women (i.e., scientific motherhood). "Care can be easily idealized as a moral disposition, or turned into a fairly empty normative stance disconnected from its

critical signification of a laborious and devalued material doing” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 95). The possibility of ethos Johnson speaks of needs to begin with the outright valuing of care, relationality in its *fullest*. Part of what I believe renders this so tricky is that we remain mired in modernist dichotomies and boundary projects: male/female, mind/body, knowing/being, culture/nature, private/public, human/nonhuman, self/other (Haraway, 1991, 1997). Much resistance to gendered care assumptions and their consequential regulation (of some more than others³⁹) continues to shore up gender and other binaries. In other words, what I am arguing is that we need to do more than widen the net (e.g., men can primary caregive, women can work outside the home) if we are to seriously attend to the mattering of gender-care. I believe that material feminism offers a way, some tools to dismantle the Master’s house (Hekman, 1999). I want to stress that much has gone on to trouble the universalizing and governance of gender-care (as described in the resistance stories I have just shared) and this work has been integral to my questions of gendering and caring in practices related to early childhood (see Hodgins, 2007, 2011a). Haraway (1994) suggests that “the saving negativity of critical theory [is] there are only specific worlds, and these are irreducibly tropic and contingent” (p. 64).

Critical vision⁴⁰ has been central to critical theory, which aims to unmask the lies of the established disorder that appears as transparently normal. Critical theory is about a certain kind of "negativity"--i.e., the relentless commitment to show that

³⁹ Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2011) refiguring of care as natureculture assemblages reminds, “yes, in the world as we know it, paying attention to care as a necessary doing still directs attention to devalued doings that are accomplished in every context by the most marginalized – not necessarily women. Caring, from this perspective, is a practice that most often involves asymmetry: some get paid (or not) for doing the care so that others can forget how much they need it” (p. 95).

⁴⁰ Haraway (1994) proposes diffraction, rather than representation, as an optical metaphor for “making a difference in the world” (p. 63), which I draw on in my study (see Chapter 3 for more about diffraction).

the established disorder is not necessary, nor perhaps even "real." The world can be otherwise. (Haraway, 1994, p. 62)

As Haraway (2008) notes, “feminists have also argued early, often and well for caring in all its senses as a core needed practice” (p. 332, n8). I take these arguments with me and build on this inheritance, with the help of others, into the next tale, A Tale of Materialization.

A Tale of Materialization

The previous two tales aimed to situate the research study *Gender and care with Young Children* in terms of paying careful attention to children, gender and care. As A Tale of Resistance suggested, this study has been informed by, in particular, feminist postfoundational theories. This tale will pick up the threads of *paying careful attention*, *relationality*, and *politically embedded* and consider them with/through the work of Barad and Haraway in relation to this study’s research questions about gender and care, children and things, in early childhood practices. As described in Chapter 1, this study was guided by the question of what an engagement with human-and non-human relationality might do to complicate conversations about gender and caring practices and make visible new ways of knowing and being. The co-researchers queried how children, educators and *things* emerge as viable gendered caring subjects in these practices. This tale begins with an overview of key threads that connect postfoundationalism’s rethinking of humanist ontology, including the recognition that matter is agential and the mattering of entanglements. I consider how this impacts conceptualizations of gender and care and then point to ECE research that is thinking with a beyond-human relationality. The tale

concludes with a summary of what paying attention through material feminism does for this study.

Matters of Matter

Chapter 1 also pointed out that this study is indebted to postfoundationalism's rethinking of *humanist ontology*, not always a visible, certainly not simple, project. "Given the pervasiveness of Descartes' cogito in western thought and science for over 300 years, we should not be surprised that issues of knowledge overtake issues of being in our work" (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 648). One of the key theoretical threads to refiguring ontology in ECE research and practice (elaborated on in a proceeding section) is the recognition that matter is agentic (see Alaimo & Hekman, 2008; Barad, 2007; Bennett, 2010; Haraway, 1991; Hekman, 2010). Hekman (2010) points out that, "the error of the linguistic turn was not this insight [language's constitutive power] but rather the assumption that discourse alone is constitutive" (p. 24). To see matter as agential, rather than simply dead or passive, or as coming alive through discourse (Lenz Taguchi, 2010), is to recognize that:

Matter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentic, not a fixed essence or property of things. Mattering is differentiating, and which difference come to matter, matter in the iterative production of different differences. (Barad, 2007, p. 137)

Barad (2003) further elaborates that:

Material conditions matter, not because they "support" particular discourses that are the actual generative factors in the formation of bodies but rather because

matter comes to matter through the iterative intraactivity of the world in its becoming. The point is not merely that there are important material factors in addition to discursive ones; rather, the issue is the conjoined material-discursive nature of constraints, conditions, and practices.

And as Haraway (1991) asserted early on, “acknowledging the agency of the world in knowledge makes room for some unsettling possibilities” (p. 199).

It’s a matter of entanglements. To recognize matter as agentic refigures the Cartesian separation of object and subject. Extending Bohr’s conceptualization of phenomena, Barad (2007) offers that it is not independent objects with particular boundaries and properties – “things” - that are the primary ontological unit, but rather phenomena: “the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies’” (p. 139). “Phenomena – the smallest material units (relational ‘atoms’) - come to matter through this process of ongoing intra-activity” (p. 151). “Phenomena are entanglements of spacetime matter, not in the colloquial sense of a connection or intertwining of individual entities, but rather in the technical sense of ‘quantum entanglements,’ which are the (ontological) inseparability of agentially intra-acting ‘components’” (Barad, 2011, p. 125). Chapter 1 introduced Barad’s (2011) description of entanglements as “*not* intertwinings of separate entities” (p. 148, italics added). This is not mere blurring of boundaries; this is “*ontological inseparability of agentially intra-acting ‘components’*” (p. 125, italics added). In other words, both objects and beings do not pre-exist their relatings (see also Haraway, 1988, 1991, 1997, 2008).

This recognition changes the paying attention to *children and things* in their making considerably (see Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2010, 2011;

Olsson, 2009). This is not to say that objects in the classroom (and children) were not taken seriously before; much attention and care went into the development and implementation of the didactic materials of Froebel (Blow, 1908/1894; Bowen, 1916/1892; Lilley, 1967; Meyer et al., 1879) and Montessori (Montessori, 1912, 1913, 1964/1917), wooden blocks (Hausser, 2002; Pratt, 2008/1948; Prochner, 2011), role play materials and “real life” tools that arrive in the classroom in the progressive education era (Dewey, 1910, 1912, 1915b). Children’s engagement with plants and animals has also received considered interest (e.g., Pestalozzi (see Krüsi, 1895; Pestalozzi, 1973/1894); Froebel (see Bowen, 1916/1892; Lilley, 1967; Meyer et al., 1879); and Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005). From a developmentalist perspective, the materials in the classroom are deemed important (be they blocks, paint, plants, or dress-up clothes) because they foster children’s physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development (see Beaty, 2014; Gestwicki, 2014; Gestwicki & Bertrand, 2012; Government of British Columbia, 2008a, 2009), but from a humanist understanding of matter, these materials (instigators of learning) remain separate (albeit influential) from the doer (learner). With Barad and Haraway, both the learner and the materials *become* through their relatings. We must move our focus away from the individual (i.e., child, object) and their “inherent potentials and essential qualities and abilities” (Hultman, 2010, p. 25) to phenomena, “the ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting ‘agencies’” (Barad, 2007, p. 139).

Thinking of matter as iteratively intra-active also adds to “endeavours to overcome the sex/gender split” (Lykke, 2010, p. 132). Barad (1998, 2007) suggests that Butler’s notion of materiality (of which she draws heavily on Foucault’s analytic of power) throughout her work does not go far enough in her analysis of accounting for

sexed bodies. “While Butler correctly calls for the recognition of matter’s historicity, ironically, she seems to assume that it is ultimately derived (yet again) from the agency of language or culture. She fails to recognize matter’s dynamism” (p. 64). It is through the intra-action of bodies (human and non-human), discourses, technologies, structural relations of power, etc. that sex-gender materializes. (See also Hird, 2003, for a feminist materialist challenge to the “naturalness” of sexual difference.) When I refer to gender in this thesis it is with the recognition that sex and gender are mutually implicated in their bodily production. To consider the mattering of gender(sex) is “taking account of marks on bodies, that is, the differences materialized, the differences that matter” (Barad, 2007, p. 89). Haraway (1994) puts it as this:

The view from the marked bodies in the stories, discourses, and practices; marked positions; situated knowledges, where the description of the situation is never self-evident, never simply "concrete," always critical; the kind of standpoint with stakes in showing how "gender," "race," or any structured inequality in each interlocking specific instance gets built into the world--i.e., not "gender" or "race" as attributes or as properties, but "racialized gender" as a practice that builds worlds and objects in some ways rather than others, that gets built into objects and practices and exists in no other way. Bodies in the making, not bodies made. Neither gender nor race is something with an "origin," for example in the family, that then travels out into the rest of the social world, or from nature into culture, from family into society, from slavery or conquest into the present. Rather, gender and race are built into practice, which is the social, and have no other reality, no origin, no status as properties. Feminist, antiracist, and multicultural locations

shape the standpoint from which the need for an elsewhere, for "difference" is undeniable. This is the unreconciled position for critical inquiry about apparatuses of bodily production. Denaturalization without dematerialization; questioning representation with a vengeance. (p. 67)

This study is situated within the conceptualization of gender and care as sociomaterial *doings, in-the-making*, always already *becoming* (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1994, 1997). “Matter is the sedimenting historicity of practices/agencies and an agentic force in the world’s differential becoming. Becoming is not an unfolding in time but the inexhaustible dynamism of the enfolding of mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 180). As Chapter 1 suggested, Barad and Haraway’s beyond-human relational ontology challenges theories of gender and care that function to nail down individual autonomous subjects’ knowledge and behaviour. Barad and Haraway help to unstick constructions of gender and care from social/biological binary explanations and loosen the ties that bind gender constructions as explanations for care and vice versa. This does not mean that gender is absent from considerations of care. Puig de la Bellacasa (2010) argues that:

Care is a necessary practice, a life sustaining activity, an everyday constraint. Its actualisations are not limited to what we traditionally consider care relations: care of children, of the elderly, or other ‘dependants’, care activities in domestic, health care and affective work – well mapped in ethnographies of labour – or even in love relations. Reclamation of care is not the ‘veneration of ‘feminine values’’ (Cuomo, 1997, p. 126), it is rather the affirmation of the centrality of a series of vital activities to the everyday ‘sustainability of life’ that have been historically

associated with women (Carrasco, 2001). This is an important aspect to think a naturecultural meaning of care ethics. (p. 164)

Åsberg (2013) suggests, “if we want humane practices of care and concern, the humanistic idea is not enough. As relations precede identities, in Harawayian and Baradian vernacular, engagement, concerns for alterity and care for others is prior to selfhood” (pp. 8-9). In Chapters 4 and 5, I think with a naturecultural meaning of care ethics, explore to explore several gender-care-techno-socio-political-affect-entanglements stories that emerged in/with/through the *Gender and care with Young Children* study.

Refiguring Ontology in ECE Research

Taylor and Ivinson (2013) refer to works within material feminisms (in particular they cite Alaimo and Heckman (2008), Barad (2007), Bennet (2010) and Coole and Frost (2010) as highly influential recent writings) as “springboards for thinking about educational practices in new ways” (p. 665). In regards to the (potential) impact that material feminisms hold for educational research and practice, they argue that:

The emphasis in new material feminism on ‘becoming-in-relation’ to/with matter and meaning has the potential to re-cast and reinvigorate an ethics of care by installing an ecological perspective – rooted in a respect for the vitality of all matter – at its heart. (p. 667)

Researchers and educators thinking with a rethinking of ontology in ECE are drawing on a variety of (re)sources, including feminist political theorist Jane Bennett (e.g., Clark, 2012; Hultman, 2010), philosopher and feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti (e.g., Blaise, 2013a, 2013b; Nxumalo, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw, forthcoming; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo & Rowan, 2011; Palmer, 2011), feminist philosopher Elizabeth

Grosz (e.g., Hultman, 2010; Lind, 2005; Nxumalo, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2011), feminist environmental sociologist Myra Hird (e.g., Hultman, 2010), feminist anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli (Pacini-Ketchabaw, di Tomasso, & Nxumalo, 2014) and feminist ethnographer and philosopher Anne Marie Mol (e.g., Lenz Taguchi, 2011; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2011). The work of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, including his writings with and French psychiatrist and political activist Felix Guattari has been influential to many working with/in early childhood (e.g., Blaise, 2013a, 2013b; Castañeda, 2002; Clark, 2012; Gallacher, 2006; Giugni, 2013; Hultman, 2010; Jones et al., 2010; Lenz Taguchi, 2011; Lind, 2005; MacNaughton, 2004; MacRae, 2012; Nxumalo, 2012; Olsson, 2009; Palmer, 2010; Prout, 2005, 2011; Rossholt, 2009). A recent special issue volume of the journal *Global Studies of Childhood* was devoted to Deleuze and early childhood education (see Jones & Duncan, 2013).

Gender and care with Young Children adds to the growing scholarship in ECE that is attending to the mattering of childhood (practices) through/with “beyond-human relational perspectives” (Taylor, Pacini-Ketchabaw & Blaise, 2012, p. 82). My thinking with Barad was influenced early on by the work of Lenz Taguchi (2010) and my thinking with Haraway was (and continues to be) inspired by Pacini-Ketchabaw. Barad’s agential realism has provoked (re)thinking in ECE curriculum and pedagogy by such researchers as Blaise (2013a), Hultman (2010), Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2011), Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012a), Pacini-Ketchabaw et al. (2011), Palmer (2011), Taylor and Blaise (2014). Several recent early childhood projects have been particularly influenced by thinking with Haraway including: Castañeda (2002), Giugni (2013), Nxumalo (2012), Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012b; 2013, forthcoming); Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., (2014), Pacini-

Ketchabaw et al., (2011), Taylor (2013), Taylor and Blaise (2014), Taylor, Blaise and Giugni (2013), Taylor and Giugni (2012). Haraway (e.g., 2008) has been particularly useful for paying attention to non-human species and children, multispecies relationality. Recent endeavours to carefully think with particular animals that children live with/near in both real and imagined ways include querying/queering children-dogs (Taylor & Blaise, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013), children-chickens (Taylor et al., 2013), children-deer (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012b), children-bears (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2014), and children-wombats (Taylor et al., 2013). These have provided valuable (re)considerations about the ethico-political embeddedness of shared inheritance and co-habitation that touch/is touched by ECE practices by taking seriously these multispecies complexities. This body of work resonates with those paying careful attention to multispecies intra-activity outside of ECE, such as: Collard's (2012) exploration of how cougars and humans live together on Vancouver Island, Canada; Tsing's (2011, 2014) slowed down detailed account of mushrooms; and Hayward's (2012) provocative stories of captured jellyfish in Monterey Bay Aquarium in California.

Thinking with animals in classrooms might require paying attention to the ways in which nonhumans are typically left out of children's histories and futures. Yet, these common world pedagogies do not assume harmony or balance in the form of a perfect equality in multispecies encounters. Common world pedagogies are an ethico-political project that opens new channels of communication that take into account the messiness already inherent in that communication. (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2014, p. 49)

In a similar spirit to the afore mentioned thinking with animals in classrooms, in *Gender and Care with Young Children* I pay attention to *things*⁴¹, the play objects so taken for granted in ECE spaces, in particular dolls and cars, to grapple with (re-imagine) children, educators, things, gender, and care “immersed in the politics of difference and multiplicities” (Giugni, 2013, p. 25). Blaise suggests (drawing on Haraway, 2004 2008), “grappling-with practices involves the co-shaping of gendered, raced, classed, and specied others” (in Taylor et al., 2013, p. 55). In Chapters 4 and 5, I play with the dolls and cars that the children in this study played with, and follow their trajectories and histories to ask: (1) How might dolls/cars deepen our understandings of children’s relations with the world? (2) How might emerging ideas in feminist science studies assist early childhood education to respond to interconnected ideas of gender and care that emerge through thinking with dolls/cars?

Care/full Attention and Curiosities

Thinking with is a Haraway inspired articulation and effort. Puig de la Bellacasa (2012) explains that, “Haraway’s thinking with creates new patterns out of previous multiplicities, intervening by adding layers of meaning rather than questioning or conforming to ready-made categories” (p. 200). Thinking with is the kind of care/full attention that both Haraway and Barad call for through their work; curiosity – “the beginning of fulfilment of the obligation to know more as a consequence of being called into response” (Gane & Haraway, 2006, p. 143) – for “what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 148) in the world’s differential becoming. Haraway

⁴¹ Other ECE research attending to objects/things/materials in classrooms include Gallacher’s (2006) exploration of block play, the sand pit and doll corner, Giugni’s (2013) look at clay, Hultman and Lenz Taguchi’s (2010) attention to sand and climbing structures, and MacRae’s (2013) thinking with a baby doll. (See Chapter 3 for more about attending to the more-than-human in post-qualitative research.)

(2008) is clear that our “obligations of care” (p. 70) require us “to do the *work* of paying attention and making sure that the suffering is minimal, necessary and consequential” (Haraway, 2008, p. 82, italics in the original). With Haraway and Barad it is also clear that *doing the work of paying attention* is beyond-human exceptionalism, but rather is about human and non-human interdependencies and co-shapings “even if results come more slowly or cost more or careers aren’t as smooth” (p. 82). Our conversations - “meeting-place[s] of various modes of imagining” (Oakeshott, 1959 as cited by Pinar, 2004, p. 190) – need to attend to the onto-ethico-epistemology (the inseparability of knowing, being and ethics, Barad, 2007) of our practices. “We don’t obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are *of* the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 185).

Lenz Taguchi (2011) argues that gender, race and culture are important aspects of the process of becoming that need to be understood as “part of a multiplicity in the process of becoming continuously *anew* in each new encounter” (p. 47, italics original). If we (e.g., children, educators, things, ideas) are continuously becoming anew, then the need to *do the work of paying care/full attention* seems evident. “We need to look to the singularity in each becoming, and how gender or race, or both, matter *differently* in different events for different children” (p. 47, italics in the original). Hultman (2010) suggests that “this is done, *not* by trying to point out that some individuals do not fit into a certain pattern, but by destabilizing the pattern (any pattern) itself” (p.25). In *Gender and Care with Young Children*, I pay care/full attention to everyday small encounters, events, and relations among children, dolls and cars in the classroom. I trace the geohistorical trajectories of these events to find out how they came to be there and

investigate their interrelations, interdependencies, and co-shapings. I also link these encounters to the developmental and gendered logics that have shaped them. “Feminist interest in care has brought to the forefront the specificity of care as a devalued doing, often taken for granted, if not rendered invisible. What can this change in the aesthetics of exposing the lively life of things?” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 93). My mundane classroom stories help to illuminate some materialdiscursive, technological, historical, political, ethical, affective, child, educator, car, doll entanglements – that which is “often submerged or hitherto ‘unseen’” (Taylor & Invinson, 2013, p. 667) in commonplace practices. Taylor and Blaise (2014) point to what Latour (2004) calls “‘learning to be affected’, a process that involves paying fresh attention to the way in which our bodies are moved, disconcerted, affected and enlivened by the collective body or the body-world” (p. 9). As Puig de la Bellacasa (2011) asserts “adequate care requires knowledge and curiosity regarding the needs of an ‘other’ – human or not – and these become possible through relating, through refusing objectification. Such a process inevitably transforms the entangled beings” (p. 98).

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of how I understand and think with/in material feminism for the research study, *Gender and care with Young Children*, in particular my use of conceptualizations from Haraway and Barad. It also highlighted though the three tales that I tell, how theories about children, gender and care were put to work in efforts deemed important for bettering lives (of some), which materialized practices we use (take for granted) today. I bring with me to this study, the legacy of paying attention to children (with all its troubles); that children (and their parents and

educators) are *important enough to pay attention to*. The centre this study took place in, the school where I teach, the journals and conferences where I dialogue about practice all exist because of the work of many (named and unnamed) who paid/pay attention to children. But of course nothing comes without problems. I also bring the inheritance from critical theory that challenged the *non-innocence* (i.e., the ethical and political embeddedness) of practices (e.g., education, research, care, gender, etc.) and questioned very seriously who and what are excluded in/with/through theories and practices (*including our very own*) and how these inclusions/exclusions matter. This study is indebted to resistances to modernist epistemology and ontology, in my efforts to attend to how children, educators and things might become implicated in gendered caring practices. Material feminism has been integral to my argument that taking seriously the things that children (seem to) take seriously might teach us something about our pedagogies, our taken-for-granted knowledges, and ultimately about our becoming of caring gendered subjects.

Haraway (2008) describes her work *When Species Meet* as “striv[ing] to build attachment sites and tie sticky knots to bind intra-acting critters, including people, together in the kinds of response and regard that change the subject – and the object” (p. 287). It is my humble intention to bring some of what Haraway describes to this thesis, however modest my grapplings. This study adds to the limited scholarship that is working with material feminism to extend a critically conceptualized ethics of care. The intra-acting “critters” I play with Chapters 4 and 5 include children, educators, dolls, and cars, as I consider their encounterings in ways that might change (re-imagine) both the subjects and objects in gendering and caring with young children. She continues:

Encounterings do not produce harmonious wholes, and smoothly preconstituted entities do not ever meet in the first place. Such things cannot touch, much less attach; there is no first place; and species, neither singular nor plural, demand another practice of reckoning. In the fashion turtles (with their epibionts) on turtles all the way down, meetings make us who and what we are in the avid contact zones that are the world. Once “we” have met, we can never be “the same” again. Propelled by the tasty but risky obligation of curiosity among companion species, once we know, we cannot not know. If we know well, searching with fingery eyes, we care. That is how responsibility grows. (p. 287)

Chapters 4 and 5 share many stories that explore how once “we” met, we were never “the same”. I share these stories, “propelled by the tasty but risky obligation of curiosity” and consider in Chapter 6 what this care/full attention might mean/do for both research and pedagogical practices, and growing *response*-abilities. The next chapter provides an overview of the study design and its implementation, and outlines how I put material feminism to work in pedagogical narrations as my methodology to “know well”, to (re)search “with fingery eyes”, to (re)search (with) care.

Chapter 3: Pedagogical Narrations, Glimmers and Glows

“Why tell stories like this, when there are only more and more openings and no bottom lines? Because there are quite definite response-abilities that are strengthened in such stories” (Haraway, 2012, p. 312).

Introduction

My proposed research study aimed to engage the researcher and participants (and ultimately viewers/readers) in an inquiry that would challenge us to resist simplified, typically gendered, explanations or “truths” about caring practices for children. There were three main objectives to the study: (1) explore the relationship between gender and caring for children with both children and educators in an early years setting through the process of pedagogical narrations; (2) to work from a postfoundational theoretical and methodological perspective to consider what happens in-between bodies (human and non-human), things, and spaces when considering (multiple possibilities of) caring for children; and (3) share with others stories of complexities in practices as examples of how both gender and caring for children is (can be) a complicated conversation. In the sections that follow I outline the overall research study design and rationale. I describe in some detail the methodological approach of pedagogical narrations that I used in this study, how it sits within post-qualitative research, and the data analysis strategy it invites. I also present the processes of participant selection, data generation and data analysis that I followed for this study. Included is an overview of my role as a researcher and some of the tensions and ethical considerations that were addressed prior to starting the research as well as some that emerged during the study.

Research Methodology and Rationale

My curiosity about an inquiry that complicates the conversation of gender and care needed a methodological approach able to attend to complexity and plurality. My interest in child-educator engagement, as well as my years of practice in early years settings, led me to modes of inquiry suited to exploration in an early childhood context. The *British Columbia Early Learning Framework* (ELF) presented pedagogical narration as a specific tool “to engage in critical reflection through observation” (Government of British Columbia, 2008a, p. 13). I use the plural form of the term, pedagogical narrations. The word narration highlights the dialogical aspect of this tool, while the plural form, narrations, underscores the ongoing and multiple nature of the process (see also Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2010). The approach of pedagogical narrations was chosen as the study’s methodology as it: (1) facilitates the generation of multiple knowledges within pedagogical practices; (2) was a familiar methodology to the participants (i.e., the educators, children and the researchers); and (3) is a methodology being theorized and practiced in/with/through postfoundational perspectives.

Pedagogical Narrations

Simply put the process of pedagogical narrations is one of observation, documentation and dialogue. In a document developed to support the integration of the ELF into practice, the process is described as: observing and documenting moments of practice; interpreting documentation individually and collectively to make learning visible; sharing the description with others, making it public, to add to and deepen the interpretation; linking the narration to pedagogical practice; and evaluating, planning and starting the process again (Government of British Columbia, 2008b, p. 14). The process

of pedagogical narrations was informed by the practices of pedagogical documentation well established in Reggio Emilia, Italy⁴² and described by many researchers and educators (Dahlberg et al., 1999, 2007; Rinaldi, 2006). Over the years I have been drawn to the process of pedagogical documentation, and more recently as pedagogical narrations here in BC, as both a methodological tool to strengthen ECE practices (e.g., Kocher, Cabaj, Chapman, Chapman, Ryujin & Wooding, 2010; MacDonald, 2007; MacDonald & Sánchez, 2010; McLellan, 2010; Thompson, 2010; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kocher, Sanchez & Chan, 2009; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Nxumalo, Kocher, Elliott & Sanchez, forthcoming) and as a method to collect empirical material within childhood studies (e.g., Hultman, 2009; Kocher & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2011; MacDonald, 2008; McLellan, 2010; Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008).

I have been particularly inspired by both the postfoundational theoretical and practical application of pedagogical documentation by Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2011; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010) and Olsson (2009), and of pedagogical narrations by Berger (2010; 2013) and Pacini-Ketchabaw and Nxumalo (2010, 2012). Postfoundational perspectives take the understanding and use of pedagogical narrations further than the BC government framework's description. Berger (2010) explains that, "pedagogical narration is a process by which educational experiences in early childhood settings are narrated and made visible in the public realm, thus becoming subject to public critical thought and dialogue" (p. 58). It was with inspiration from postfoundational engagement with this

⁴² Reggio Emilia is a municipality in Northern Italy. For more than forty years, the municipal schools for children up to six years of age in Reggio Emilia have developed a "unique body of theory and practice about working with young children and their families" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 2). It is a pedagogical approach which Dahlberg and Moss (2006) refer to as the longest running "pedagogical experiment in a whole community" (p. 3). This "pedagogical experiment" grew out of the very particular political, historical and educational contexts of Northern Italy, particularly in relation to their experience leading up to and following World War II and the opposing ideologies of Socialism/Communism and Fascism (Hall, Horgan, Ridgway, Murphy, Cunneen, & Cunningham, 2010).

process that I employ pedagogical narrations as the methodology in this doctoral dissertation research study. As I have suggested elsewhere (Hodgins, 2011b, 2012; Hodgins, Kummen, Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2013; Hodgins, Kummen, Rose et al., 2013; Hodgins et al., 2011, 2012), pedagogical narrations can be understood as operating as a methodology, *a philosophy of method* (Law, 2004), which provides a distinct rationale for the methods that researchers and educators use within this approach. The following is an overview of how I understand this philosophy.

Resisting single stories. Firstly, the process of pedagogical narrations is built around the value of plurality.

The idea is simple – making practice visible or material, thence subject to research, dialogue, reflection and interpretation (meaning-making). But its application, doing documentation, is anything but simple, as are its consequences. For it acknowledges and welcomes subjectivity, diversity of position and multiple perspectives: in short, it values plurality. (Dahlberg & Moss, 2010, p. xiii)

As Berger (2010) describes, “these narrations provoke us to think anew and to resist normalized and habitualized conceptions” (Berger, 2010, p. 58). The process is *not* about “nailing down the story of the already obvious” (Olsson, 2009, p. 113) but rather, is a way to “[look] for that which escapes already determined definitions and positions and engage in collective experimentations with children and teachers in making more space for lines of flight⁴³” (p. 179). As a listener and “collective experimenter” (p. 180), the researcher/practitioner who is engaged with pedagogical narrations must be prepared to “latch on” and “experiment with” the ongoing event, as well as be “prepared for *not*

⁴³ A line of flight is a concept developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) that describes learning on a new path, opening up possibilities of the unknown. This is connected to their concept of the rhizome; knowledge is not constructed in linear fashion.

knowing and for unexpected surprises” (p. 181, italics added). For example, when we began our research inquiry, we knew our overarching curiosity about the relationship between gender and care but did not know which moments in practice we would follow. We did not present ourselves as co-researchers or educators as experts who *knew* what would emerge, what we would “discover” (see the section Data Generation for more details). This preparedness for experimentation and unknowing resembles Lather’s (2007) postfoundational considerations of what it means for a researcher to approach research with a willingness to be lost, to not know, and calls for researchers to openly engage in efforts to disrupt/disturb/dismantle the known (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, 2011; MacNaughton, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Olsson, 2009, 2010). As Olsson (2009) observes, “this is a messy place to be in” (p. 180), and one that is very different than a methodological approach that aims to predict, control, supervise or evaluate according to any predefined standards (p. 181).

Blurring boundaries of distinction. Secondly, the process is built around the value of *being in relationship with* (Dahlberg et al., 2007). In this way it is well aligned with Haraway’s (1991, 1992, 1997, 2008) relational ontology and Barad’s (2007, 2011) onto-ethico-epistemological approach, both described in Chapter 2. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, Olsson (2009) aptly demonstrates through her exploration of collective and unpredictable experimentations that “everything and everybody is seen as a relational field” (p. 179). With this conceptualization, the boundaries of distinction between child and adult are blurred. “Through the practice of collective narration[s], the educator becomes a collaborator with the child and others to generate knowledge in the world” (Berger, 2010, p. 68). The conceptualization of everything and everyone in a

relational field also problematizes the distinction between educators and researchers, theory and practice. Knowledge generation occurs through dialogue and contestation (Dahlberg et al., 2007) and both educators and researchers are not above or outside the process (Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Olsson, 2009; Rinaldi, 2006). For example, within this inquiry, the educators were co-researchers who documented, interpreted, and shared data with me, with each other, and with the children. As educators on the floor who practice as researchers in their daily pedagogical practice (see Rinaldi, 2006), where “research” and “practice” begin and end is constantly blurred (see the sections Data Generation, and Tensions and Ethical Considerations for more about this).

To think of pedagogical narrations with the values of relationality and plurality is not simply a matter of adding more voices. The danger within the concept of multiple voices is that it can create an “allusion of inclusion”. Ideally multiple perspectives help us to recognize that our interpretations are always partial, always incomplete. An important point to reiterate is that educators and researchers do not sit above or outside this process. Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2012) state that, “you, with all your previous knowledge and experiences, are a crucial performative agent: in the production of data, in the enactment of analysis, where different pieces of data, previous knowledge, etc., are connected” (pp. 3-4). (I will address the notion of “the enactment of analysis” and researchers’ previous knowledge being intra-connected with other forms of data in the data analysis section later in this chapter.) In Olsson’s (2009) consideration of the role of the researcher, she draws on written correspondence between Foucault and Deleuze in which Foucault argues that the academic should no longer “position him or herself outside or above practice” (as cited by Olsson, 2009, p. 103). Deleuze responds to Foucault’s point as one

that teaches a "fundamental lesson . . . [about] the indignity of speaking for others" (as cited by Olsson, 2009, p. 103). With Deleuze's phrase, "the indignity of speaking for others", Olsson (2009) argues that "within such a statement there is no longer room for giving voice, or making people aware of their own ignorance. It is a matter of *working together* to produce new constructions of what *we are all part of*" (p. 103, emphasis added).

Attending to the materialdiscursive. Thirdly, the process has begun to be engaged in ways where the value of *both* the material and the discursive within this relational field are recognized. The recent work of Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2011, Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010), Olsson (2009, 2010) and Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012a, 2012b, 2013, forthcoming; Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2010, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., forthcoming) draws on theoretical positions that problematize the dichotomous distinctions between the material and the discursive and the human and non-human, and are examples of how this process is transforming. Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010), utilizing what they refer to as a relational materialist approach, comment that this transformation,

might, for example, increase our attentiveness to children's strong relations to the things, artefacts and spaces in pre-schools and schools that are often overlooked in favour of the social or interpersonal relations. Importantly, we are not referring to an attentiveness that seeks to fully understand, organise or capture the essence of these material-discursive intraactivities. This is impossible. Rather, this is an attentiveness that might give us the possibilities to be affectively engaged with and moved by that which seems to enchant and move the children. (p. 240)

This kind of attentiveness (which I will consider further in the section that follows) is integral to shifting the biological/social binary so prominent in early childhood education and research and the tendency to “reduc[e] our world to a *social* world, consisting only of humans and neglecting all other non-human forces that are at play” (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 526). Most early childhood studies and practices are uncomfortably stuck with how to understand what Prout (2005) refers to as “childhood’s hybrid character, part natural and part social” (p. 63). His observation is that “what seems to be required are ways of speaking about childhood that can handle the hybridity of childhood, that can tolerate its ambiguity without lapsing very quickly into the ‘purification’ that dichotomies demand” (p. 64). As Barad (2003) suggests, if we recognize “the conjoined material-discursive nature of constraints, conditions, and practices” (p. 823), then methodologically our aim should not be “to determine individual effects of material or discursive factors” (p. 823). Instead (as Chapter 2 described), she comments that methodologically we need to attend to phenomena, entanglements of spacetime-matter (2011, p. 125), in our efforts to be accountable and responsible for “what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (2007, p. 394). With Barad it is no longer a matter of boundary blurring, but rather it is about entanglements.

Transforming Qualitative Modes of Inquiry

St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) contend that postfoundationalism has produced new epistemologies, ontologies and methodologies. I contend that the (ongoing) evolution of the process of pedagogical narrations is an example of this. To better understand how I see pedagogical narrations as a postfoundational methodology, let me say a few things about postfoundationalism in general, an umbrella term for theoretical positions that

trouble such assumptions as Truth, generalizability, and essentialisms. St. Pierre (2013) describes that:

Scholars whose work has been labeled “post” (e.g. postmodern, poststructural, post-Fordist, posthuman, post-emancipatory, postfoundational, postcolonial, postsubjective, and so on) provided a diverse array of analyses to interrogate the ontological and epistemological order of things in Enlightenment humanism. (pp. 646-647)

She suggests that these critiques raised important epistemological questions related to “what counts as knowledge and whose knowledge counts, how knowledge becomes foundational and is used to secure truth, the imbrication of knowledge and relations of power, the links between knowledge and ethics, how knowledge produces reality, and so on” (p. 648).

The impact of the “posts” on qualitative research led to many efforts in research practices “to resist so-called value-free scientific knowledge and make public the knowledge and everyday lived experiences of the oppressed, the silenced, and the lost and forgotten in the service of social justice” (St. Pierre, 2013, p. 648). Yet St. Pierre argues that “qualitative inquiry [has] remained mired in Enlightenment humanism” (p. 654), particularly in humanism’s representational logic, and that overall “the posts have had little effect on the humanist underpinnings of qualitative inquiry, chiefly because its ontology remains intact” (p. 649). Lather and St. Pierre (2013) contend that, “rethinking humanist ontology is key in what comes after humanist qualitative methodology” (p. 629). St. Pierre (2013) writes that “the focus on ontology at the beginning of this new century is both timely and provocative, and there is much to read and re-read. . . . the

“posts” are rich in ontological critique, and those analyses have been awaiting this new attention” (p. 654). “Ontology in the ‘posts’ flattens what was assumed to be hierarchical. Here, there is no Real – nothing foundational or transcendental – nothing beneath or above, outside – being to secure it. Language and reality exist together on the surface” (p. 649). As Jackson and Mazzei (2012) caution, “to encounter what is simultaneously materially and discursively produced requires not just a reading with/through a materialist lens, but it is a reading that relies on a re-insertion of ontology into the task of knowing” (p. 121).

St. Pierre (2008) has challenged researchers to stop doing qualitative research “in the same way, particularly if we want to produce different knowledge” (p. 229). She continues by stating, “But I think it is very, very difficult to produce knowledge differently because I believe we are still deeply mired in the conceptual order of the metaphysics of presence” (p. 229). Law (2004) has stated that the “task is to imagine methods when they no longer seek the definite, the repeatable, the more or less stable. When they no longer assume that this is what they are after” (p. 6). He asserts that:

To do this we will need to unmake many of our methodological habits, including: the desire for certainty; the expectation that we can usually arrive at more or less stable conclusions about the way things really are; the belief that as social scientists we have special insights that allow us to see further than others into certain parts of social reality; and the expectations of generality that are wrapped up in what is often called ‘universalism’. (p. 9)

St. Pierre (2011) has put forward, this *doing qualitative research differently*, as post-qualitative research and post-qualitative analysis. In a recent special issue of *The*

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, Lather and St. Pierre (2013)

suggest that the papers in that issue

illustrate that the limits of humanist qualitative inquiry become sharper as we put “post” ontology to work. At some point, we have to ask whether we have become so attached to our invention – qualitative research – that we have come to think it is real. Have we forgotten that we made it up? Could we just leave it behind and do/live something else? (p. 631)

Lather (2013) presents four exemplars for considering how we might approach methodology in a post-qualitative world that all varyingly “take on issues of messy conceptual labor, difference, otherness and disparity, and incompleteness as a positive norm” (p. 642). She suggests that

This is beyond tensions between tradition and avant-garde. It is about working the stuck places into which such tensions have gotten us. Critical ideas have become their own orthodoxy in “the reflexive turn” that is its own “best practice” and limit situation. Moving toward glimmers of alternative understandings and practices that give coherence and imaginary to whatever “post-qualitative” might mean, it explores a new culture of method of breaking methodological routine by savoring our critical edges, aporias, and discontents. It troubles visibility and holds up blind spots as productive sites toward “the risk of a new relationality” (Berlant in Davis & Sarlin, 2008). Instead of a voice of masterful, individual authority, it does what Ronell (2010) calls “partnering up with the questioning other” in order to disrupt any settled places in our work. (p. 642)

In reference to her previous work, *Getting Lost*, Lather (2013) says that, “perhaps,

‘getting lost’ might exactly be about an accountability to complexity and the political value of not being so sure” (p. 642). Thinking with Deleuze, Lather (2013) offers as a possible imaginary (i.e., QUAL 4.0) for post-qualitative researchers to:

accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently. This inquiry cannot be tidily described in textbooks or handbooks. There is no methodological instrumentality to be unproblematically learned. In this methodology-to-come, we begin to do it differently wherever we are in our projects. Here, the term “post-qualitative” (St. Pierre, 2011) begins to make a certain kind of sense. (p. 635)

She goes on to qualify that

To think differently means to work within and beyond the reflexive turn, to problematize inquiry, to redefine objects as more in networks than in single sites (Barad, 2007), to trouble identity and experience, and what it means to know and to tell. Most importantly, it means “no methodological a priori” (Marcus, 2009, p. 5). The actual design and practice of the fieldwork of the future are up for grabs. “What is usually thought of as method” (p. 6) shifts to a sort of “running away” from traditional models, especially the holdover of research as a mirroring/objectivism where “despite fierce resistance,” destabilization has happened. (p. 638)

Davies, de Schauwer, Claus, de Munk, Van de Putte, and Verstichele (2013) argue that, “such research demands of the researcher new skills of listening to the minute details of life as it unfolds in all its multiplicity, in its repetitions, and in its leaps into the unexpected and new” (p. 680). Lenz Taguchi’s (2013) assertion is that the

The territory of qualitative inquiry is so heavily sedimented that it requires very hard collaborative work to deterritorialize its habitual ways of thinking and practicing in order for new and different researcher practices and subjectivities to emerge. However, as this paper has illustrated, a rhizomatic image of thinking, operating from within a Deleuzian ontology of difference, can cut qualitative inquiry loose from old tools to invent new ones. This is not something that can be done only once, but it has to be done over and over again, in an ongoing flow of differentiation. Our researcher practices can never be fixed, but must be invented again and again. (p. 715)

Observation. I have described observation as a key element of pedagogical narrations but it is important to qualify that I do not suggest a humanist sense of observation, whereby observations are “the benign facilitator of discovery, a transparent and undistorting lens passively gazing at the world” (Barad, 2007, p. 195). Observations are never neutral. The assumption that we are all addressing the same reality (Law, 2004) and we can objectively capture said reality through our observations (and descriptions), is based on the notion that there are concrete, knowable, stable, fundamental laws and regularities in nature and the social world (St. Pierre, 2012, drawing on Comte). Law (2004) describes this “Euro-American assumption that the world is more or less specific, clear, certain, definable and decided” (p. 24-25) as *definiteness*. This definiteness and a Cartesian logic that separates words, knowers and things (Barad, 2007), underlie a humanist understanding of observation.

Law draws on Latour and Woolgar’s (1986) influential ethnographic report of the Salk Institute endocrinologists to assert that, “reality is neither independent nor anterior

to its apparatus of production. Neither is it definite and singular until that apparatus of production is in place. Realities are made. They are *effects of the apparatuses of inscription*” (p. 32). Barad’s (1998, 2003, 2007) use of and elaboration on Bohr’s understanding of “apparatus” provides a similar argument. For Barad (2003), apparatuses are not passive instruments, “mere static arrangements *in* the world, but rather *apparatuses are dynamic (re)configurings of the world, specific agential practices/intra-actions/performances through which specific exclusionary boundaries are enacted*” (p. 116, original italics). They “*are the material conditions of possibility and impossibility of mattering*; they enact what matters and what is excluded from mattering” (Barad, 2007, p. 148, italics in original). Law (2004) and Barad (2007) both demonstrate that methods (such as observation) participate in the enactment of realities.

As described, in the process of pedagogical narrations observations (always partial, always incomplete traces of an event) are made and documented (through narratives, photographs, videos, artwork, etc.). One of the effects of documents is that they “make ‘things’ visible and traceable” (Prior, 2003, p. 87), a concept central to the development and practice of pedagogical documentation/narrations (see Dahlberg et al., 2007; Dahlberg & Moss, 2010; Rinaldi, 2006; Vecchi, 2010). Both Olsson (2009) and Lenz Taguchi (2010) stress the need to recognize the *verb* form of pedagogical documentation, “the ongoing event” (Olsson, 2009). Lenz Taguchi (2010) describes pedagogical documentation as a tool that is “machinic”; it “is *alive* and from which we can produce a multiplicity of differentiated knowledge from a specific event” (p. 67, italics in original). Pedagogical narrations work “as a movement or force in itself – a verb – and which can only be identified by what it produces” (p. 67).

We are not, as researchers and educators, separate from the observations we make and document (see Banerjee & Blaise, 2013; Blaise, 2013a; Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Olsson, 2009). We are part of the production of realities. Perhaps it is helpful to consider our role in this process as one of a “modest witness” (Haraway, 1997). Haraway describes witnessing as: “a collective, limited practice that depends on the constructed and never finished credibility of those who do it, all of whom are mortal, fallible, and fraught with the consequences of unconscious and disowned desires and fears” (p. 267). Witnesses are not disengaged observers. Observation is “always an interpretive, engaged, contingent, fallible engagement. It is never a disengaged account.” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 161). For Haraway,

True modesty is about being able to say that you do have certain skills. In other words, being able to make strong knowledge claims. Not giving in to stupid relativism, but to witness, to attest. The kind of modest witness I am calling for is one that insists on situatedness, where location is itself a complex construction as well as inheritance. . . . A witness is always at risk of for attesting to some truth rather than others. You bear witness. . . . Witnessing in this sense is anti-ideological in the sense of resisting the ‘official story.’ Truth here is not with a capital ‘T’; truth that is transcendent or outside history. It’s resolutely historical; attesting to the conditions of life and death. (p. 160)

Representation. Connected to the considerations I have laid out about observation is representation. As Barad (2007) explains, “The assumption that language is a transparent medium that transmits a homologous picture of reality to the knowing mind finds its parallel in a scientific theory that takes observation to be the benign

facilitator of discovery” (p. 97). Lather and St. Pierre (2013) importantly remind that, “of course, the theory of representation used in humanist qualitative inquiry was not always thinkable (see, e.g. Foucault, 1966/1970), so there is a precedent for thinking other theories” (p. 631). One way to think of representations is as Law (2004) offers, as being “enacted”. Thinking with Mol (2002), Law writes:

Enactments, it is being argued, don’t just present something that has already been made, but also have powerful productive consequences. They (help to) make realities in-here and out-there. . . .To talk of enactment, then, is to attend to the continuing practice of crafting. Enactment and practice never stop, and realities depend upon their continued crafting – perhaps by people, but more often (as Latour and Woolgar imply) in a combination of people, techniques, texts, architectural arrangements, and natural phenomena (which are themselves being enacted and re-enacted). (p. 56)

MacClure (2010) suggests that non-representational theory “doesn’t aspire to generalisation, abstraction or the condensation of complexity into categories or themes” (p. 278). She continues that, “the kind of theory I have in mind defamiliarises, complicates, obstructs, perverts, proliferates” (p. 278). Proliferation is of upmost importance in our increasingly mobile, technological, complex world, a world where inequities through racism, homophobia, gender, class, age and abilities remain firm.

MacClure (2013) surmises that

The materialist critique of representation has radical implications for qualitative methodology. It would no longer allow us to work under the auspices of common sense wielded by responsibly autonomous human subjects (aka well-trained

qualitative researchers). We would no longer be able to appeal to a fundamentally good sense guiding wise judgement in the arbitration of categories and hierarchies, and the detection of error. Such wise judgements, based on the representational ‘fettters’ of identity, similarity, analogy and opposition, underpin the analytic enterprise as conceived in many methods textbooks and in our everyday habits as researchers: this is like that (so we will call it a theme); that is an example of this; this belongs under that code; this is a metaphor for that; this is a sub-category; this interviewee is not saying what she really thinks.

The materialist critique of representation would also confound interpretation, to the extent that this implies a critical, intentional subject standing separate and outside of ‘the data’, digging behind or beyond or beneath it, to identify higher order meanings, themes or categories. This again is the logic of representational thought, operating under the ‘logic of instead’: instead of multiple instances, interpretation substitutes patterns or meanings. (pp. 660-661)

As previously quoted, Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) are clear that in their work with documentation, they “are not referring to an attentiveness that seeks to fully understand, organise or capture the essence of these material-discursive intraactivities.

This is impossible” (p. 240). Olsson (2009) is just as clear that

pedagogical documentation does not refer to the recognizing and representative aspects of the word documentation at all. An ambition has been to challenge the recognizing and representative aspects of the photos, observations, and recordings; not to focus in these on ‘what really took place’, but rather to use the pedagogical documentation together as teachers and researchers, and most

importantly, together with the children in the ongoing process of constructing a problem. (p. 19)

The more-than-human. There are a couple of key points about the impact of a materialist ontology, and thinking with the more-than-human world, on post-qualitative methodologies and in this research study specifically. One is that considering seriously the-more-than-human world that challenges the human exceptionalism so readily present in most (humanist) qualitative research. In terms of documentation, Lenz Taguchi (2011) describes that she works with documents in ways that challenge the assumption that "human beings [are] the taken-for-granted starting point and centre" (p. 39), a position that ultimately "makes us over-emphasise human *language* as the superior way to understand learning" (p. 39). Law raises several important questions in relation to this kind of noticing (beyond human, beyond language) for teaching and conducting academic research.

Should we adopt a more generous and less exclusive approach to what can or should be made present in method? Its materialities? Should materials other than those that are currently privileged be recognised as presences that reflect and help to enact reality? Should we move beyond academic texts to texts in other modalities? And not just texts and figures, but bodies, devices, theatre, apprehensions, buildings? I have responded by saying yes to all these questions and have argued that the realities we know – and help to enact – in academic texts, though important, are much too restricted. I have suggested that allegory is often likely to demand novel materialities. Once again, however, this is work to

be done. There is need for a whole range of materially innovative methods. (Law, 2004, pp. 153-154)

My assertion is that pedagogical narrations, when understood and approached from a post-qualitative perspective, can attend to the call that Law is making. Jackson and Mazzei (2012) also point out the limitations of qualitative methods that take humans and words as their starting point, as foundational. They write that, “taking words at face value fails to account for *how* the discursive constructions . . . intra-act with their material conditions” (p. 127, italics added). They further comment that, “We cannot separate the discursive practice from its production in the material. Nor can we fail to take into account its material effects” (p. 128). Sørensen (2013) offers an example of how this perspective shifts the understanding and practice of observation, in which she draws on the principle of symmetry for analyzing sociomaterial processes.

Sequential descriptions of co-presence in situations unfolding here-and-now through processes of interrelation are necessary for the researcher to account symmetrically for human and nonhumans participants. To do this, observational data is generally more useful than accounts of ‘speaking subjects’. As discussed above, experience relies exclusively on what is present in the situation of experience, and accordingly adequate analyses of experience must take their point of departure in data at the scale of experience, the situation, that is, in data of the present. (p. 123)

This materialdiscursive (or as Sørensen writes, sociomaterial) recognition is the second important conceptualization that a materialist ontology brings to methods of observation, representation and analysis that I want to highlight. This is not about

recognizing materials and bringing them in as an additional factor to be analyzed, but rather recognizing practices as always already materialdiscursive phenomena (Barad, 2007). As post-qualitative researchers, it is about “attend[ing] to the data in terms of phenomena” (Barad in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 120). For Sørensen “the empirical analyses performed within this field generate and analyse data in many different ways . . . moving from a focus on ‘speaking subjects’, discourse, interpretations and sense-making to ‘doings’, affects, configuration, symmetry and presence” (p. 128; see also Sørensen, 2009).

A diffractive analysis. As a researcher interested in producing *different knowledges* I sought a methodological approach with tremendous potential to be an apparatus for such a project as well as an analysis strategy that could attend to this intention. In Chapters 4 and 5, I have employed a diffractive analysis (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1992, 1994, 1997). Drawing on Bohr’s work in quantum physics, Barad (2007) has offered diffraction “as a productive model for thinking about nonrepresentationalist methodological approaches” (p. 88). Haraway, (1992) explains that, “diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the effects of difference appear” (p. 301).

Diffractions does not fit what is the object and what is the subject in advance, and so, unlike methods of reading one text or set of ideas against another where one serves as a fixed frame of reference, diffraction involves reading insights through one another in ways that help illuminate differences as they emerge: how different

differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter.

(Barad, 2007, p. 30)

To think with diffraction is to attend to the effects of differences and relationalities and is “a commitment to understanding which differences matter, how they matter, and for whom” (Barad, 2007, p. 90). As Haraway (1994) suggests, “the point is to get at how worlds are made and unmade, *in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others*” (p. 62, italics added). One of the things that I think is important to stress is that “diffraction, as a physical phenomenon, entails the entanglement/superposition *of different times and spaces*” (Barad, 2011, n16 p. 154, italics added). With diffraction, “what you get is not a reflection; it’s the *record* of the passage” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 103, italics added), “seeing both the history of how something came to ‘be’ as well as what it is simultaneously” (p. 104). In Chapters 4 and 5, I attend to different times and spaces in my analyses of how dolls and cars (gender, children, care) have come to “be” as well as simultaneously “are”. These analyses speak to the gendering and caring of young children not as innocent, private, individual practices but rather as always already collective, entangled, political, ethical materialdiscursive endeavours, what Barad might call ethico-onto-epistemological practices.

Developing diffraction as a methodology for me has been about that ethico-onto-epistemological engagement, attending to differences and matters of care in all their detail in order to creatively repattern world-making practices with an eye to our indebtedness to the past and the future. Diffraction is about thinking with and

through differences rather than pushing off of or away from and solidifying difference as less than. (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 16)

“Diffractively reading insights through one another for patterns of constructive and deconstructive interference” (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 12) is very different than traditional interpretations and analyses. Several diffractive analyses that have been employed in educational research are useful examples (e.g., Davies et al., 2013; Hultman & Lenz Taguchi 2010; Jackson & Mazzei, 2012; Lenz Taguchi & Palmer, 2012; Taylor & Blaise, 2014). Writing about the influence Barad (and Deleuze) has had on their approach to the post-qualitative methodology of collective biography, Davies et al. (2013) write that, “concepts, memories, and the virtual bodies of the participants are brought into a diffractive reading with one another” (p. 684). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) apply a diffractive reading to their participants’ narratives and suggest that “it is in and through an understanding of these entangled practices presented by Barad that we can begin to understand how diffractive readings can help us in our work as qualitative researchers to produce knowledge differently” (p. 135). Thinking with Barad, Jackson and Mazzei (2012) explain that their attention with the data shifts from what is *told* by participants, to what is *produced* in the intra-action of the event. It is no longer the research subjects or even ourselves as researchers that are the focus of the inquiry, but rather “the enactment of agency and the co-production of these enactments” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 118). As such, “data and meaning-making [then] become not merely a re-insertion of the material into our analyses” (p. 119).

The question is not why does this happen, but how does this happen? The implication for how we think data differently, given this entangled state, is to

move away from thinking the interview and what is told discursively, toward a thinking of the interview and what is “told” as discursive, as material, as discursive *and* material, as material ↔discursive, and as constituted *between* the discursive and the material in a posthumanist becoming. (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 126)

Hultman and Lenz Taguchi (2010) present the potential of a diffractive analysis within their material realist approach (see also Lenz Taguchi, 2011) and suggest that such an analysis is not about re-creating the event that took place, but reading with the data, or in Haraway terms, “becoming-with the data” (p. 534). “The event of diffractive ‘seeing’ and ‘reading’ the data is an entirely *other* event, emerging *only with the reading of the data*” (p. 537, italics in original). “When reading diffractively, seeing *with* data, we look for *events* of activities and encounters, evoking transformation and change in the performative agents involved” (p. 535). This approach recognizes the researcher’s own installation in the event (Lenz Taguchi, n.d., as cited by Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) as one of the performative agents involved. This is congruent with the process of pedagogical narrations that I have already described. Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2012) state that, “you [the researcher], with all your previous knowledge and experiences, are a crucial performative agent: in the production of data, in the enactment of analysis, where different pieces of data, previous knowledge, etc., are connected” (pp. 3-4).

In another example of a diffractive analysis, Lenz Taguchi and Palmer (2012) share with the reader “how differences get made when different texts are read diffractively” (p. 15) in their diffractive analysis of school girls’ ill – or wellbeing in Sweden. The aim is to know differently, to read with the different texts “in ways that

interfere with” (p. 15) a dominant understanding or presentation of a particular subject (in this case school girls’ ill – or wellbeing). Taylor and Blaise (2014) do something similar “through the diffractive process of re-reading queer theory through the new feminist materialisms and more-than-human interferences” (p. 4), particularly influenced by Haraway thinking, which illuminated “the limits of [their] earlier efforts to queer childhood” (p. 4). This diffractive mapping allowed them to “re-read anthroponormative discourses through the inherent queerness of our already entangled and always more-than-discursive common worlds” (p. 4). Lenz Taguchi and Palmer’s approach with Barad’s agential realism seems to offer a way that “might *increase our power to act* for us to become different in ourselves” (p. 15), that approaching data diffractively might “make possible . . . many different possible and alternate realities” (p. 15).

Importantly: to be able to imagine other possible realities, we need to use both language and our ability to think with images and embodied senses and emotions. It seems as we should *not* try to free ourselves from our thinking, but contrary to this we need to *think more* but *think differently* The next step is, of course, to make this thinking and imagining be actualized as material realities. (p. 17)

Inquiry Design and Implementation

As described in Chapter 1 this inquiry was guided by my overarching curiosity for how conceptualizations of gender impact assumptions about and practices of caring for children. Engaging with/in/through pedagogical narrations, the research questions explored in this study were:

1. What might an engagement with human-and non-human relationality do to complicate conversations about gender and care?

2. How might children, educators and things become implicated in gendered caring practices?
3. How might a post-qualitative methodology complicate gender and care conversations and make visible new ways of knowing and being?

Participants

The participants of this research study were both educators and children who work/attend a licensed childcare program in the Victoria area. I invited educators from four licensed childcare programs to participate in this study. Educators from these centres were invited because I knew of their interest in exploring and experimenting with pedagogy and because I had an established relationship with them through pedagogical project work in the past (as previously described). Four early childhood educators from one of the programs, a program that cares for children aged 18 months to three years, consented to participate in the project. These educators oversee the daily care and education of the children they work with at their childcare program. The educators who participated in the project acted as co-researchers. As per Human Research Ethics Board (HREB) guidelines, the educators were informed of their right to withdraw from the project at any time (see Appendix A).

Following the educators' consent, the manager of the childcare services distributed the research study information letter and consent forms to the families of children in that program, as an invitation to all of the children to participate. Ten families' consented for their children to participate. The educators and I extended an invitation to the children themselves about participating in the project and were asked permission for any pedagogical narrations that involved them to be included in the

research after the documentation was collected. For nonverbal children their parents made the decision. Children who were not granted permission from their parents to participate in the research project still had the same access to the program activities but their information (e.g., words, ideas, art work, etc.) was not included in the research project in any form. Families were informed of their right to withdraw their child from the project at any time, as per HREB guidelines (see Appendix B).

The methodological approach of pedagogical narrations that was used for this research was already part of the program where this study took place. Educators who participated in this study regularly document pedagogical practice through photographs, video, written notes, and children's creations/artwork, and use these traces of practice to dialogue together, with the children, and with the families in their program. Their pedagogical narrations are regularly displayed within their childcare centre. In the fall (or when new families join) it is standard practice for parents/guardians to receive an orientation package which includes information about the pedagogical practices of the centre and information about the different kind of projects, including research studies, that the educators may be involved in. Families are told that any research requires permission and that they will receive detailed information and consent forms for any study to be potentially conducted within their program. One of the intentions of the orientation package is to clearly indicate to parents the difference between inquiry based pedagogical practices that are regularly part of the programs (e.g., documentation practices, dialoguing with educators and families) and research studies which will generate knowledge to be disseminated to a wider audience (i.e., outside the childcare programs).

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher working with/in/through pedagogical narrations, I was engaged with the children and educators in pedagogical moments at the centre. I was not involved in the direct care of the children (i.e., counted as an educator on the floor for licensing purposes; support the children's feeding, toileting, sleeping needs; or report daily care information to parents/families). Rather, my involvement ranged from quietly observing children and educators engaged in daily activities of the centre to directly engaging with children and educators in play/exploration. I was also involved in planning provocations for the children (i.e., materials and spaces set up in a particular way to evoke a response) with the educators that related to our emerging research curiosities. I regularly had a camera with me, recording moments of practice through video or photographs.

Prior to this study, I had already been part of a project at the child care centres where I was part of a small team invited by the child care services manager to support the centres as pedagogical leaders. The role of the pedagogical leaders was to work with the educators to extend and deepen their everyday practices based on the *BC Early Learning Framework* (Government of British Columbia, 2008a). Involvement with us as pedagogical leaders was voluntary for the educators. Through this pedagogical support, a research study emerged where several early childhood educators engaged with the pedagogical "support team" in practitioner action research in order to implement and disseminate pedagogical approaches outlined in the *BC Early Learning Framework*. My dissertation research became a sub-study of that research project.

In both of these roles, a pedagogical leader and a researcher, I did not have a supervisory position, nor was I evaluating individual educators or children. However, I

could be perceived as having power-over the educators and their choice to participate in the research project. While my previous relationship with the educators and children presented some “power-over” issues, *relationship* is an integral part of the mode of inquiry used in my study, pedagogical narrations. I tried to mitigate the power-over issues by emphasizing in the information letter and consent to participate form that my role as a pedagogical leader at the centres is not intended to act as an influence on educators’ or children’s (through their guardians) decision to participate in the research study; their decision to participate must be voluntary. It was also emphasized that in my role as a pedagogical leader and as a researcher, I have no authority to evaluate individual children or an educator’s job performance, nor make any recommendations about individuals to the manager of the childcare services. Lastly, it was also emphasized that participation or non-participation would not affect the educator’s employment or the services that the children receive from the centre in any way. This was addressed within my HREB application to conduct research.

Data Generation

For this study, I began the process of pedagogical narrations with initial observations and documentation of moments of practice. Differently than our previous explorations together (i.e., through the pedagogical support project and other research studies), we knew what our focused curiosity was for this research study. So while we were observing and recording ordinary moments, it was through a lens of thinking about gender and care⁴⁴. At the beginning, I asked the educators to *not* purposefully or

⁴⁴ In previous explorations, the focus was more general: to observe and document moments of practice related to pedagogy for the purposes of further dialogue and experimentation. From these traces, we would find a thread of interest to think with (e.g., the image of the child, the role of the educator, the use of materials, etc.). Conversely, for this study, while we began in a similar manner – observing and

consciously change their setup or routine because I was joining them. The intent was to observe and document traces of *what was there*, to look for jumping off points related to care that we found intriguing/interesting.

As I said yesterday, I imagine that I will be observing, looking for threads of interest for the first few days. Please do not feel like you have to “set up” for me. Do as you do normally. If you are thinking with water, keep going with that, or whatever else you are working with. I will observe “ordinary moments” in practice. As we go, I may come to you all with a suggestion for a provocation, or something I would like to try with the children for the purpose of extending something that emerged in the first days. We will see how this emerges. (Email correspondence, November 29, 2012)

I spent most of the first week in the daycare observing and getting to know both the children and the current program⁴⁵. Initial observations and documentation led to conversations in the moment and afterward with both the participating children and educators. From these, the importance of particular materials seemed to call to me or, as MacLure (2010) might say, to “glow”. MacLure (2010) describes this kind of process in the following reflection:

Now and then, out of the wearying mass of ethnographic ‘data’ (videos and fieldnotes), something would catch our attention, usually in a project meeting, and start to form itself into an example. It is hard to describe how this happens, since

documenting “ordinary moments” – we already knew the line of thinking for our inquiry. We did not, however, know how (or if) this thinking would emerge and transform.

⁴⁵ While my relationship with the educators in this program was established through previous work together, almost all of the children attending the daycare at the time this study began were new to me in the program. As a centre for toddlers, children only stay within the program for 1-2 years, depending on when they began and when space becomes available in a program for 3-5 year olds. Therefore I needed to get to know the children I had not met before *as well as* the program as it was emerging with this particular group.

you cannot recognise an example right at the point of its emergence. One way to describe its beginnings would be as a kind of *glow*: some detail – a fieldnote fragment or video image – starts to glimmer, gathering our attention. Things both slow down and speed up at this point. (p. 282)

I requested that the educators keep certain materials available for the children in the weeks ahead (i.e., dolls, play house and figures, small animal figurines, cars) as a provocation for curiosity (Haraway, 2008). These materials seemed to evoke caring responses (from the children, from the educators, from the researchers) and also are deeply connected to discourses and practices related to both gender and care. We were curious about what that these materials might teach us about gender and care. Our attention to the materials in the space was likely connected to the work we had engaged in together with another project: a three-year multi-site collaborative inquiry that aimed to engage non-traditional approaches to materiality in early childhood classrooms through an investigation of art materials (see Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, & Kocher, 2012; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, Kocher, Wapenaar & Kim, 2014). As the gender-care project evolved, this attention to materiality led to conversations and analyses among the co-researchers that worked to de-center the human in our considerations about gender and care. We were curious about what might happen to our constructions of care by paying attention to human and more-than-human relationality and how this de-centering might loosen ties to bounded gendered developmental logics (Chapters 4 and 5 provide this analysis).

I joined the children and educators at the centre almost every day, in the mornings, for four weeks. During some of those days, pedagogical facilitator Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw was also present. She is the lead researcher of the larger study that this

inquiry is a sub-study of. Collectively, we (i.e., the educators, Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw, and I) generated data through observation, documentation, and dialogue over this time. This meant we recorded moments that we found interesting through video, photographs, and written narratives. Photographs and video recordings that I had captured with my camera were brought back to the centre and shared with the children and educators throughout the four weeks. At times these images were projected on to a wall in the centre and we (the children, their families, the educators and I) could watch them together (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Documentation projected in the classroom.

At other times, some were shared as hard copy versions that were displayed or made available on the shelves. Photos and video recordings that the educators had captured with their camera, particularly moments when I was not in the centre, were offered to me electronically (saved on a portable USB stick) to add to the artefacts that I had collected. As co-researchers, the educators knew that they were generating data as well and they selected which pieces they wanted to share with me. All of the photographic traces were uploaded to the centre's computer, accessible to the educators to share with the children and families, and to potentially build narrations for their

program. As mentioned before, this is part of the practice of the centre, which families know of and have granted permission for⁴⁶.

While most conversations with the participating educators happened on the floor, during regular practice hours, two scheduled meetings occurred which also generated data for our collective and my individual analysis. These meetings occurred during work hours, with substitute educators filling in for the participating educators while involved in the scheduled meetings (two educators at a time). These meetings were audio recorded. Traces of practice that we (the researchers and educators) had captured were discussed during these meetings. Other moments were captured through reflective written narratives (e.g., field notes, emails between co-researchers). Documentation artefacts that generated data in this study included: (1) written field notes; (2) digital audio-recording of conversations of meetings between researchers and the participating educators; (3) transcripts of those audio-recorded meetings; (4) photographs and video clips of and daily activities and routines including play, adult-directed activities, children-initiated dialogues/activities, group activities⁴⁷. These different artefacts generated numerous kinds of data that are used for the analyses in Chapters 4 and 5.

What counts as data? MacCLure (2013) suggests that a relational ontology “calls into question the very notion of what will count as data” (p. 660). She continues that

We are no longer autonomous agents, choosing and disposing. Rather, we are obliged to acknowledge that data have their ways of making themselves

⁴⁶ It is important to reiterate that only images, notes, etc. that related to participants of the study, those who consented to participate with the use of photographs and video, were kept by me on my computer (in compliance with HREB regulations) for the purpose of analysis.

⁴⁷ While materials created by the participating children, such as drawings, paintings, constructions, are often artefacts within pedagogical narrations, these did not emerge in relation to this study.

intelligible to us. This can be seen, or rather felt, on occasions when one becomes especially ‘interested’ in a piece of data – such as a sarcastic comment in an interview, or a perplexing incident, or an observed event that makes you feel kind of peculiar. Or some point in the pedestrian process of ‘writing up’ a piece of research where something not-yet-articulated seems to take off and take over, effecting a kind of quantum leap that moves the writing/writer to somewhere unpredictable. (pp. 660-661)

In this research study, there were two artefacts that really “glowed” for us and we became particularly interested in them, revisiting them many times and in many formats (e.g., in meetings, as documentation projected on walls, in written narratives, at conferences and workshops). Each of these pieces became a catalyst for the generation of more data and they feature prominently in the two analysis chapters that follow. The story of Angus playing with baby dolls at a water table is a connecting thread that runs through Chapter 4 and my thinking with dolls. Zach and Wayne playing with cars under a small table was a catalyst that led me through Chapter 5 and my thinking with cars. Slowing down and paying close attention to these moments created space for attending to far more than what was said (what we thought we heard) and what was done (what we thought we saw) in those moments.

Drawing on poststructuralist writers (e.g., Butler, Derrida, and Foucault) and the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari, St. Pierre (2008) has problematized the privileging of *voice*, particularly interview data, as the “truest, most authentic data and/or evidence” (p. 221). Within this study, the scheduled group meetings of the co-researchers, which we recorded, did not have more “data value” than something like a photograph of two baby

dolls floating in a water table. Voice is but “one data source among many from which we produce evidence to warrant our claims” (p. 221). Only by “giv[ing] up the conventional description of data” (p. 232) can we conceptualize data so broadly. She describes drawing on comments “from published researchers and theorists, from participants, from colleagues, from characters in film and fiction, from anyone and everyone to help me think hard about that topic” (p. 231). In my analysis I too draw on comments from participants, colleagues, published researchers and theorists to help me think hard about the topic of my research. I also look to such things as historical documents (e.g., parenting advice books, shopping catalogues), mainstream media (e.g., shopping websites, newspapers, parenting blogs), family photographs, and curriculum manuals. Citing some of her previous writing (1995, 1997a), St. Pierre (2008) names the various sorts of data she has come to recognize: sensual data, dream data, emotional data, response data, and memory data. Those moments with Angus, Zach and Wayne certainly generated emotional and memory data that become part of this study’s analysis. Memories even perforated my reading of historical documents and current websites in my thinking with cars and dolls in my analysis of gender and caring with young children. In a description of their collective biography (a methodology resonant with pedagogical narrations) where memories, responses, emotions, etc. are among the “data” generated, Davies et al. (2013) remind that:

The stories we tell of our remembered experiences are not treated as if they are fixed or real, or as if they exist only in some time past. Rather, each time the stories are accessed they are re-made in their virtual intensities in the present moment. (p. 684)

The moments of Angus, Zach and Wayne that we (re)watched certainly evoked memories (the co-researchers) of caring for own children, the children we worked with, as well as materials. Our memories were remade with the events of dolls and cars and our memories co-shaped our analyses of these moments. Pearce and MacLure (2009) describe a similar analysis process, thinking with an image from their data and write:

We know, of course, that none of these thoughts and memories sprang out of the image itself but were generated at an intersection of discourses that shifted and moved between past/present; spectator/image; words/objects; and in different times, contexts and emotional registers. (p. 259)

Rather than treat these memories or our embodied responses to (re)watching the data, these “sensations and intensities that haunt the research scene” (MacLure, 2013, p. 664), as biases in the analyses, I treat them as data. In her description of a collective research project where they engaged with a materialist ontology in their analyses, Lenz Taguchi (2013) comments:

We came to understand this decentered researcher subjectivity, of being used by thought, in terms of a deep loading interconnectedness and companionship with our fellow researchers, the data, and the material discursive places and spaces where this research was enacted. (p. 715)

Data generation as storying. Using the camera, taking both photos and video, were all done with “storying” in mind, recognizing that the documents captured in the process of pedagogical narrations are always partial and incomplete, never objective. The person with the camera is part of the moment. The camera is not necessarily (and in the case of this particular study, not at all) sitting on a tripod, separated from the

researcher(s), catching a wide sweep for observation later. From this study, I have video clips that highlight how interconnected the participants, researcher, materials, and the camera are in pedagogical narrations. Children are often interested in what is being photographed and ask to see (watch) through the camera display. Sometimes they ask for video or photographs to be played back so they can (re)watch a particular moment (Chapter 5 includes a narrative that illustrates this child-camera-researcher engagement). Children will also ask for the camera so that they can be the one to take photographs or/video. This is a very different process than the one described by MacLure, Holmes, MacRae and Jones (2010). In their description they talk about a banality in the data that did not spark much enthusiasm, even in their discussions with the educators, something that we did not experience in this study. I wonder how much this is related to the involvement of the educators and children in the process of pedagogical narrations, not just for this study but as a regular part of their practice. They were engaged with the inquiry as co-researchers but perhaps more importantly engaged in the ongoing exploration of pedagogy for how to make space for the complexity, the questioning, the tensions, and the unknown in practice. Storying with the camera is a regular part of their pedagogical explorations. The use of the camera in pedagogical narrations is similar to “the development of video in participatory or performance research in which control over the recording (though less frequently the editing or assembly) may be shared between researchers and subjects or given over entirely to the subjects” (MacLure et al., 2010, Note 2, p. 554).

Storying through narratives is also a regular part of the educators’ (co-researchers) practice with pedagogical narrations. Pedagogical narrations are very

dialogical (thus the name “narrations”). What was said through this process – what was agreed upon, not agreed upon, multiple viewpoints, multiple histories - impacted the process and in various ways became part of the data generated/documented. Prior’s (2003) caution about resisting the dialogical focus of most qualitative research in order to conceptualize documentation broadly is not to say that “words” are not considered, but rather to not lose sight of other forms of data amidst the voices of the participants. For example, a moment captured through video where two children are underneath a table with small toy cars is not attended to solely for what those two children said (and what we think those words mean). The materials (table, carpet, wood blocks, cars), their bodies (crouched under a table, arms reaching out from the table, hands rubbing backs), and the silences are also paid attention to and become very important in our conversations and analyses (see Chapter 5 for more details).

Data Analysis

Within the process of pedagogical narrations researchers, educators and children interpret documentation individually and collectively to make learning visible. By sharing their description with others, making it public in some way, they create opportunities to add to and deepen their initial interpretation (Berger, 2010, 2013; Rinaldi, 2006). This is a form of data analysis. We engaged in this process throughout the study, though at times with more purposeful intentionality (e.g., during a scheduled meeting). Analyses occurred through documenting (choosing what to document and what not to document), producing and sharing narrations (choosing which artefacts to share, what kind of narrations to produce), and collective dialogue. I have described that analyses in pedagogical narrations happen both individually and collectively. It is the *documents* (e.g., transcripts, observations, field notes, video recordings, photographs,

audio recordings, displays, written narrations), the traces of our collective engagement in the process of pedagogical narrations, which I as a researcher am analyzing for the purpose of defending a doctoral research study. While my individual analysis is unable to be completely separated from the relationships and collective knowledge generation that I engaged in with others throughout the process of pedagogical narrations, my written analysis (which follows in the proceeding chapters) was of course written on my own.

I have described that I follow a diffractive analysis in my thinking with data in Chapters 4 and 5. Knotting together stories (Haraway, 1994) and diffractively reading them through each other I consider how gender and care emerge in early childhood practices. I have written my stories with Barad's reminder that "there is no origin in [such] stor[ies], and no fixed narrative[s] as such" (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 11). As she has noted, "I will jump in and pull out a few threads" (p. 11) as a way of "beginning to pull the sticky threads where the technical, the commercial, the mythical, the political, the organic are imploded" (Harway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 110).

Storytelling. As I have previously described, pedagogical narrations can be conceptualized as an act of storying. We story through our documentation, our dialogues together, and our sharing of narrations with others. Our observations and narratives tell a particular perspective of an event in which certain aspects are highlighted and others silenced. As educators and researchers, we choose to attend to specific moments, pay attention to particular artefacts, tell certain stories, and in doing so choose not to attend to others (Wolcott, 1994). Is this way pedagogical narrations – the artefacts, our dialogues, our stories - are always already political acts (see Chapter 6 for more). I have taken up this storying in my analyses (see Chapters 4 and 5) through the telling of many stories. I

am cognisant that story (re)telling also has the tremendous potential to be taken up as descriptions of reality, what really took place, but as I have written, a postfoundational perspective challenges this kind of a representationalism. There is also the potential to share the experiences of participants in a way that their stories, or their “voices”, are left to speak for them selves. St. Pierre (2008) states that it is not enough to “‘find’ stories in [their] data and call that work analysis” (p. 227) and chastises researchers for “abandoning” theory in their analysis, thereby leaving “an unreflexive description of participants followed by a collection of stories” (p. 227). Similarly, MacLure (2010) writes that,

Theory stops us from forgetting, then, that the world is *not* laid out in plain view before our eyes, or coyly disposed to yield its secrets to our penetrating analyses (or our herbivorous ruminations). It stops us from thinking that things speak for themselves – ‘the data’, ‘practice’, the pure voice of the previously silenced. (p. 278)

The stories I tell in Chapters 4 and 5 engage with theory, particularly with Barad and Haraway, to not leave the data, practices, and voices to “speak for themselves”. I follow MacLure’s suggestion to “proliferate [theory] through *sustained entanglement and interference* with its objects – with their details, their intransigent specificity and their perplexing otherness in trying to get to grips with ‘data’ whose complexity always exceeds its [theory’s] reach” (p. 281, italics added). In my analyses, theory acts at the level of interference with other practices: pedagogy, curriculum, psychology, dolls, cars, production, marketing. In my diffractive analysis I pay attention to the details (e.g., of dolls, of cars, of production, of touch, of entanglements) to carefully work and rework for

new patterns, possibilities, and surprises (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012). These chapters are inspired by other early childhood researchers and writers who write – story – “data” differently in their efforts to attend to the complexities of children’s increasingly global, technological, complex worlds (see Taylor & Blaise, 2014; Taylor et al., 2013; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, forthcoming). Haraway’s (2012) assertion that there are “definite response-abilities that are strengthened in such stories” (p. 312) buoys my story telling analyses.

There is no innocence in these kin stories, and the accountabilities are extensive and permanently unfinished. Indeed, responsibility in and for the worldings in play in these stories requires the cultivation of viral response-abilities, carrying meanings and materials across kinds in order to infect processes and practices that might yet ignite epidemics of multispecies recuperation and maybe even flourishing on terra in ordinary times and places. Call that utopia; call that inhabiting the despised places; call that touch; call that the rapidly mutating virus of hope, or the less rapidly changing commitment to staying with the trouble. My slogan from the 1980s, “Cyborgs for Earthly Survival,” still resonates, in a cacophony of sound and fury emanating from a very big litter whelped in shared but nonmimetic suffering and issuing in movements for flourishing yet-to-come. (p. 311)

Tensions and Ethical Considerations

All research has ethical concerns and tensions. This section reviews some of the procedures undertaken in regards to ethical considerations prior to the study and discusses some of the tensions that emerged during the research process. While I believe

strongly in the process of pedagogical narrations, the methodology is of course not without its ethical considerations, challenges and potential dangers. I will discuss these in three sections: (1) ethics protocols, (2) always already unfinished, and (3) moving from generalizability situatedness.

Ethics Protocols

As stated, this research study was a sub-study of an action research project led by Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw of which I was a research assistant. HREB approved my doctoral study as a sub-study of that project. As per HREB recommendations, new recruitment letters which included information about the sub-study and consent to participate forms were developed that specifically addressed the content focus of the sub-study. As previously described, I recruited the educator participants and the manager of UVic Child Care Services recruited the children participants through their families. Considerations regarding confidentiality, anonymity, use of images and right to withdraw were outlined in the HREB application and consent information letters (see Appendix A and B). As already described, I was in a position of a dual role having had previous work and research experience with the educators who participated in this study and earlier in this chapter I described how power over issues were addressed prior to undertaking this study. During the research study no participants withdrew their consent to participate and no adverse events occurred.

Pedagogical narrations involve the use and production of artefacts. These artefacts are part of the data that is generated and analysed which raises important considerations regarding ownership of and access to data. The participating educators and children provided permission for the use of their image (through photographs/video), words (as

observed, documented in video, and/or recorded in conversations) or creations (e.g., art work, narrations writing, document displays) as data in this study. Consent was sought prior to beginning as well as throughout the research process. Educators, children and families had access to the artefacts that were collected and used in the analysis.

Participants will also have access to any produced items (e.g., video, website, published articles/chapters, conference presentations, the written dissertation, etc.). As pedagogical narrations are a part of the centre's pedagogical practice already, children, educators and families were acquainted with providing or denying permission for use of artefacts. Any data that was taken with the researcher (e.g., copies of photographs, video, children's artwork, educator's narrations, observation notes) has been stored in a secure manner and will be destroyed after 5 years in compliance with HREB protocols.

Always Already Unfinished

It is possible to look at the amount of time that is generally needed to establish a collaborative working relationship necessary for the process of pedagogical narrations as a limitation of this methodology. This kind of researcher engagement would likely limit the number of sites that one researcher could engage in at one time. One of the tensions of this methodology that emerged for me, as the researcher, happened while I worked on the analyses and also relates to time. As I worked with the data on my own I found myself focused on what I did *not* do with this inquiry during my time in the centre. I was particularly worried about the amount of narrations that were produced during our initial month of documentation, observation and dialogue. We did not, for example, build numerous pedagogical narrations to be displayed publicly in the classroom or within the Child Care Services buildings. While we did share narrations in the classroom through

the production of two video montages and child hand-sized printed photographs pasted on card stock, as I reflected back over the data generated, I imagined other possibilities for sharing the narrations (stories), particularly as I delved further and further into my own analysis. Since that time I have “produced” presentations informed by this research and my analysis (as presented in Chapters 4 and 5), including one co-presented with one of the educator co-researchers of this study (Hodgins & Forleand, 2014), and know other opportunities will emerge for more storytelling. The fact that certain kinds of narrations were produced and not others during this inquiry speaks to *the many ways to do and be with* pedagogical narrations (see Hodgins, Kummen, Rose et al., 2013; Hodgins et al., 2011, 2012; Kummen, forthcoming; Thompson, forthcoming; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., forthcoming). It also highlights that this is never a complete methodology - there is always more to be done.

From Generalizability to Situatedness

As I have described in this chapter, I contend that the process of pedagogical narrations is a methodological approach that holds tremendous potential for attending to the complexity and plurality of childhood, of pedagogy and of research itself. But I am very cautious not to be lulled into a false sense of thinking that we have now found *the way*, a way that eschews the ethics and politics of our work. Through my work with educators and practicum students, as well as my own engagement with pedagogical narrations, I find myself more and more compelled to wonder about, to discuss, to make visible, the challenges, tensions and dangers that exist alongside the potential of this process. Foucault (1983) wrote:

My point is not that everything is bad, but that everything is dangerous, which is not exactly the same as bad. If everything is dangerous, then we always have something to do. So my position leads not to apathy but to a hyper- and pessimistic activism. I think that the ethico-political choice we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger. (p. 231-232)

In terms of determining “which is the main danger” in regards to pedagogical narrations many questions emerge that concern how one *does* pedagogical narrations, whose voices are included in the process, and for what purpose. As already described, Olsson (2009) and Lenz Taguchi’s (2010) approach to pedagogical documentation is one that challenges the representative aspects of documents. Recognizing these moments as merely incomplete traces of an event, rather than a (re)presentation of what really happened, wherein these material artefacts are now part of a dialogue wherein they become something new, is challenging always-unfinished work. It is in this way that pedagogical narrations act a verb, an apparatus of change. As an emergent, relational and dialogical process it is a *doing* that cannot be replicated from site to site, classroom to classroom. Some might suggest that this is a limitation, this study’s inability to be generalizable and applicable outside the participating setting. But from an onto-ethico-epistemological perspective, phenomena can never be nailed down, as “we” become *anew* in each new encounter. With material feminism and post-qualitative methodologies, it is no longer about generalizability and validity (based on Cartesian science) but about situatedness, “where location is itself a complex construction as well as inheritance” (Haraway & Gane, 2000, p. 160). What we can do is take with us, from site to site, our partial knowledge and our implicated *response-ability*.

Recently, colleagues and I presented a workshop about the potentiality of pedagogical narrations as a post-qualitative methodology for educational research. In our introduction to the workshop we explained:

As we share with you the potential of this research methodology, our troubling, our questions, are never far from our engagement. How do we resist claims about pedagogical narrations getting naturalized to rules and procedures that govern children, families, educators and researchers? How do we mitigate the risks of narrations maintaining hegemonic ways of constructing and being with children, reiterating practices of developmentalism, individualism, and school-readiness discourses? How do we embrace the complexity of multiple interpretations, confusions and disorders that challenge our desire for clarity, our singular ways of listening, single ways of acting? In a collective dialogue how do we restrict our desire to answer, creating space to live in question's capacity to provoke or call forth a range of possibilities? How do we question and question again while living in pedagogic actions? (Hodgins, Kummen, Rose et al., 2013, pp. 6-7)

These are the kind of questions that need to be addressed and re-addressed in our engagements with pedagogical narrations as both researchers and educators. And although I'm not suggesting that these questions have clear answers, I believe that we need to *stay with the trouble* (Haraway, 2008, 2010, 2012) that these questions bring to both research and practice, as it is our ethical *response-ability*. I will speak to researching and practicing within these challenging questions and tensions more in Chapter 6.

Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the doing of *Gender and care with Young Children*, including the overall research study design and rationale, and the processes of participant selection and data generation. I described my role as a researcher and some of the tensions and ethical considerations that were addressed prior to starting the research as well as some that emerged during the study. I also detailed how an extended understanding of pedagogical narrations as a post-qualitative methodology was put to work in this study, including the diffractive analysis strategy that I followed. Chapters 4 and 5 take up this diffractive analysis wherein gender and care are analyzed with/in several child-doll and child-car encounters that emerged in the study and diffractively read through other doll and car stories near and far from the classroom.

Chapter 4: (Re)Storying Dolls in Gendered Caring Pedagogies

“Dolls have so long been one of the chief toys of children, and are now so nearly universal among both savage and civilized peoples, that it is singular that no serious attempt has ever been made to study them” (Ellis & Hall, 1896, p. 129).

Introduction

Angus is by himself at the water table playing with small buckets, pouring water over a peachy-coloured plastic girl baby doll who is sitting up in the bubbly, soapy water. He has been “bathing” this baby doll for several minutes when he shifts from pouring water on the baby to pouring some water on to the floor. He looks at me, smiles, waits. He pours some more. “I’m making a puddle right there,” he announces. Angus pours some more water into his puddle. He returns to the water table and picks up the peachy-coloured doll he had been bathing, turns and puts the doll face first “in” the puddle and slides her across the floor with his hand, smiling. He jumps over the baby, than steps on the doll, now laughing. Angus kicks the baby doll the across the floor. More laughter as Angus runs toward me. Angus quickly returns to the water table and grabs up one of the other dolls there -- a dark brown boy baby doll. He brings him to the puddle, placing him down face first, and kicks him across the floor. He follows the doll, laughing, picks him up again and drops him with the first doll still lying face down on the watery floor.

In this chapter⁴⁸, I *think-with* dolls to consider gender and care in early childhood practices. I begin by briefly situating my analytical framework for the chapter. I consider the abundance of dolls and their expected role within early childhood settings, as well as some of the gendered critiques that have emerged. I then further explore the complexity

⁴⁸ Portions of this chapter will also appear in an upcoming publication in the *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies* (see Hodgins, forthcoming).

of dolls through their plasticity, shape (formed as an infant), and diversity. Through these three tales I attend to some difficulties and contradictions related to the entanglements of gender, care, childhood, racialization, socio-economics, consumerism, production, marketing, and bodies. I conclude the chapter with wonderings about practice as a complicated, socio-historical, political, and ethical endeavour where actions and decisions are made every day that must be about children's wellbeing *and* beyond. Choosing with care.

Thinking with Dolls

As described in chapter two, feminist theorising has been instrumental in efforts to challenge gender hierarchies and conceptualize care as an ethic of relationality and interdependence that is at once both private and public, and politically charged (see Gilligan, 1993/1982; Held, 2006; Noddings, 2003/1984, 2005; Ruddick, 2002/1980, 2004/1989; Tronto, 1993, 1995). I draw on these insights and how they have influenced pedagogies to challenge simplified, uncontextualized notions of both gender and care (e.g., Cameron, Moss & Owen, 1999; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Noddings, 2005). As I have also described in chapter two, working within a material feminism and post-qualitative research perspective (Davies et al., 2013; Lather, 2013; Lather & Pierre, 2013; MacLure, 2013; St. Pierre, 2011, 2013), I am not interested in gender and care in terms of an individual autonomous subject but rather in terms of entanglements and the materialization of naturecultures. With a focus on materialdiscursive relationality, where gender and care are conceptualized as performatively emerging through intra-action, I consider dolls and children together

in situated histories, situated naturecultures, in which all the actors become who they are in the dance of relating, not from scratch, not *ex nihilo*, but full of the patterns of their sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages both before and lateral to *this* encounter. All the dancers are redone through the patterns they enact. (Haraway, 2008, p. 25)

To *unstick* early childhood pedagogies from individualist and child-centred pedagogies, I play with the dolls that Angus and the other children in this study play with to rethink the apolitical and developmental logics that underpin “doll early childhood pedagogies”. It is both their historical and current dominance in early childhood practices and their materialdiscursive links to gender and care that make dolls such a significant material to *think-with*. Throughout the chapter, I follow histories and trajectories of the dolls that live in Angus’ classroom to ask: (1) How might dolls deepen our understandings of children’s relations with the world? (2) How might emerging ideas in feminist science studies assist early childhood education to respond to interconnected ideas of gender and care that emerge through thinking with dolls?

My utilization of the doll as a figure to think-with is indebted to Haraway’s (1997) use of figurations as “performative images condensed maps of contestable worlds to make explicit and inescapable the tropic quality of all material-semiotic processes” (p. 11). Through such figures as cyborgs (1991), OncoMouse (1997), and companion species (2008), Haraway problematizes dualisms and challenges “the categorical purity of nature and society, nonhuman and human” (Haraway, 1994, p. 66). Haraway’s serious play with figures foregrounds relationality. Humans, nonhumans, language, technology, past, presents and futures do not exist in isolation but are

entanglements, always *in-the-making* through their intra-action (see also Barad, 2007, 2011) within naturecultures. As Haraway (1994) aptly suggests, “human and nonhuman, *all* entities take shape in encounters, in practices; and the actors and partners in encounters are not all human, to say the least” (p. 62).

In line with my Haraway and Barad inspired theoretical approach, I follow a diffractive methodology (Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1992, 1994, 1997; Haraway & Goodeve, 2000) in this chapter through the telling of stories. As described in chapter three, to think with diffraction is to attend to *the effects of differences* and relationalities, “to get at how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others” (Haraway, 1994, p. 65). The ordinary and mundane classroom stories I tell, are interspersed among the other doll stories I tell to be diffractively read through each other, with the aim to interfere with the expected, add layers of meaning, challenge assumptions, and raise questions of implication and *response-ability* (Haraway, 2012). As Haraway suggests, “There is no innocence in these kin stories, and the accountabilities are extensive and permanently unfinished” (p. 311). I do not tell these stories of children and dolls’ interrelations, interdependencies, and co-shapings as truths of practice, but rather as partial, incomplete knotted stories, with the belief that through sharing stories of complexities in practices, we can generate new knowledges and work toward actualizing new material realities. Through my storytelling and tracings, “diffractively reading insights through one another for patterns of constructive and deconstructive interference” (Barad, in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012, p. 12), I generate new insights about children and dolls, caring and gendered practices, and the kinds of worlds that children inherit and inhabit.

Dolls, Dolls, Dolls: Why so Many Dolls?

The act of playing with a doll is like no other act. Nor is it like any other type of play that happens in the early years of our little ones. Giving a child a doll is like giving a child a tool from which he can express himself and give himself full range of the many facets of adulthood that he can mimic and weave into his learning experiences. (Disch, 2012, para. 1)

In this section I consider the dolls in our research study and their past-present entanglement with developmental psychology, education, marketing, and the governing of practices related to early childhood. Dolls have been part of most cultures throughout history: as sacred objects used for ceremony or ritual, tools for information sharing, and as toys for both adults and children (Jaffé, 2006; Lascarides & Hinitz 2013). Dolls remain a popular toy choice for children in the home and in childhood settings, in spite of the enormous selection of toys that children have to choose from. Dolls designed, produced, marketed, bought, and played with come in numerous shapes, sizes, colours, qualities, and personalities, and a browse through any local or online toy store will highlight the multitude of doll possibilities that exist today (see Amazon Canada for examples of choices for consumers, <http://www.amazon.ca>).

Dolls Come to Play/Teach

A child interacting with baby dolls among bubbles in a water table, like Angus and the dolls in the opening narration, is likely a familiar scene for those who have spent time in a childcare centre in Western contexts. In curriculum guidelines for educators

who work with young children, baby dolls are listed and described in a taken-for-granted way as a standard material to provide children in what are referred to as developmentally appropriate Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) practices (e.g., Beaty, 2014; Bundy, 1989; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Government of British Columbia, 2009, n.d.a, n.d.b.; Government of Manitoba, n.d.). Within these guides, dolls and doll paraphernalia are typically included as part of a dramatic play area and their play (education) value is varyingly categorized as supporting children's socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive development.



Figure 2. Angus and baby dolls at the water table.

In the home. Parents are also told about the variety of ways that miniature figures such as dolls purportedly support children's developmental wellbeing through government produced and distributed information guides for parents (e.g., Government of British Columbia, 2011) and the growing number of parenting blogs (e.g., Disch, 2012; Mama OT, 2012) and websites (e.g., BabyCenter Canada, 2013; The Bump, n.d.). So the

developmental value of dolls in a water table need not be reserved for toddlers in an ECE setting like Angus was in; parents can provide opportunities for pretend play baby doll bathing that will support the development of fine motor skills, self-care, and the knowledge of body part names (BabyCenter, 2013). Parents and educators can also be reminded of the developmental value of doll play by retailers and manufacturers who overtly promote the “importance of doll play” (Corolle, 2012, para. 2) and assure customers that they have dolls to support each “age and stage” of children’s development (see Corolle, 2012; Zapf Creations, 2009). While manufacturers, parenting blogs, and parent and educator guidebooks do not necessarily ignore that dolls may be a toy that is *enjoyable* to play with, the discourse of play as a function in developmental (e.g., psychological, sociological, physical) processes is the overriding message (see Sutton-Smith, 1997 for an overview of the relationship between developmentalism and the rhetoric of play).

In the classroom. The inheritance of this need for, or legitimization of having, dolls in an ECE setting comes from progressive education ideals and the child study movement at the turn of the twentieth century. As described in Chapter 2, Dewey was a leader in the progressive education movement and his early work at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools was instrumental in shaping ideas about education and children. One of the ideals of progressivism was that curriculum should be derived from children’s own experiences and interests (see DePencier, 1996; Dewey, 1897, 1910, 1912, 1915a, 1915b, 2008/1933), which impacted the didactic materials that were made available in schools⁴⁹. In Dewey’s (1910) early work *How we Think*, he refers to

⁴⁹ At the turn of the twentieth century, those interested in liberating the kindergarten movement from its dogmatic adherence to Froebel’s philosophies took up progressive ideals such as engaging children in the

children’s manipulation of “their dolls, their trains, their blocks, their other toys” (p. 161) as building their understanding of meanings, concepts, “so fundamental to all intellectual achievement” (p. 161; see also Dewey, 1915b). He was critical⁵⁰ of the (then dominating) Froebelian based view of which/how didactic materials facilitated learning.

Toy dolls, trains of cars, boats, and engines are rigidly excluded, and the employ of cubes, balls, and other symbols for representing these social activities is recommended on the same ground. The more unfitted the physical object for its imagined purpose, such as a cube for a boat, the greater is the supposed appeal to the imagination. (p. 166)

Dewey (2008/1933) would reiterate his position several years later in his revised version of *How we Think*. By the 1920s and 1930s, the curriculum in liberal kindergartens (those most aligned with progressive movement ideals) included dolls as a material for what was termed “household arts” (today often referred to as the home corner, house area, or daily living area) (Prochner, 2011).

curriculum through the children’s own experience and interests (Dewey, 1897, 1910, 1912, 1915a, 1915b, 2008/1933). With the critique of traditional (Froebelian) kindergarten programs comes the reinterpretation of previous pedagogic materials (e.g., wood blocks in the early childhood classroom as described in Hauser, 2002; Pratt, 2008/1948; Prochner, 2011) and the development of new didactic and play materials to match the “new” philosophies. (e.g., Montessori, 1912). Within the progressive movement, materials were called to be more open ended, better able to facilitate creative play (source), and often imitated everyday “real” objects but in child’s size. Montessori (1912) does something similar in terms of child sized furniture, pitchers, brooms, etc., but these are for use in daily activities, not designed for “creative free play” as such. While the idea that (particular) toys (should) have developmental value may have begun with Locke (Thrift (2003) cites John Locke as usually being given credit for introducing this notion), the child study movement of the early twentieth century greatly impacted the spreading of this idea.

⁵⁰ I think it is important to clarify that while Dewey did not agree with all of Froebel’s philosophy and approach, he valued much of the work and wrote with an acknowledged indebtedness (see Dewey, 1915a, 1915b). Though he could be a staunch critic, some of that criticism was directed to a technocratic adherence to Froebel as interpreted by his pedagogic disciples, a level of strictness that Dewey argued was not actually inherent in Froebel’s writing. Froebel advocate Susan Blow (1908/1894) suggested this as well. Blow’s interpretation was that he wanted his theories to continue to evolve in practice, to not get stuck in a strict replay of his chosen *Motherplays*, and songs. She urged Kindergartners to take the underlying messages of Froebel and build a practice from there.

In Canada, at the Institute to Child Studies at the University of Toronto, Blatz and his colleagues Dorothy Millichamp and Margaret Fletcher produced a treatise on nursery education theory and practice. Within outlined the developmental value of dolls as a tool for imaginative play suitable for both younger (two to three and half year-olds) and older (three and half to five year-olds) children (Blatz, Millichamp & Fletcher, 1935).

According to Blatz et al. (1935) linguistic, social, physical, and cognitive development are all (potentially) supported through doll play, and as a child's maturation brings increased capacities, the play and the play objects can (should) become more sophisticated. Arguably, the psychologising of doll play begins with G. Stanley Hall and A. Caswell Ellis when they conduct a rather large study about dolls and theorize its significance for "both psychology and pedagogy" (Ellis & Hall, 1896, p. 129)⁵¹. As described in Chapter 2, the child studies movement reached beyond psychology to the scientisation of pedagogy and parenting (see Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2005; Strong-Boag, 1982; Varga, 1997).

⁵¹ Bradbury (1937) refers to another study by Hall, *Topical Outline for Educational Studies* (1896-1896), in which his analysis overtly critiqued Froebelian materials in the kindergarten, concerns that in 1898 he took to the International Kindergarten Union in regards to kindergarten reform.



Figure 3. Playing with baby dolls outside.

Tangled practices. One example of this reach is the dictating of scientific motherhood found within a 1934 resource booklet produced by The Canadian Welfare Council aimed at helping “Canadian mothers at risk” with appropriate materials and play spaces for preschool aged children (Mitchell, 1942/1934). According to the resource, “toys are essential” at this stage in a healthy child’s development. This government resource also highlights the knotted relationship between psychology (e.g., the developmental value of particular forms of play), progressive education ideas (e.g., child size materials that mimic the adult world), and marketing (e.g., the overt promotion of brands of toys). Thrift (2003) cites John Locke as usually being given credit for introducing the notion that (particular) toys (should) have developmental value but the child study movement of the early twentieth century greatly impacted the spreading of this idea. Designing, marketing and selling toys for didactic purposes has certainly added to the (Western) abundance of toys in general through the twentieth and now the twenty-

first century (Thrift, 2003). The Milton Bradley Company (MBC) is one example of this, targeting both the home and the classroom consumer. Bradley himself was an early kindergarten advocate and his company published many books about kindergarten, in addition to producing many of the “necessary” materials for the kindergarten classroom (Prochner, 2011). Included in the 1927 MBC catalogue were “Bradley’s Kindergarten Dolls” which the company assured met the standards of the International Kindergarten Union Standardization Committee. Doll play in itself was approved for kindergarten and primary grades by leading educators (as cited in Prochner, 2011, p. 371).

A baby doll lies in an oval handled basket. The basket is just the right size for the doll. The handle nicely suits the size of the hand that lifts and carries it throughout the centre. The basket baby doll carrier sits on the floor of the classroom, waiting for block building to be done. Eventually, fingers grab the handle and then it’s nestled into the crook of an arm. Perfect to carry and walk: to wander through different areas and rooms of the centre to the back corner where a set-up of paper and bingo dabbers awaits. Basket baby doll carrier now sits on the table, on top of the already painted paper. The red dabber is picked up and used to dot, dot, dot, dot the baby doll lying in the basket carrier.



Figure 4. Baby doll in basket.



Figure 5. Baby doll in basket painted with Bingo dabbers.

Doll Troubles

When we viewed the video footage of Angus and the dolls at the water table, I wondered whether might interpret Angus' play in terms of "this is just what boys do"; turn all play into "rough" play. But we didn't label that engagement as gendered in that way. Was our work together pushing us to think outside particular assumptions? Or did we not dare?

Dolls are overtly connected to nurturance and often considered a gender-typed toy to study such constructs as gender differences, same-sex friend/peer group preferences, gender stereotyping, and gender role behaviour (e.g., Banerjee & Lintern, 2000; Banse, Gawronski, Rebetez, Gutt & Morton, 2010; Blackmore, 2003; Cherney, 2003; Eisenberg, Murray & Hite, 1982; Golombok, Rust, Zervoulis, Croudace, Goulding & Hines, 2008; Kuhn, Nash & Brucken, 1978; Martin, Eisenbud & Rose, 1995; Miller, 1987; Taylor, 1996; Theimer, Killen & Stangor; 2001). From a developmental perspective, through engaging with dolls, children are imitating what they see/experience from the adult world; practicing for their adult life to come (Blatz et al., 1935; Bundy, 1989; Ellis &

Hall, 1896). This has helped to foster the enduring belief that by playing with (baby) dolls, children are practicing the skill/duty/pleasure of physically and emotionally caring for others. The aim of this section is to further highlight the complex web of dolls and children by sharing stories that highlight a few knots related to gender and care.

Nurture, Nurture, Nurture

Basten (2009) suggests that, “young girls playing with dolls [as] probably one of the most visibly familiar images of early child interaction with childbearing and nurturing” (p. 2). This “familiar image” is plastered throughout current doll advertising (e.g., Corolle, 2012; Toys R Us Canada, n.d.a.; Zapf, 2009) where photos of smiling girls playing with dolls in a sea of pink, that quintessential marker of girlhood, advertise dolls “for the littlest mommies” (Corolle, 2012). While boys *do* play with dolls (almost every boy in the centre played with a doll at some point during the research) and have for quite some time (see Blatz et al., 1935; Dewey, 1915b; Ellis & Hall, 1896), they are rarely marketed to as the consumer of dolls. In Formanek-Brunell’s (1993) overview of doll production in the US from 1830-1930, she assesses that by the 1920s, in the US nearly all doll manufacturers were marketing their dolls “to emphasize domesticity, maternity, and femininity” (p. 181). A review of several Eaton’s catalogues⁵² (1897, 1909, 1920, and 1934) illuminates a similar marketing trend in the early twentieth century in Canada. The Eaton’s 1897 Christmas Catalogue includes a small section for toys that advertised a few “kid body dolls” (Eaton’s, 1897, p. 18) but by the 1934-35 Fall and Winter catalogue, dolls are no longer advertised as toys for “the little folks” but now promoted under the page heading: “Every little mother will fall in love” (Eaton’s, 1934, p. 258). Rather than

⁵² According to Library and Archives Canada (2007), the Eaton’s company was the first Canadian retailer to distribute a catalogue in Canada (the first one distributed in 1884 and the last in 1976), and was an important vehicle for merchandising across the vast and sparsely settled country.

selling the technical details of the dolls as earlier catalogues emphasized, the marketing of *maternity* becomes overt, and rather similar to what we see in marketing today. This connection between dolls, girls, and nurturing has certainly received comment and criticism⁵³ including early feminist critic de Beauvoir (2011/1949), who considered how dolls were implicated in the indoctrination of girls “to become caring, maternal, and passive” (Wagner-Ott, 2002, p. 251).

Don’t forget the boys. As described in Chapter 2, with de Beauvoir’s (2011/1949) infamous assertion “One is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one” (p. 283), previously accepted assumptions of the “naturalness” of gender hierarchy/relations could now be theorized as “a social condition constituted through relations of power, thus open to critique and the possibility of change” (Dietz, 2003, p. 401). This possibility of change does not get missed within discourses and practices related to dolls⁵⁴. One way these ideas get taken up is to include boys in the dolls and nurturing discourse and practices, exemplified in Charlotte Zolotow’s (2002/1972) children’s picture book *William’s Doll*, an adaptation of which was included in the early 1970s liberal feminist iconic collection of stories, songs and poems known as *Free to Be You and Me* (see Hart, Pogrebin, Rodger & Thomas, 2008). The grandmother’s explanation is clear that boys need dolls so they can “practice being a father” (Zolotow, 2002/1972, p. 286) assumingly just the way girls have had the opportunity to practice being a mother. (Bundy (1989) makes this point explicitly to ECEs and parents – boys must play with dolls to learn how

⁵³ For an overview see Formanek-Brunell (1993). For a few recent critiques about the “pink aisle” see Crozier (2014), Dockterman (2013) and Gruver (n.d.). For critiques/comments about the gendering of dolls see Sweet (2012).

⁵⁴ Interestingly, Dewey (1915b) early on pointed to the “socialization” of boys *away* from dolls. “The idea that certain games and occupations are for boys and others for girls is a purely artificial one that has developed as a reflection of the conditions existing in adult life. It does not occur to a boy that dolls are not just as fascinating and legitimate a plaything for him as for his sister, until some one puts the idea into his head” (p. 115).

to nurture.) This challenges the exclusion of boys from the nurturing/caring discourse and practices related to dolls, but perpetuates the notion that playing with dolls is preparatory for a future parenting self. When efforts to change gendered behaviour (such as boys should play with dolls to develop their nurturing capabilities) “fail”, biological determinism is often called upon to explain behaviour (MacNaughton, 2000). Biological determinism is generally rooted in discourses of essential, universal difference: developmental difference, biological difference, emotional difference, functional difference (Eidevald, 2009). As Sommers’ (2012) online article title suggests, “you can give a boy a doll, but you can’t make him play with it”.

The past presents (presence) of dolls teaching/playing in ECE is not outside gendered discourses and practices of care. Woven into the fabric of dolls’ developmental value discourses are gendered questions (assumptions) of who will (should) care for dolls that parallel questions of who will (should) care for children. Dominant biological and social theories of gender do little to disrupt the male/female binary associated with care (see Cameron et al., 1999; Johnson, 2011). To unstick care from this dichotomous gender quarrel, a more expansive view of gender and care that can account for the complexity of material discursive becomings is required.

A wooden dollhouse sits on the floor of the classroom. Three children walk around the dollhouse driving die-cast cars on the dollhouse roof. Baby cars they have come to be called. A “baby car” pokes in through the dollhouse window only to re-emerge quickly, back to roll over the roof. Walking. Rolling. Some talking. Mostly just baby cars on the dollhouse roof. A plastic baby doll wrapped in a blanket is tucked under one of the children’s arms as she drives her baby car on the roof.



Figure 6. Baby cars.

A Knotty Tale of Plasticity

This tale takes as its starting point the plastic material of the dolls with whom Angus and the other children engage with through the duration of this study. While it is a material that largely influences the water table possibilities for bathing dolls in ECE it is also one embroiled in controversy. In this section, my aim is to consider the plasticity of the dolls, and in so doing add some sticky knots to the complicated, sometimes contentious, web of dolls, children, gender, and care. As Puig de la Bellacasa (2009) suggests “these worlds of collective feeling, relational processes that are far from being always caressing, have something specific and situated to teach us” (p. 310).

The Promise and Peril of Invention

Depending on the resources available and the tradition of the people, dolls have been made from: wood; paper; food, such as cornhusks and apples; terracotta and clay; porcelain china; rags and other kinds of cloth; rubber; and various kinds of plastic (Fraser, 1966; Holmes, 2012; Jaffé, 2006). With the development of polymers (i.e., polyurethane in the 1930s, followed by polystyrene, and by the 1950s polypropylene) which could support various types of molding and be mass produced cheaply, hard

plastics overtook doll production by the mid-twentieth century (Jaffé, 2006). Plastic production is implicated in the variety of doll shapes and sizes and the abundance of dolls available then and today in ECE classrooms and homes. Plastic also helped to facilitate different play possibilities as the dolls were now lighter and easier to carry/move around, they could be washed and left outside in the rain without (much) worry, and did not break (as easily) and therefore could be played with under less supervision than porcelain dolls (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Originally marketed as better for children's play – plastic is hygienic, safe, durable, and cheap – today, plastic dolls are embedded in multiple controversies related to physical and environmental health.

Physical and environmental health. In terms of physical health, chemicals found in plastics, such as bisphenol A (BPA) which is used as a binding agent in polycarbonates, are increasingly being associated with delayed puberty, growth retardation, cancer, diabetes, obesity, as well as reproductive and neurological problems/diseases (see Grossman, 2009; Knoblauch, 2009; Kovacs, n.d.; Schmidt, 2011; White, 2009). Phthalates, a chemical compound used to soften plastic in the production process, is also of concern. Like BPA, phthalates are not chemically bound to the plastic and therefore in different ways leach into the environment, including migrating into the body through saliva (Schmidt, 2011). In terms of environmental health, producing plastic consumes a large amount of non-renewable resources, such as petroleum and coal, both for the actual product and the process of production (Knoblauch, 2009; Kovacs, n.d.; White, 2009). Not only are non-renewable resources used to make plastic products but major air, water, and soil pollution is also created through their production and their disposal, which is also impossible to detangle from human and non-human health

(Allsopp, Walters, Santillo & Johnston, 2006; Grossman, 2009). Much of the general concern related to plastic production gets directed toward China, as the world's largest producer of plastics (Pop, 2011). Dolls are among the many plastic products whose manufacturing has migrated to China over the last twenty years in the pursuit of reduced production costs (Jaffé, 2006; Van Patten, n.d.).

Blaming and needing (using) China. Among the health and environmental problems that have been raised are strong concerns about the conditions of toy production in China, which is estimated to be 80% of the world's toy production (Bjurling, 2005, 2009; Jaffé, 2006). Most production occurs within the Guangdong Province and severe working conditions have been reported that often violate Chinese legislation, international conventions, as well as companies own codes of conduct: extremely long working hours, little to no days off from work (particularly in peak season), lack of safety and health education, and low-wages (Bjurling, 2005; Ekelund & Bjurling, 2004). Added to this is the health concerns for the 105 million permanent residents (as of 2011) of the Guangdong Province due to severe soil, air, and water pollution (Chow, 2012; Fung, 2013; Gong, 2013; McGeary, 2013). It is difficult to not see a dichotomy here between the plastic baby dolls played with in a childcare centre on the west coast of what is regularly described as “beautiful British Columbia” and the highly polluted province of Guangdong where these dolls likely came from.

Pressure from public reporting, such as Ekelund and Bjurling (2004), and other safety issues, such as a massive recall of toys containing lead in 2007 which saw the largest toy manufacturer Mattel recall 21 million toys made in China (Bjurling, 2009; for ongoing plastic doll recalls see also Health Canada, 2012; ITV 2013) have led to many

efforts to improve working conditions (Bjurling, 2009, 2011; Toloken, 2012). They have also led to growing concern about consumers *supporting* production from China as portrayed in mainstream media (e.g., Roosevelt, 2006; Thottam, 2007), ECE newsletters (e.g., *Stoeklin*, 2008), and parenting (mommy) blogs (e.g., Bernadette1, 2013; Cool Mom Picks, 2007; Journey to Crunchville, 2007; Mommy Footprint, 2012; Morris, 2012; Sarnoff, 2003). Bernadette1 (2013) inquires of her readers where a doll “not made in China” can be acquired. Journey to Crunchville (2007) notes that a recall of plastic baby dolls sped up her move to rid the house of her daughter’s “gazillion plastic babies” (para. 1). Sarnoff (2003) describes the first night that followed her daughter being given a plastic baby doll by the daughter’s well intentioned but ill informed grandparents as thus: “All night I smelled Baby Ava as she emitted a powdery chemical scent so powerful it made me gag. Baby Ava was off-gassing” (para 4-5). Suffice it to say that Baby Ava was gone the next day. For Sarnoff (2003), there are simply two doll purchasing choices: “potentially lethal lead poisoning or organic cotton options” (para. 3).

How to Care for All Those Plastic Dolls?

With cotton and wool handmade dolls such as Waldorf dolls (Bernadette1, 2013; Disch, 2012) and Bamboletta dolls (Cool Mom Picks, 2007; Mommy Footprint, 2012) costing upwards of \$700 each (Elton, 2013), deciding which doll to buy becomes an issue of access as well as sustainability (see Jones et al., 2012 who also touch on access and plasticity in regards to children’s objects in classrooms). Furthermore, what happens to all the plastic dolls in our caring efforts to “go green” or “choose wisely”? In a growing push to shift from plastic materials to natural ones in early childhood environments (e.g., cotton, wool or wood dolls; wood blocks; wood play structures and furniture) (e.g., Smart

baby smart kid, 2013) where does all the plastic go when we make this adjustment? Where did baby Ava go in Sarnoff's (2003) efforts to protect her infant daughter from "off-gassing"? To another child whose parent or educator is less informed (enlightened) than her? To a recycling depot or a landfill? Are we as consumers prepared to see and take action regarding our culpability –what we purchase, from where we purchase and how we dispose - in this knotty tale of plasticity? What are our "obligations of care" (Haraway, 2008, p. 70)? One of the challenges associated with adhering to international standards and ethical calls for "good practice" is an unwillingness to share (i.e., among manufacturers, retailers and consumers) the accompanying extra costs (e.g., increasing wages, assuring safe working conditions and materials) that ultimately result in increased prices for goods manufactured, like dolls (Bjurling, 2009; Toloken, 2012; Van Patten, n.d.). As Puig de la Bellacasa (2010) suggests, "the obligation 'to care' is more than an affective state, it has material consequences" (p. 165).



Figure 7. Ruby dressing a baby doll.

Ruby holds one of the baby dolls in her hands, sitting with her and trying to add another dress to the dolls' layers. She looks at Terry, the educator in the room who is near to Ruby and asks for help getting another dress on to the doll. Terry helps wiggle the dress

onto the doll. “There you go.” She smiles at Ruby and hands her back the doll. Ruby continues to play with the baby doll but then asks Terry for help to wrap the doll into the blanket she has on her lap. “Oh, does your baby need a blanket?” Terry helps Ruby by carefully wrapping the doll with the baby blanket. “There’s your baby.” She hands the baby doll back to Ruby, who scoops the baby into her arms. She places the baby doll down on the carpeted floor and then lies down beside her. “Are you having a nap with your baby?” Ruby smiles, not at Terry or I, but at her baby.



Figure 8. Ruby lying beside a wrapped up baby doll.

A Knotty Tale of Infancy

As I watch and listen to the video footage of Angus and the dolls at the water table, I can hear my smiling/laughing voice as I ask Angus questions, trying to engage him in conversation, yet I remember feeling uneasy. Angus kicking the two baby dolls across the floor evoked a sense of discomfort in me. When the educators and I re-watched the video some of us talked about this feeling and wondered whether this embodied sense of discomfort would have been elicited if a different toy had been kicked across the floor. How does my experience as both an educator and a mother, through which I have scooped, rocked, cuddled, and embraced small (fragile) bodies, live in my response to

this moment? How do my own frequent childhood experiences of playing with and caring (often very deeply) for dolls live in this moment?



Figure 9. Angus kicking a baby doll.



Figure 10. Angus throwing a baby doll.



Figure 11. Getting a baby doll and carriage, Christmas morning 1972.



Figure 12. Getting another baby doll, Christmas morning 1975.

This tale adds to some of the complexity of doll-child engagements in ECE by continuing to think about the materiality of the dolls present in Angus' classroom. As mentioned, one of the desirable features of plastic is how easily it can be molded to create a variety of shapes. This has been instrumental to the evolution of doll design and production, and the multitude of shapes and sizes available today, including baby dolls shaped as infants. How much does this physical change in the dolls' appearance impact the relationship between and expectations for dolls and gendered care-play? In this tale, my aim is to consider the infant shape of the dolls, and in so doing add more threads and sticky knots to webbed accounts of dolls, children, gender, and care. I tell several stories related to the creation, expectations and affects of baby dolls.

Maternity is the Mother(s) of Invention

In their extensively detailed research study about doll play, Ellis and Hall (1896), who surveyed 800 parents and educators, commented about how “remarkable” it was that so few dolls described in the surveys were “babies”. Were Ellis and Hall (1896) surprised by how few dolls were “baby” shaped because of their (anticipated) link to preparing for parenting? Does the fact that only forty-one of their respondents said that they believed that dolls helped prepare children for parenthood (p. 158) reflect that this was not a domain message at the time? At the turn of the twentieth century some manufacturers produced infant-like dolls, however, the first commercially successful realistic looking infant doll was not until the 1920s with the Bye-Lo Baby designed by Grace Storey Putnam. According to Formanek-Brunell (1993), what followed was the progressive juvenilization of dolls from looking like women and girls, to looking like babies. Returning to examples from the Eaton’s catalogues previously described, the increased production of infant dolls through the early twentieth century is apparent. Looking chronologically, the advertisements move from “kid body dolls” (Eaton’s, 1897, p. 18) at the end of the nineteenth century, to “a real baby doll” (Eaton’s, 1909, p. 157) in the early twentieth century, to then several realistic looking infant dolls by the 1920s and 1930s (Eaton’s, 1920, 1934). As moulding techniques improve, the ability to shape more realistic looking infant dolls also improves. As the realism and number of infant dolls increases in the catalogues, so too do the maternal messages; marketing to little girls and their mothers baby dolls “just waiting to be cuddled and loved” (Eaton’s, 1934, p. 259).



Figure 13. Mateo snuggling with two baby dolls.

As mentioned, it was the Bye-Lo Baby designed by Grace Storey Putnam that was the first commercially successful infant doll. Putnam, like other women doll designers, used technological advances of the day (e.g., celluloid, rubber, and textile stockinet) along with “traditionally feminine household skills” (Formanek-Brunell, 1993, p. 74) (e.g., sewing, hand painting) to craft light, non-breakable, washable, and often realistic looking infant dolls. Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the US, many middle-class women began patenting their doll inventions with the US Patent Office, blurring lines between private and public, domesticity and business. Drawing on their own childhoods with dolls and watching their daughters or other young girls play with dolls like the mechanical and the high fashion elaborately dressed ones, women like Martha Chase, Izanna Walker, Ella Smith, Julia Beecher, and Emma and Marietta Adams began to design dolls which they (and contemporary advice books and popular literature aimed at women) deemed to facilitate more natural, lifelike play/engagement than the heavy, mechanical dolls that were being designed (by men). Formanek-Brunell (1993) ascertains that “as a result playing with the dolls women created more closely approximated the sensations and emotions stimulated by handling real babies” (p. 72).

Really real (like). In the US during the 1990s a few women began making very realistic looking infant dolls, now known as Reborn dolls (Celizic, 2008). While not natural organic cotton and wool like the Waldorf and Bamboletta dolls described in the previous tale, Reborns are another example of hand crafted and very expensive dolls (Estrin, 2013; for doll kits see Secrist Dolls, www.secrisdolls.com). They are also an interesting mix of technological advances (the molded plastics used) and artisan handiwork (e.g., face painting, hand stitched hair, assembling the doll body parts together, etc.) reminiscent of the early examples of infant dolls by women designers like Putnam and Chase (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Recently photographer Rebecca Martinez spent five years documenting within the Reborn community, curious about the dolls' emotional pull for these (mostly) women doll makers and collectors (Campbell-Dollaghan, 2013; Estrin, 2013; Williams, 2011). In Martinez' estimation,

Many of them have a very, very strong genetic makeup to nurture and they love babies. . . . And many are mothers. A lot of people think these are people who can't have children. Some are, but many of them have children and love the baby stage of nurturing. They can love a baby, they can nurture it in a permanent way. (quoted in Estrin, 2013, para. 6).

The notion that this extremely realistic, some say creepy (Celizic, 2008), looking infant doll freezes time is fascinating. Permanent nurturing. And this permanent nurturing seems to come in a variety of forms: for a child one has never had, as a way to extend (relive) the memories of parenting or grandparenting newborns, or to immortalize a real newborn (called "portrait" or "memorial" babies, see Williams, 2011). Reborn dolls seem to not only be a hybrid of new-old technologies but of live-inanimate babies as well, and

while there is much to explore about this phenomenon, my point is to stress the connection between the infant shape and nurturance. Just as the chemical make-up of the doll's material impacts how the doll can be engaged with (e.g., light for carrying, non-breakable, washable, etc.), so too does the form the plastic has been pressed into. Putnam, writing about her 1920s infant doll design states, "I was creating a baby" (as cited in Formanek-Brunell, 1993, p. 157), not a doll. The realistic newborn Putnam created was deemed too realistic and unattractive by businessmen (George Borgfeldt & Company ultimately smoothed out the newborn-like wrinkles and creases of the Bye-Lo dolls they would sell) but was a hit with women consumers when it first appeared for Christmas 1922 (Formanek-Brunell, 1993). Women's reported draw to the early realistic newborn dolls that women designers like Putnam created are rather similar to the description of the Reborn dolls' draw. As Martinez observes, "These are absolutely the most powerful objects I've ever worked with" (as cited by Campbell-Dollaghan, 2013; para 5). Their uncanny resemblance to real babies evokes both repulsion and connection. Haraway (2008) suggests that, "the familiar is always where the uncanny lurks. Further, the uncanny is where value becomes flesh again, in spite of all the dematerializations and objectifications inherent in market valuation" (Haraway, 2008, p. 45). This raises several questions. With Freud (1919), is there something in the dolls' familiarity to *real* babies that for some is threatening, uncomfortably strange? What is it to hold and cuddle frozen-in-time perfect specimens of (re)presentations of otherwise frail, imperfect, demanding newborns? Who exactly are we designing and buying baby dolls for⁵⁵?

⁵⁵ There is a very large adult market of doll collectors - Barbie dolls, baby dolls, black dolls, early production dolls, limited edition dolls, American girl dolls, Reborn dolls, etc. See Campbell-Dollaghan, (2013), Ducille (2003), Hix (2013). *Living Dolls* is a Canadian documentary that explores the eccentricities of doll collecting taken to the extremes (see Champagne, 2013; Cross, 2013).

Working Dolls

I suggest that the expectations that dolls in ECE settings (including the home) will (should) support the developmental wellbeing of children, what I have called the psychologizing of dolls (e.g., Blatz et al., 1935; Ellis & Hall, 1896), has led to what I am going to call a pedagogizing of dolls. I believe the realism of the dolls, particularly infant shaped dolls, has been instrumental in *putting dolls to work*, to teach a variety of skills and qualities. For example, dolls like *Baby Alive*, with versions that can talk and giggle, eat and drink, and even go to the bathroom (Hasbro, 2014), are designed to teach personal care (through modelling) and the care of others (through caring for the doll). The realism of the infant doll is paramount. “This little doll is coming to life, so the little girl doesn't believe it's just a doll. It's her baby” (senior brand manager for Hasbro as cited by Basten, 2009, p. 5). Hasbro's (2014) “brand statement” for Baby Alive states: “Watch your little girl love and share real, mommy moments with her very own Baby Alive doll. See your little girl laugh, nurture and enjoy endless moments turned into memories she will always treasure...just like you”. Again, the blurring of whom we are marketing these baby dolls to is apparent, but so too is the *teaching* that dolls like *Baby Alive* can do.

Basten (2009) thinks realistic infant dolls may play a vital role in teaching “care”, particularly important given our culture's “low-fertility trap” (p. 2) context, “where small families become the normalised and children are surrounded by fewer or no siblings to nurture” (p. 2). Drawing on research from Japan (Chen, 2007) and Europe (Lutz et al., 2006), Basten (2009) wonders whether “this form of ‘synthetic’ nurturing could play an important psychological role” (p. 2), with dolls “form[ing] a substitute for children caring for their siblings” (p. 8). So baby dolls can help to teach nurturance and care, which

theoretically will set them up to *want* to be parents and with the (culturally sanctioned) skills for being good nurturing parents. This realistic synthetic substitute can also be used to teach culturally sanctioned beliefs about the appropriate time to really become a parent. *Baby Think it Over* dolls (now called RealCare® Baby, see Reality Works, www.realityworks.com) designed by a US company called Reality Works are used in classrooms to deter teenagers from becoming parents (yet) by demonstrating just how difficult caring for a newborn is. A much more technologically advanced “baby” than the health class predecessor egg or bag of flour, when turned back in at the end of the project these computerized dolls provide teachers and students with a print out of the “care” the student provided. The doll is able to measure proper care and mishandling, with proper care consisting of feed, rock, diaper, and burp. Oh if only real-life parenting just had four measures for success!

Combating technology. Baby Alive’s predecessors, several dolls that could replicate various bodily functions that by the mid-twentieth century had achieved commercial success, include: Betsy Wetsy, who was introduced in the 1930s by Ideal); Tiny Tears, by the American Character Doll Company in the 1950s; and Chatty Cathy, by Mattel in the 1960s. Ironically, the baby doll designs from Putnam and other women doll designers in the early twentieth century, the forerunners that arguably spearheaded the development of these and other modern day realistic dolls, were a response to overly technical dolls (e.g., clockwork technology used to make dolls that could crawl, early recording technology to simulate crying) and concerns “about the encroachment of industrialization into the nursery” (Formanek-Brunell, 1993, p. 42). In the 1920s and 1930s, “feminine attitudes toward dolls paralleled an emerging ideology that emphasized

the relationships between mother and child within a notion of ‘scientific motherhood.’ Inspired middle-class mothers . . . would praise cloth dolls and disparage mechanical ones for these very reasons” (p. 58). (Cloth dolls included rag dolls as well as infant dolls that had typically had sculpted heads, and sometimes limbs, with soft fabric bodies.) This image of maternal critique intertwined with scientific discourses and notions of “proper” “natural” nurturing (of dolls and children) is reminiscent of the current debate regarding plastic dolls versus “natural” options like Waldorf and Bamboletta dolls previously described. In many ways the push for “natural” toys today is a response to the (computerized, digital) toy world that children grow up in (Thrift, 2003). While the technology has changed, the fear of it and its danger to the loss of childhood (innocence) has not.

Combating innocence lost. While Baby Alive, with all her technological realism, may come to teach children in the home, she may not be as welcome in the classroom. Twenty-five years ago Bundy (1989) cautioned educators:

Doll play is a very important part of the early childhood curriculum. Early childhood professionals don’t need to be tempted by the costly new mechanical toys on the market. They will be serving their children best if they provide them with several traditional baby dolls. The children will do the rest. (p. 8)

“Traditional baby dolls” continue to be pushed for in many ECE environments for their perceived simplicity in terms of less technology and their evocations of innocence.

Not just any doll will do in many early years settings. Barbie⁵⁶ is the quintessential bad-

⁵⁶ Barbie debuted in 1959 as a beauty doll produced with a female *adult* audience in mind. Ruth Handler modeled her after German doll Bild Lilli (made between 1955 and 1964, when Mattel acquired the rights to Lilli), also produced with an adult (this time *male*) audience in mind. She was a three dimensional version of a German cartoon character many interpret was a prostitute (Tremonti, 2014). A different kind of working doll indeed. A recent controversy with the announcement that Barbie was to appear on the 2014 issue of the annual Sports Illustrated swimsuit edition, erupted

girl doll of early childhood, vilified for her overt sexuality and unrealistic body, challenged for being an unhealthy image/toy for children (especially girls) (Elliott, 2014; MacNaughton, 1996; Toffoletti, 2007; Tremonti, 2014). Like Barbie, Bratz dolls (which in 2002 overtook Mattel's Barbie in sales, source, and since 2008 has been embroiled in a law suit initiated by Mattel, McMahon, 2012), and more recently Monster High dolls (Barbie's sales were down consistently through 2013, due in part to competition by Mattel's own Monster High dolls, Anderson, 2013), are marketed to young girls yet are generally all taboo in ECE as they "go beyond the sanctioned scripts of child's play" (Jones et al., 2012, p. 56). Educators are encouraged to avoid toys like Barbie (princess dolls) and Bratz dolls which, according to the group Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment (2010), "narrowly focus girls into play scripts about shopping, appearance and being sexy" (p. 6). While Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment raise consumerism as one of their concerns (which as I have suggested, is certainly an important thread historically and currently in practices related to dolls and ECE), it is the (supposed) loss of childhood innocence due to the dolls overt sexuality that fuels educators' caution (see also Bezaire, & Cameron, 2009).

Concern over marketing that "tell[s] girls to act older at younger ages" (p. 6) through "sexually provocative role models" (p. 6) is steeped in developmental discourses that portray children to "unthinkingly soak up all the gender [and sexuality] messages implied in the product's design" (MacNaughton, 1996, p. 18). These discourses not only govern appropriate behaviour through conceptualizations of age, gender, and children's lack of agency, but through constructions of young children as asexual, innocent, and in

the familiar debate Barbie fuels about women's objectification, in/appropriate children's toys, female role models, how children take up subjectivity, and the role/impact of marketing and consumerism (Elliott, 2014; Tremonti, 2014).

need of protection (see Blaise 2005, 2010, 2013b; Jones et al., 2012). Drawing on Buckingham (2000), Jones et al. (2012) point out that for many of the educators in their study, the “offending objects ‘violate’ the ‘sacred garden of childhood’” (p. 55)⁵⁷. This notion of innocence underlies the marketing of what many perceived to be “safe”, “asexual” doll choices for young children. Take for example the quote from doll maker Platt that Elton (2013) includes in his recent article about the increased production, marketing and purchasing of Waldorf dolls: “It really is a lost piece of childhood. . . . These dolls don’t propel little girls into adulthood and that’s what’s special” (para 7). Interesting to consider which forms of adulthood we encourage (propel) children to experiment with; mothering children (dolls) is all good as long as it doesn’t get anywhere near sexuality. Where do those babies come from anyway? So particular dolls (those that are not too technological, not too sexual, not too adult-like) take on another teaching job; keeping children safe, innocent, young. As Bernstein (2011) points out, “dolls are crucial props within the performance of childhood because they are contrivances by which adults and children have historically played innocent⁵⁸” (p. 19).

I am sitting at my desk writing, trying to write, about dolls. My deep challenge with the histories and present-day socio-political production stories engulf me, move me, as I click away on my laptop. I have placed myself beside the family desktop computer whose

⁵⁷ Even efforts to use Bratz dolls as props to explore children’s views and understandings of gender and sexuality (rather than simply policing them) “is not easy to work with” (Blaise, 2013b, p. 13). Blaise talks frankly about her experience of purchasing the dolls evoked feelings of anxiety and shame. She explains: “I was negotiating a fine line between wanting to engage children with gender and sexuality on their own terms, while still preserving imagined middle-class respectability. I did not realise it at the time, but I was policing my own social class positioning, as well as the class prejudices of all those who might see the dolls during the research. I did not want anyone to know I was buying these dolls, and I certainly did not want them to be too ‘trashy’” (p. 13).

⁵⁸ See also Taylor and Richardson’s (2005) exploration of home corner and their efforts to associate “queerness rather than innocence with childhood” (p. 171).

screen saver is set up to scatter photos randomly across the monitor. It generally catches my eye when I seek a distraction from writing. I notice that an almost 9 year-old picture has turned up of my son, at about a year and a half, feeding one of his dolls with a toy baby bottle. Like the image of Ruby lovingly looking at the baby doll she has wrapped beside her, this photo punctures my moral outrage about plastics and messages of obligatory maternity and domesticity with feelings of pleasure that my son (and I) took in his dolls. I am reminded again of the delight and fun – dare I say care - that can emerge from engaging with dolls. I shift my eyes from the screen saver and return to my writing but I am different than I was a minute before. As my fingers tap on the keyboard feelings of conflict, tension, and fondness resonate through my body as I type.



Figure 14. My son feeding his baby dolls.

A Knotty Tale of Diversity

I don't actually see (take-in, notice) that the dolls Angus plays with at the water table are differently coloured until we are watching the video later and a colleague asks about the brown and peach coloured dolls. When I was with Angus, I remember being very focused on the dolls being dropped to the ground, lying face down in water, and getting kicked across the floor, but I do not remember wondering about their colour. As we re-watch

and discuss the moment together, the question lingers, their colour has become present. When I continue to revisit documentation from the research, when I research about dolls, the question lingers. The colour of the dolls is not insignificant. “Multicultural” dolls mean something. Caring for coloured dolls.



Figure 15. “Multicultural” dolls floating in the water table.

As previously described, dolls in the early childhood classroom are an assumed material, deeply justified through developmental discourses. Like the shape and style, the colours of the dolls help to delineate which dolls are deemed appropriate for the 21st century DAP environment. Reminders that dolls need to be ethnically diverse (along with other “dramatic play” accessories like food and clothing) are relatively commonplace in current Western ECE teaching (see Beaty, 2014). As Ellis and Hall’s quote that opens this chapter suggests, racialization are no less connected to dolls than gender. Their invoking of the savage/civilized binary in their description of the value of dolls (and thus their study) calls up the deeply tangled history of science, child studies, colonization, and racialization (see Burman, 2008; Cannella & Viruru, 2004). There is great danger in dismissing Ellis and Hall’s comment as simply indicative of Hall’s social evolutionary theory of the time (Goodchild, 2012), unenlightened past errors that now “we” *know*

better, the troubles are over. In fact all of the (partial) histories I share could be dangerously dismissed in that way. Haraway (1991) reminds that, “an adequate feminist theory of gender must simultaneously be a theory of racial difference in specific historical conditions of production and reproduction” (p. 146). With Barad (2011), these histories are always already present today and tomorrow; there is no dividing line between then and now and tomorrow. This tale explores the “diversity” of the dolls in Angus’ classroom to consider several racialization, gender and care entanglements.

Abundance for Some

As the Dolls, Dolls, Dolls story indicated, there is an abundance of baby doll choices available for consumers. A browse for baby dolls in Toys and Games on Amazon Canada’s webpage returned 424 results (<http://www.amazon.ca>): dolls with different shapes, styles, clothing and accessories, price points, and colour. Scrolling through Amazon’s list (as of May, 2014), 68 could be classified as non-white dolls, generally referred to as African-American (the most non-white version available), Asian, and Hispanic. A few Canadian based companies also offer what they categorize as First Nations or Aboriginal baby dolls (Louise Kool & Galt, 2014a; Wintergreen, 2014a; Quality Classrooms, 2013a). Louise Kool & Galt recently added “traditional garments for both girls and boys from five cultural influences: Aboriginal, Islamic, South Asian, Asian and African” (Humber et cetera, 2013, para. 2) to their catalogue. While the number of ethnically diverse dolls available is likely a significantly larger amount of choices than in previous decades (see Eaton’s 1896, 1909, 1934), going through the various websites and catalogues the dominance of the peachy, pink dolls that represent white skin is abundantly clear.

What is also apparent is that the “diverse” dolls are varied colours of the same doll mould used for the original white doll⁵⁹. The white doll is generally not named, not identified as “white” or “Caucasian” because it is the assumed starting point. Notice in the advertisement for the 1909 Eaton’s Beauty doll, a fashion beauty doll that was produced each year and was always the most expensive, described as having “natural flesh colour” (Eaton’s Catalogue, 1909, p. 157). These observations are not new. Major criticisms of current “multi-ethnic” dolls is “the ‘it’s a small world’ representation of diversity” (Humber et cetera, 2013, para. 9) and what Ducille (1997) calls “sameness mass produced in a variety of colours, flavours, fabrics, and other interchangeable options” (p. 340). This sameness is connected to mass production and the costs to manufacture a range of difference (Ducille, 1997, in reference to Black Barbie). Ducille suggests that, “tawny-tinted ethnic reproductions are both signs and symptoms of an easy pluralism that simply melts down and adds on a reconstituted other without transforming the established social order, without changing the mould” (p. 338). In her exploration of some “efforts to commodify alterity” (p. 339), she raises significant questions for caring pedagogies. How does difference look? What signifies race? What are the risks of reifying difference?

Still Working Dolls

Early calls for “dolls of various races” (Bundy, 1989, p. 7) to be included in classrooms were driven by the “recognition of the cultural diversity of our society” (p. 7; see Derman-Sparks & A.B.C. Task Force, 1989), and the same is true today. The importance of ECE programs and services to be culturally inclusive (i.e., in terms of both

⁵⁹ For example, the “Lots to Love” baby doll by Berenguer, which is available as African American, Hispanic, Asian and non-identified white, have the same bodies but the heads are slightly altered around the eyes and mouth.

access and involvement) and culturally safe can be found in many early learning frameworks and guides⁶⁰. The *BC Early Learning Framework* (Government, 2008a) suggests that educators respect, promote and support the diversity of individuals and families in terms of family structure, economic circumstance, gender, age, language, culture, and ethnicity.

The underlying assumptions for having ethnically diverse dolls are: (1) children of colour will identify with, see themselves in, a doll that looks like them; and (2) children will learn acceptance/tolerance for others (see Humber et al., 2013)⁶¹. The first has been especially influenced by the famous experiments by Drs. Clark and Clark in 1935 where they asked African American children a series of questions designed to ascertain their preferences for black or white dolls (Bernstein, 2011). The tests deemed to reveal unequivocally “black children’s damaged self-esteem” (p. 236) and the “negative effects of segregation” (p. 197). The second has been especially influenced by multiculturalism and anti-bias pedagogies (Derman-Sparks & A.B.C. Task Force, 1989; Derman-Sparks, & Edwards, 2010). These assumptions are evident in the marketing of dolls and add social awareness, self-confidence, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others to the list of developmental outcomes that dolls can help children to achieve (for education supply catalogue examples see Louise Kool & Galt, 2014a; Wintergreen, 2014a; for examples from doll companies see Corolle, 2012). Teaching care takes on another level of meaning when considering the diversity of dolls in the home and classroom.

⁶⁰ In the Canadian context see also Government of New Brunswick (2008); in the US context see Gestwicki (2014), NAEYC, 2009.

⁶¹ It is the same kind of logic for why dolls should be available in male and female versions, and with visible special needs/disabilities or have accompanying adaptive equipment accessories (Beaty, 2014).



Figure 16. Mateo dressing baby dolls.

While marketing promotes that just having a variety of dolls – these beacons of diversity - there in the classroom or home will make a difference, educators are taught that they can/should also facilitate “learning” (Beaty, 2014; Derman-Sparks, & Edwards, 2010; Gordon & Browne, 2011). Lane (2008) is clear that “alone [dolls and books] cannot counter racism – talking about issues is likely to be more effective in changing attitudes than having resources reflecting our multicultural societies which no one plays with” (as cited by Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2014, p. 69). Persona dolls are perhaps the epitome of the belief that dolls can be used to teach tolerance and acceptance (see Whitney, 1999), through learning such things as perspective taking (Logue & Kim, 2011). As a tool for communication (Etienne, Verkest, Kerem, & Mecier, (2008), persona dolls are brought in as a “member of the classroom” (Bisson, 2007) to help children “develop respect for each other” (Etienne et al., 2008, p. 10). The dolls are also believed to help strengthen awareness and acceptance in both pre-service and practicing educators (Derman-Sparks,

& Edwards, 2010; Logue & Kim, 2011). Within the Australian based Preschool Equity and Social Diversity (PESD) project, MacNaughton (2005) used four persona dolls (an Indigenous Australian doll, a Vietnamese-Australian doll and two Anglo-Australian dolls) to engage children in conversations about race and racializations. Her Foucaultian analysis does not rest only within the individual children's responses (like, for example internalized racism, which the Clarks' experiments focused on, see Bernstein, 2011) but considers the socio-political and historical entanglement of race in present day ECE practices in Australia (see also MacNaughton, 2003).

The Othering and Individualizing of Race (and Actions)

There are several critiques of multicultural and anti-bias approaches to ECE that are important to note. One is that the portrayal of culture in essentialist and universal terms erases the heterogeneity within and across cultures (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2014). This is illustrated in the four or five styles/colours of baby dolls to represent all "ethnicity". Careful attention is often paid to the "realism" of the dolls within marketing (as was also described with the infant dolls); "super-accurate skin tones that bring dramatic play to life" (Wintergreen, 2014a), and "accurate ethnic features" (Louise Kool & Galt, 2014a). These particular quotes from retail companies are of course connected to battled-for consumer dollars, yet the desiring of more "realistic" looking dolls was (and still is) related to combating racist stereotyping images. For example, late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century efforts to produce black and brown dolls *for* African American children were to create dolls that "approximated the actual appearance of African American children" (Mitchell, 2004, p. 181) and countered the few available options that "were essentially kerchiefed plantation figures and, even worse, 'demon[s] or caricature[s]'" (p.

181; see also Ingham & Feldman, 1994)⁶². I understand efforts to offer representations of diversity that challenge single stories of race, but I am not sure this has actually been achieved and I do not believe the answer is *more* variety of dolls.

As I return to the images of the dolls in the classroom, I notice all of the photographs and video clips that I have contain only brown and white versions of baby dolls. This is interesting to me given that most of the children in our geographical area would be of many different skin tones beyond (instead of) the two that are re-presented here. The lack of an Indigenous doll seems ironic as we live and practice on the traditional Territory of the Coast Salish and Straights Salish People. I know that having an Indigenous baby doll floating in the bubble water alongside the brown and white dolls would do little challenge the legacy and ongoing impacts of colonization and assimilation policies in Canada. I also know that one doll cannot represent the cultural, economic, socio-political and historical multiplicity of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. It might even contribute to a sense of having “moved beyond” this legacy, that all is now harmonious. Yet the fact that that doll is not there speaks very loudly to me. Its invisibility matters.

Still really real (like). The notion that we can represent race and culture in a doll (or food, clothing, photographs, etc.) is problematic and situated within a modality of subjectivity that is based in representationalism, either through identification or resistance (Toffoletti, 2007). One of the problems with this is that it perpetuates a self/Other dichotomy, which Ducille (1997) suggests even the act of theorizing difference can reify. She contends that “the very act of theorizing difference affirms that there is a centre, a standard, or – as in the case of Barbie – a mould” (p. 346). Another problem is that it

⁶² Formanek-Brunell’s (1993) overview suggests that in the US during the early twentieth century, white dolls were mass marketed as having a sense of humour (and smart/clever) while “black dolls were made to seem happy-go-lucky” (p. 102). Marketing like this is evident in the 1934-35 Eaton’s catalogue (Eaton’s, 1934, p. 254).

individualizes race and responsibility, which I think is evident in Ducille's warning. This is also a critique aimed at multicultural and anti-bias approaches in ECE, that they did not go far enough to recognize constitutive power relations at the macro level (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2014). "Differences are dissolved into a depoliticised pluralism that invokes a myth of global harmony" (Giroux, 1994, as cited by Toffoletti, 2007, p. 102). In terms of dolls, Ducille (1997) observes that [Mattel] "make and market ethnicity by ignoring not only the body politics of the real people its dolls are meant to represent, but by ignoring the body politic as well – by eliding the material conditions of the masses it dolls up" (p. 340). "Dolls, as signs of childhood and property of many children, create propinquity between the idea of childhood and the racial project of determining who is a person and who is a thing; thus dolls tuck racial politics beneath a cloak of innocence" (Bernstein, 2011, p. 18). I turn now to a few more doll stories, ones that consider some of these material conditions and further recognize the (non-innocent) entanglements of gender, care, dolls, technology, and diversity. The intention is not take up difference as categorical, mired within "representationalism (with its metaphysics of individualism)" (Barad, 2007, p. 59), but rather to pay attention to the "entangled nature of differences that matter" (p. 381) (see also Nxumalo, 2012).

Differences that Matter

In the *Knotty Tale of Infancy* I highlighted some of the mothers of baby doll invention in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in the US whom Formanek-Brunell (1993) describes in her overview of dolls and the commercialization of American girlhood from 1830-1930. These white, middle and (mostly) upper class women border crossed private (female) and public (male) domains. They often challenged worker

conditions and child labour laws (as aligned with the women's movement at the time) and in their efforts to produce infant dolls and boy dolls, and their own working as designers and manufacturers, challenged the gender social order of the day. This story sits alongside the story Formanek-Brunell tells of immigrant women and children at the turn of the century in New York city hand sewing doll pieces together in their (typically overcrowded) tenement housing in areas closest to the commercial doll industry. These "doll homeworkers", who were paid by the piece and generally had to incur the costs of supplies and machinery, laboured on dolls they could never afford to buy. Their home/working conditions "contrasted sharply with contemporary childrearing ideals, disseminated by home economists and other Progressive Era reformers" (p. 115). The focused attention working class and immigrant populations received by reformers through such services as social work, childcare, and education aimed at "improving" their conditions (the individuals, the families) with the transmission of what ultimately were "middle class values of the home" (p. 88). Formanek-Brunell's story reminds me of the mostly young female worker population in toy factories in Guangdong, China (Bjurling, 2005), many of whom are "guest workers" from the North (p. 5). A temporary work force population comes in to support the production during the busy season (i.e., Christmas toy production). As temporary workers they do not have access to benefits, as temporary residents they do not have access to health care. They too, like the immigrant women in 1910 New York, build dolls that are (mainly) destined for other people's homes.

In 1908, Richard Henry Boyd founded the National Negro Doll Company (NNDC) in an effort to sell and promote beautiful black dolls *for* black children (Bernstein, 2011; Mitchell, 2004). These efforts were situated within a time where

technological advances enabled the mass-production of both dolls and marketing. Commercially produced dolls in the nineteenth and early twentieth century would have been financially accessible mainly to white middle class and upper middle class children (Formanek-Brunell, 1993; Mitchell, 2004). The NNDC did price their “lower-end” dolls less expensively than other commercial dolls, placing “colored dolls within closer reach of aspiring families” (Mitchell, 2004, p. 183). Bernstein describes that the NNDC sold bisque (porcelain) “noncaricatured dolls from Germany” (p. 234) that were fragile and broke easily, unlike dolls of rubber or cloth, and suggests that, “because NNDC dolls shattered when subjected to carelessness, much less abuse, they intervened in nearly a century of violent play scripted through black dolls” (p. 234). Black newspapers (including *The Nashville Globe*, which was run by Boyd) provided an avenue to promote the dolls (Jordon, 2001), not simply for children’s play but as a tool for the progress of black Americans (Bernstein, 2011; Ingham & Feldman, 1994; Mitchell, 2004).

There is more involved than appears on the surface in encouraging little Negro girls to clasp in their arms pretty copies of themselves. The white race doesn’t monopolize all the beauty and loveliness, and it will be a happy day when this is realized. (*The Globe* as cited by Ingham & Feldman, 1994, p. 108)

Marcus Garvey, who founded the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) in 1912 and established the widely distributed newspaper *Negro World*, wrote: “Mothers, give your children dolls that look like them to play with and cuddle [so that] they will learn as they grow older to love and care for their own children and not neglect them” (as cited in Bernstein, 2011, p. 233). New Negro reformers’ use of dolls to represent and attempt to influence families were an enterprise in “race pride” which

Mitchell (2004) describes what was understood to mean efforts that “produced better children, strengthened Afro-American identity, and enabled a positive collective destiny” (Mitchell, 2004, p. 174). This collective destiny was increasingly portrayed through an emphasis on (white middle class values of) self and home to “better the race” (Mitchell, 2004) of which black dolls become used to play out scenarios of families and “instructing girls to perform innocence” (Bernstein, 2011, p. 233).

Troubling questions. Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012b) asks ECE educators and researchers to consider: “How do racial and economic hierarchies and categories from colonial pasts persist in today’s social, political, and material landscapes within the context of childhood? How are neocolonialisms activated in Canadian childhoods?” (p. 305). The observation of the dolls’ colours was raised at our first, organized educator-researcher meeting off the floor. The idea of the colour meaning something was not taken up in that moment. But we never really took it up over the course of our month of direct observation, documentation and dialogue. We talked a lot about gender and care, which of course was the focus of our inquiry, but we didn’t follow-up together on the question of racial/izing dolls in the classroom. How often do we sidestep conversations about race? The legacy of colonization? The ongoing colonizing of land, language, people, ideas? The past/presents(presence) of tangled, often un-harmonious, regularly inequitable settler and Indigenous commonworlds? Where are the places for these questions in ECE? How do we make space for these complicated conversations? Researchers who take up these kinds of troubling questions in ECE in different ways (MacNaughton, 2005; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012b, 2014, forthcoming; Taylor 2008, 2013) suggest that it will take more than simply raising the questions and bandying about critique to generate new

knowledges and transform practices. How will we do more than question in our efforts to (re)story, “to figure out, together, how we want to live as heterogeneous species that are now entangled in colonized common worlds” (Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012b, p. 313)?

Following Trajectories with Dolls

In this chapter, I have told several stories of child-doll encounters from the classroom that each, in varying ways, could be interpreted as moments of pleasure, enjoyment and contentment. While there are many ways to interpret children’s doll play, what I am most interested in is that these seemingly pleasurable, multiple ways of being with dolls exist within the partial, incomplete tales of plasticity, infancy and diversity that I have told. In our obligations to care, whom do we care about in these practices? The children’s enjoyment with the plastic doll that can be soaked and painted and kicked and cuddled with relative ease? The working conditions under which this doll was likely produced? The environmental hazards of this doll’s production, use *and* disposal? Whose (which) bodies come to matter in our practices of care? How do we weigh the care/concern of one over the other? And is one over the other the only option we have? Puig de la Bellacasa (2012) suggests that, “where there is relation there has to be care, but *our cares* also perform disconnection. We cannot possibly care for everything, not everything can count in a world, not everything is relevant in a world” (p. 204). What might caring pedagogies look like, then, in this world of dis/connections?

Drawing on emerging ideas in feminist science studies, caring pedagogies might respond to interconnected ideas of gender and care by *thinking with care* which, as Puig de la Bellacasa (2012) proposes, invites us to consider how “our cuts foster relationship” (p. 204). This *is* about our implication and response-ability but *it is not* about categorical

blame or romanticized visions of seamless relations. We will not be able to care for all, all of the time, but we can pay attention to the mattering of our practices. Barad (in Juelskær & Schwennesen, 2012) explains it as this: “performing the labor of tracing the entanglements, of making connections visible, you’re making our obligations and debts visible, as part of what it might mean to reconfigure relations of spacetime mattering” (p. 20). In other words, Barad’s assertion, like Haraway’s (1994) call for “getting at how worlds are made and unmade” (p. 65), stresses the importance of making visible how (certain) practices come to matter, not simply as a form of critique but “*in order to participate in the processes, in order to foster some forms of life and not others*” (p. 65, italics added). Through mapping our partial connections with the question “to what and whom is a response required?” (Gane & Haraway, 2006, p. 145) we can do the work to reconfigure more liveable common worlds. This is not to suggest that if we work hard enough we will be able to detangle the knots and smooth out the complexity (of, for example of children, dolls, plastic, gender, care). Caring pedagogies require that we stay with the complexities, share in the suffering.

Maybe sharing suffering is about growing up to do the kind of time-consuming, expensive, hard work, as well as play, of staying with all the complexities for all of the actors, even knowing that will never be fully possible, fully calculable. Staying with the complexities does not mean not acting, not doing research, not engaging in some, indeed many unequal instrumental relationships; it does mean learning to live and think in practical opening to shared pain and morality and learning what that living and thinking teach. (Haraway, 2008, p. 83)

The many doll stories I have shared suggest several things, including that dolls are more than (only) developmental tools for future selves. By tracing some of dolls pastpresents(presence) in ECE, developmental psychology, production and marketing, the becoming of caring gendered subjects is made visible as a materialdiscursive entanglement. Through thinking with dolls, children's relations with/in the world as situated within materialdiscursive practices in, near and far from the classroom become evident. We – dolls, children, educators, researchers – “become who we are *in the dance of relating*” (Haraway, 2008, p. 25); becomings that are not preformed, predestined, or transcendent of the ethics and politics of being of the world. Chapter 6 will consider further the ethics and politics of paying attention to materialsemiotic becomings. But first, the following chapter continues the think-with strategy that I have employed here with the dolls. I consider moments in the classroom that emerged between several of the children and toy cars and trucks and how, like the dolls they may tell us something about our gendering, caring pedagogies.

Chapter 5: Tangled Tales of Car(e)s

In an important sense, in a breathtakingly intimate sense, touching, sensing, is what matter does, or rather, what matter is: matter is condensations of responsibility. Touching is a matter of response. Each of “us” is constituted in responsibility. Each of “us” is constituted as responsible for the other, as the other.

(Barad, 2012, p. 215)

“Love at first sight: from the moment they are seen, cars stimulate complex and unique emotions in drivers” (Benson, MacRury & Marsh, 2007, p. 3).

Introduction

I sit on the floor of the small classroom where the educators have made available for the children wood blocks, a wood house, a light table, and scarves. I watch as Wayne builds a long track/road with tunnels out of the wood blocks for his cars and trucks. He works for a long time. Throughout his build he talks to the other educator in the room about what his trucks and cars need for a road. I am struck by how carefully Wayne works. How meticulously he creates this space for the cars and trucks that he has gathered about him. For several minutes he works with a chunky yellow jeep-type car in particular: inspecting its tires, touching its body, sending it rolling only to chase after it and then send it rolling again. Eventually other children come into the space, including Zach who has wandered in with “matchbox-like” cars clasped in each hand. I remember that I have seen Zach this past week carrying cars with him regularly. Almost always it seems. The cars are grasped securely in his hands. Zach asks Diana (the educator in the room), “Where are my cars?” She responds that she does not know which cars are his. I wonder about the cars. My eyes move between Zach and Wayne, the cars and the block

tracks and tunnels. My training tells me that toddlers are possessive, that Zach is holding tightly to the cars because he does not want to, cannot, share them with others without some kind of adult intervention or support. But I begin to wonder if something else is going on. Are the cars being cared for, loved, in ways that I have not imagined before? What do the cars do, evoke? What kinds of caring had I missed in my work as an educator with children?

My curiosities about gender and care in early childhood practices continue in this chapter through thinking with cars. Like the dolls in Chapter 4, I play with the cars and trucks that Zach plays with in the classroom to consider their “situated histories, situated naturecultures” and the “sometimes-joined, sometimes-separate heritages” of children and toy vehicles “both before and lateral to” the classroom encounters (Haraway, 2008, p. 25). As previously described my utilization of the doll as a figure to think with is a Haraway inspired effort, that I employ again through this chapter with cars in my work “to make explicit and inescapable the tropic quality of all material-semiotic processes” (Haraway, 1997, p. 11). I continue my efforts to follow histories and trajectories, turning to the cars that live in Zach’s classroom to ask: (1) How might cars deepen our understandings of children’s relations with the world? (2) How might emerging ideas in feminist science studies assist early childhood education to respond to interconnected ideas of gender and care that emerge through thinking with cars? I tell several mundane, *non-innocent* car stories in this chapter, in, near and far from Zach’s classroom, to be diffractively read through each other. As with the doll stories, the aim of these layered stories – narratives, photographs, histories – is to act at the level of interference. They are offered to the reader not as “data facts” to be digested, but as provocations to add layers

of meaning, challenge assumptions, and raise questions of implication and *responsibility* (Haraway, 2012).

I begin by briefly describing the presence of toy vehicles in early childhood spaces followed by an exploration of how/where/when the toy vehicle was developed. I then describe some of the gendered discourses and practices connected to cars before exploring the complexity of cars through three tangled tales: technologies, recalls, and touches. Through these three tales I continue my attending to some difficulties and contradictions related to entanglements of gender, care, childhood, racialization, socio-economics, consumerism, production, marketing, and bodies. I conclude the chapter with more wonderings about practice as a complicated, socio-historical, political, and ethical endeavour where actions and decisions are made every day that must be about children's wellbeing *and* beyond. The choosing with care continues.

Cars in Care

Cars, like the dolls in chapter 4, are expected/assumed playthings in early childhood spaces (institutions, playgrounds, homes). In ECE guides toy vehicles (e.g., die cast, plastic, wooden, varied sizes) can appear in lists of materials to have and within curriculum and pedagogy descriptions (e.g., Beaty, 2014; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Gestwicki, 2014; Government of British Columbia, n.d.a, n.d.b.; Government of Manitoba, n.d.; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013). Often “car play” is described as a dramatic play activity where children (and educators or parents) play in/with large vehicles that they have created out of boxes (Beaty, 2014), chairs (Taylor & Richards, 2005), or even a bed (BabyCenter Canada, 2014). Beneke's (1998) *Reflections of a Preschool Car Project* is an example of “the car” becoming an avenue for a large project exploration with young

children. Transportation themes have been commonplace in early childhood classrooms (e.g., Beaty, 2014; Gestwicki, 2014; Mindes, 2005). During this research project, the car-child engagements that were documented and analyzed took place indoors, with small hand-sized vehicles.

These kinds of toy vehicles are typically advertised in the pretend toys/materials sections, such as Canadian ECE suppliers Wintergreen (2014b), Louise Kool & Galt (2014b), and Quality Classrooms (2013b). The ECE catalogues offer several varieties of cars and trucks, soft and washable, wood, and plastic, though not nearly so many in comparison to the number of doll varieties they offer. Commercial sellers like Toys R Us Canada and Amazon Canada offer even more choices of small cars and trucks for young children than the ECE catalogues. A search for “cars” on Amazon Canada’s website (as of May 2014) returned 1,127 options listed under “die-cast vehicles”, 1,111 results under “learning and education”, and 579 for “baby and toddler toys” (www.amazon.ca). A similar search on Toys R Us Canada’s website found 46 vehicles listed in the birth – 12 months age category, 66 for 12-24 months, 58 for age 2 years, 208 for age 3 & 4 years, 269 for 5-7 years, and 121 for 8-11 (Toys R Us Canada, n.d.b.). Like toy baby dolls, vehicles and their paraphernalia are offered in abundance. Figures 18 and 19 below offer a glimpse at some of the many, many small cars and trucks that live in Wayne and Zach’s classroom.



Figure 17. Mateo, Zach and Tiffany playing with cars and trucks.

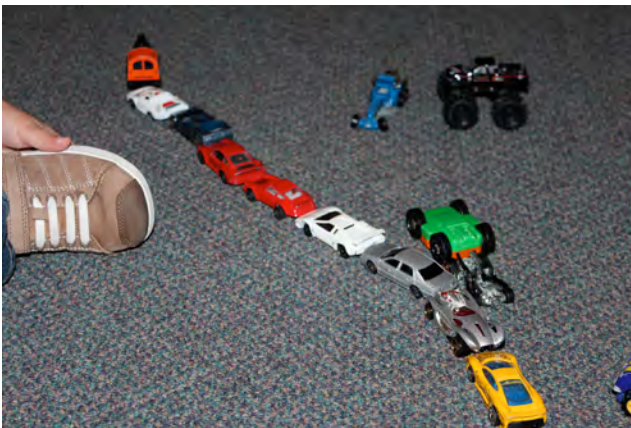


Figure 18. Cars lined up.

Where Do Toy Cars Come From?

Of course the evolution of toy cars is very different than that of dolls, as automobiles such as we know them today were not an invention until the late 19th century⁶³. The relationship between dolls and young children's play (development) have a much longer (reported) history than toy cars, though wheeled toys and wagons can be

⁶³ Examples of early forms of "automobiles" (motorized vehicles) are included in *Story of the Automobile* (1905) including that of Sir Isaac Newton in 1680 (which he referred to as really no more than "a toy" (p. 5), the "Nuremberg" car by Johann Hautsch in 1649, and Joseph Cugnot's French war automobile of 1769. Several other experiments (German, British, French, Italian, and American) with steam engine motor vehicles through the late 18th and early 19th century are documented, including the beginnings of steam engines for what would become railroads, as well as early inventions of electric vehicles (cars, trams, bicycles, tricycles), compressed air engines that were eventually fueled by gas. These experiments are part of the broader picture of technological advances of the Industrial Revolution. See also Volti (2004).

considered their early predecessor (Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013)⁶⁴. When Ellis and Hall conducted their doll study in 1896, gas, electric and steam powered vehicles were experimentations but not commonplace modes of transportation. While by the turn of the twentieth century in Europe and America automobile clubs had been formed and automobile races were running (*Story of the Automobile*, 1905), mass production of automobiles for larger public consumption and use in North America did not largely begin until 1909 (e.g., the Model T Ford). Ford's assembly line mass production design⁶⁵ made the Model T increasingly affordable for (particular) Canadian families by 1914 (Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2014; Volti, 2004). Public demand for cars increased (and thus the automobile industry, which by the 1920s saw Canada as the world's second largest producer of cars after the US) and by 1929 there were over one million cars in Canada. A large number for a small country population, but again, not something everyone could afford.

In 1930 the average cost for a new car was \$600. The average annual salary for 1930 was \$1,000.00, meaning that a new car would have cost more than half of a person's annual income. A new tire, priced at \$3.69, would have also cost more than a person's average daily income, which was \$2.50 a day. (Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2014)

The Great Depression slowed both the production of and fascination with automobiles, as many Canadians could no longer afford to buy or run them. But post

⁶⁴ Interestingly, a recent find of what is said to be a 7500-year-old stone 'car' discovered in the southeastern province of Mardin, Turkey, challenges the simplicity of dolls are older than cars (Philosopher's stone, 2012)!

⁶⁵ While contemporaries of large scale production in the US included cars produced by Olds and Locomobile, they were not to the same scale of mass production that Ford Motor Company would employ (Volti, 2004).

World War II optimism and economic growth “usher[ed] in the car culture of the post-1950s” (Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2014; see also Volti, 2004), a time that saw the Trans-Canada highway begin construction, the migration of city dwellers to suburban communities, and our increased reliance on cars. Today (statistics for 2009), there are over 23 million “licensed drivers” in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013). The evolution of toy cars (vehicles) is imbricated in the technology, production and marketing of the automobile in the twentieth century.

Wheeled toys have been modeled on vehicles of the time from very early on; first wagons, then trains, and then trucks and cars (Fraser, 1966; Holmes, 2012; Jaffé, 2006). Early versions were made of wood, followed by tin (tin plate) in the 1800s until it went out favour by about the 1840s. Tin plate toy vehicles were cheaper to produce than wood, as they were stamped out in tin plate. Germany was the lead toy manufacturer at this time, often using clockwork technology in the toy vehicle designs (toys were often made as a sideline business of watchmaking), originally designed as an amusement for adults. By the mid-19th century cast iron began to shift the use of tin in toys, until the use of sheet steel in the early 20th century. By the 1950s plastics began to dominate in toy production, including toy cars and trucks (DriveSteady, 2011; Hampshire County Council, n.d.; Jaffé, 2006). Each material change altered the production and replication abilities of manufacturers. Toy cars and trucks could be moulded with increased ease and accuracy as materials moved from wood, to tin, to iron, to steel, and finally to plastic. Each successive material was also cheaper and so, combined with the increased ease of mass production, cars and trucks (toys in general, see Thrift, 2003) became increasingly

accessible to more consumers as the twentieth century evolved, just like the real cars and trucks these replicas were modeled on.

It does not seem to have taken long for toy versions of new types of transportation vehicles to quickly follow in development. Early examples of toy trains and locomotive engines parallel the emergence of the railway; generally with examples beginning in the 1860s and toy companies begin to produce in the 1880s and 1890s (see Model Railroad Industry Association, 2008). Recently, an early wood train engine said to be made in the 1820s or 1830s has been found in a English cottage that backed on to the original Stockton to Darlington railway, which opened in 1825 (Howlett, 2011), was the “first railroad to carry both goods and passengers on regular schedules using locomotives” (Bellis, n.d., para. 6). The German company Bing began toy production in 1880 and by 1910 was the largest toy factory in the world. A leader in production innovation, Bing made many kinds of toy trains and was early to recognize the appeal of the new automobile technology for toy production. Jaffé (2006) cites the following from a 1906 Bing Catalogue:

The future of the traffic in the street and on the road undoubtedly lies with the Motor Car. We cannot, therefore be surprised that the young are eager to get acquainted with this new and interesting form of conveyance. Fully appreciating this fact we have introduced several entirely new series of Motor Car . . . we have followed up, as nearly as possible, the most acknowledged typed of modern Motors. (p. 52)

Bing would be joined by many other toy companies in the production of toy vehicles through the twentieth century as a glimpse through Eaton’s catalogues shows (Eaton’s,

1909, 1920, 1934, 1948, 1956). In the 1909-1910 Winter catalogue some trains, horse drawn wagons, and a “Bad Boy Auto” (Eaton’s, 1909, p. 160) are advertised but by the Christmas Book 1956 there is an abundance of toys advertised including many varieties of toy vehicles (Eaton’s, 1956). Through this time as a result of World War I and II, toy manufacturing significantly shifted from Germany dominance to the US and Britain (Jaffé, 2006).

The Meccano company, founded by Frank Hornby in 1901 to sell the “system of parts, nuts and bolts” that he had originally designed for his two sons, “allowing them to build cranes like the ones that fascinated them so much loading and unloading ships at the Port of Liverpool” (Meccano, 2013, para. 1). Considered the first (British) company to begin producing die-cast cars (Jaffé (2006) reports in 1931, Force, (2002) reports in 1933), by 1934 they were manufacturing these under the name Dinky Toys. At first they were designed as model miniatures to accompany their vastly successful model train sets (Battersby, 2013; Jaffé, 2006). In 1948 Lesley Smith and John Odell set up the Lesney company in east London to make small metal cars and in 1953 launched their (what would become) hugely successful Matchbox cars. “They had the idea to make replica cars small enough to fit into matchboxes, which would fit into a child’s pocket” (Jaffé, 2006, p. 57). As the automobile industry expanded along with the car culture of the 1950s and 1960s, “thousands of Matchbox die-cast cars were made each week following the increase in new life-size cars for the adult market” (p. 57). Shortly after Matchbox cars were launched, in 1956 the British company Mettoy started a line of die-cast vehicle replicas under the brand name Corgi (see Corgi, 2014; Dinkysite, n.d.). According to Knapman (2013), Lesney (the makers of Matchbox cars) would

become the fourth largest toy company in Europe by the 1960s, producing more than 250,000 models a week. The main American competitor to the British die-cast car and truck miniatures did not arrive until 1968 when Mattel introduced Hot Wheels (the boy toy to counterpart to their Barbie dolls and paraphernalia for girls). Ironically, Matchbox ownership is now under Mattel, who continue to produce miniature cars under the names Matchbox and Hot Wheels. These small car and truck replicas - Matchbox, Hot Wheels, Corgi, and Dinky Toys - are the predecessors to the ones that Zach, Wayne, Mateo and Ruby play with in this study.



Figure 19. Mateo holding several cars and trucks.

Gendering Cars

Toy cars and trucks are as gendered as they are expected in early childhood spaces, just like the dolls in Chapter 4. Trucks and cars are typically the prop that compliments dolls in researchers' exploration of gender-typing (previously called sex role stereotype) in young children (e.g., Banerjee & Lintern, 2000; Blackmore, 2003; Golombok, Rust, Zervoulis, Croudace, Goulding & Hines, 2008; Kuhn, Nash & Brucken, 1978; Theimer, Killen & Stangor, 2001). Cars/trucks (and dolls) also emerge as "stereotypical" gendered toys in research about parental perception of children's gender

typicality and atypicality (Kane, 2006; Ozkaleli, 2011). Many studies focus on the toys themselves trying to ascertain when and how (rarely if) toy vehicles and dolls are gendered (e.g., Alexander & Hines, 2002; Alexander, Wilcox & Woods, 2009; Cherney, 2003; Eisenberg, Murray & Hite, 1982; Escudero, Robbins & Johnson, 2013; Hassett & Siebert, 2008; Martin, Eisenbud, & Rose, 1995; Miller, 1987). Apparently proven gendered toy preferences are not lost on toy marketers. Both current and previous, general and ECE marketing of toy vehicles are overtly aimed at boys (see www.amazon.ca; Eaton's, 1909, 1920, 1934, 1948, 1956; Fisher Price, 2014; Louise Kool & Galt, 2014b; Quality Classrooms, 2013b; www.toysrus.ca; Wintergreen, 2013b). Boys are almost always, exclusively the ones photographed with the toy trains, trucks and cars, which are often advertised in sections labelled specifically as boys' toys. And this marketing avenue, "boys toys", has been pulled right into marketing aimed at adult male consumers where cars, trucks, motorcycles and other types of vehicles like ATVs, RVs, and trailers (both toy versions and grown-up 'real' versions) are prominently featured (see for example www.bigboystoys.ca; www.bigboystoysandhibbies.com; www.bigboystoysmuskegon.com; www.toysforbigboys.ca).

Innate versus learned. When Escudero et al.'s (2013) research that measured social versus non-social object preference (toy cars and Barbie/Ken-like dolls were some of the objects used) in infants and adults was reported, it was picked up in several online reports (e.g., Borreli, 2013; Khoo, 2013; Zolfagharifard, 2013). Zolfagharifard titled the story: "Forget toy trucks and cars! Young boys prefer playing with DOLLS, claims study." Borreli (2013) provided the following advise to parents:

Parents may want to reconsider getting their sons mechanical toys such as cars for gifts on holidays and birthdays. The theory that infant boys have an innate preference for macho toys has been challenged with a state-of-the-art eye-tracking technology used by Australian researchers. (para. 1)

Escudero et al.'s (2013) research is said to challenge previous research assertions of male "innate preference for macho toys", such as Connor and Serbin (1977) and Liss (1981) (both cited in Escudero et al., 2013), and more recently by Alexander and Hines (2002) and Hassett and Siebert (2008). Both of these more recent studies used animals (vervet monkeys and rhesus monkeys respectively) rather than human participants to try and "confirm" innateness. Hassett and Siebert's research also attracted media attention (see Callaway, 2008).



Figure 20. Tiffany with the cars.

Big stakes are at play in this game of gender toy preference. Preferences are linked to traits (active, technological, nonsocial for boys, versus relational, nurturing, social for girls), which are in turn linked to behaviour (rough and tumble for boys versus quiet and caring for girls). Child behaviour is further linked to adult behaviour. The use of developmental psychology research with infants and young children to pinpoint and

understand adult behaviour is foundational to the field (Burman, 2008). As described in Chapter 2, resistances to universal claims of gender-associated behaviours (and governance) have come from many sources (e.g., in regards to mothering, fathering, male educators, etc.) but dominant science studies (e.g., Gettler, McDade, Feranil, & Kuzawa, 2011; Mascaro, Hackett & Rilling, 2013; Mossap, 2010) continue to fuel the nature/nurture fires of care (i.e., who can care, and what care is defined as). When I look at BoysToys.com and see the essentialized (white, middle class) adult male defined through (heterosexual) sexcapades, sports, and fast cars, I understand the *drive* to dispel the story of male propensity for all things action oriented and nail down a different tale of innate nurturance. Interestingly, The University of Western Sydney's (2013) press release for Escudero et al.'s study (where their lab is located and the study was conducted) chose to title it "Research finds baby boys *love* dolls more than trucks" (italics added). For me, the use of the word love in the press release (which the researchers never use themselves) takes the research "findings" from preference for, to care and nurturance of. Perhaps Escudero and colleagues were more in tune to the affective of cars than I was before I carefully watched Wayne and Zach. Or perhaps "love" just makes a better eye-catching headline.

A post-response. Of course all of these research studies - their methodology, methods, analysis and take up – are situated historically, culturally, and politically. Science studies theorists have clearly argued that "science" does not exist outside of meaning-making or societal, institutional, economic, and political practices (see Barad, 2007; Haraway, 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997; Latour, 1993; Law, 2004). As Barad (2007) notes, epistemologies, ontologies and ethics are always already intra-related. Not only is

meaning ascribed to participant responses, for example, to the length of the infant or adult gaze and to the fluttering eye movement, but also particular, sometimes contradictory, understandings of caregiving, nurturance and gender are invariably connected within all of these studies. Technologies produce, and are produced for, theorizing and meaning-making (Law, 2004). From a material feminism and post-qualitative perspective, one of the problems of these (social) cognitive and biological avenues of research (i.e., toy preference, children's gender-typing, fathers' varying investment in caregiving) is their lack of *situatedness* and the presentation, particularly in popular media, of research findings as facts, Truth. For example: "Boys love dolls more than trucks" (University of Western Sydney, 2013), "Girls like dolls and boys like trucks" (Wolchover, 2012), "Fathers wired to provide offspring care" (Anyaso, 2011).

Another is that they are presented as single simplified stories (of biology, hormones, cognition, modeling) to support particular agendas/interests (e.g., boys should be caring, fathers should be more involved, oh just let girls be girls and boys be boys), even when the researchers themselves attempt to discuss their findings as evidence of the *complexity* of the relationship between biology, behaviour, and environments (e.g., Escudero et al., 2013; Gettler et al., 2011). Yet a third problem, again from a material feminist and post-qualitative perspective, is that while this complexity is sometimes acknowledged, these components are understood as separate, albeit interacting. This separation fuels the (re)search "to determine *if* it's nature *or* nurture that triggers little boys' interest in toy cars and trucks and other stereotypically male-associated toys" (Escudero as cited in Zolfagharifard, 2013, para. 16, italics added). Separate but influential keeps us mired in this dichotomous nitpicking of it is learned or is it biological

which in turn becomes universalizing claims for ALL women/girls and ALL men/boys and sets practices (e.g., parenting, ECE, childhood). These become normalized images/practices wherein non-conformance becomes marked as “deficient, wrong, or abnormal” (Cannella, 1997, p. 60). These also keep the world as “out there”, and maintain the focus on human individual processes (e.g., cognitive, hormonal, motor) and human *interaction* (e.g., social processes), and thereby on human individual solutions. As suggested in previous chapters, a materialsemiotic analysis that traces the pastpresents(presence) is needed to unstick our simplified conversations of gender and care. If we think with Haraway and Barad, that “we” (e.g., children, educators, cars, dolls) do not precede our relatings, than whether and why a baby boy picks up a car or a doll needs a more complicated conversation than is this action learned or innate. And perhaps our decision to have cars or dolls or both is more than a matter of children’s biology and socialization.



Figure 21. Angus placing car on face, Mateo holding baby doll.

Tangled Technologies of Car(e)s

Ruby is lying down in the window seat with a small brown baby doll wrapped tightly in a pink blanket beside the basket she has been carrying her in. They have been “sleeping.”

“I want to see, I want to see.” Ruby has asked Veronica to see the camera. She and Hailey are now beside Veronica watching though the camera display as Veronica video records Zach with small cars on the roof of the wooden dollhouse. “Zach can tell us about his baby cars.” “My Baby? My Baby?” asks Ruby. “Right now we are looking at Zach’s baby cars.” Zach is circling the dollhouse, tapping and rolling the cars on the roof. “Maybe Zach can show us his baby cars.” “They turn around”, replies Zach. Mateo walks into the classroom and joins Zach at the dollhouse walking around, eventually getting some cars to play with on the dollhouse roof. Hailey walks away from the camera and leaves the room with her blanket wrapped baby doll and basket as Ruby and Veronica watch through the display. “We’re seeing Mateo and Zach playing with their cars. It’s like they have baby cars. They’re baby cars.” “I want to play with baby cars,” says Ruby. The camera stops filming. The next moment filmed Ruby has joined Zach and Mateo with baby cars. They are all walking circles around the dollhouse running small cars over its roof. Ruby has the brown, blanketed baby doll tucked under her arm as she rolls her baby cars.



Figure 22. Playing with baby cars.

This first tangled tale takes “technologies” as its starting point for thinking with cars to help consider the materialdiscursive becomings of gender and care in early

childhood practices. For Rose (1998) (working with/in Foucaultian theory) technology “refers to any assembly structured by a practical rationality governed by a more or less conscious goal” (p. 26). As Hekman (2010) explains, the practices Foucault categorizes in his various explorations of technologies of power are “very material and very specific” (p. 55). With my Harawayian and Baradian reading, technologies are materialsemiotic conditions of both restraint and possibility. I conceptualize technologies as both *produced by and producing* meaning-making and material realities. Cars are a gendered technology that intermingles with multiple other technologies of power,⁶⁶ such as psychology, capitalism, individualism, and education. In this tale, I pull out some threads from the previous stories and think with some car(e) technologies to further complicate the conversation of how children, educators and things might be implicated in gendered caring practices.

Psychologizing Toy Cars

It is possible to think about toy vehicles, these replicas of real cars, trains, trucks, etc., and connect them to early childhood through progressive education and the ideal that curriculum should reflect children’s present lives (Dewey, 1897). As described in Chapter 4 with the dolls, Dewey (1910, 2008/1933) early on pointed to “trains” (along with dolls, blocks and other toys) in children’s play/work and intellectual development. From a constructivist perspective, toy vehicles (like baby dolls) can be viewed as a material that represents real world objects that the children can then actively explore and manipulate. From a psychodynamic perspective, these toys (again both vehicles and dolls) can be considered to support and encourage self-expression (MacNaughton, 2003).

⁶⁶ See Gordon (1980) for an edited volume of selected interviews and writings of Foucault’s from 1972-1977, and Popkewitz and Brennan’s (1998) edited collection of influences Foucault’s analyses of power have had in/on the field of education.

But developmental justification for having vehicles in early childhood spaces is not nearly as overt as it is dolls, as described in Chapter 4. In fact, current justification for toy vehicles is often not present at all. Toy vehicles are not a named material in many of the ECE curriculum textbooks, guides, frameworks or articles that I looked at, though dolls in some fashion are always mentioned (e.g., Bezaire, & Cameron, 2009; Government of British Columbia, 2009; MacNaughton, 2003).

There is no G. Stanley Hall study of cars like there is of the significance of dolls (Ellis & Hall, 1896; Hall & Ellis, 1897), or sand-piles (Hall, 1897) to children's development. But of course, as already mentioned, at that time the motorized vehicle in either real or toy form had not yet burgeoned, though the railway had already transformed transportation across the expansive US (*Story of the Automobile*, 1905) and Canada (Historica Canada, 2014). By the 1930s though, when Blatz, Millichamp and Fletcher (1935) wrote *Nursery Education, Theory and Practice*, where they detailed the value of baby dolls for young children (as described in Chapter 4), automobiles had grown in prevalence (Canada Science and Technology Museum, 2014), as had trollies, buses (Historica Canada, 2013), and toy vehicles (see Eaton's 1935). Writing to Canadian mothers in a resource booklet produced by The Canadian Welfare Council, Mitchell (1942/1934) highlights trains (wooden, durable and simple) as some of the "essential" materials for preschool aged children but does not mention other toy vehicles. Blatz et al. included both toy trucks and trains as "runabout toys" (p. 183) for children aged two to three and a half years. They advised that runabout toys "should be wood or strong metal", with no engines so that children could self-power them. This was important for in Blatz et al.'s perspective "their chief use" is for indoor active play (though a less strenuous

physical activity than what was reserved for outside play) despite Dewey's (1910, 2008/1933) perspective. Perhaps most intriguing to me though, particularly given my own developmental logics for understanding car-child play as alluded to in the chapter's opening narration, is that *unlike* the dolls, toy vehicles *do not* hold much importance for Blatz et al. In their opinion,

These toys have very little value from a developmental point of view except when they are used as accessories to imaginative or constructive game. It is therefore advisable to have only two or three of them available so the child will, out of necessity, seek out other play material. (p. 183)

Play nicely together. Active play and as an “accessory” to other, more developmentally valuable engagements, is still the dominant *raison d'être* for cars in a classroom. Besides large ride-on vehicles that are for use outdoors or in a gymnasium to support gross motor development and physical health/wellness, toy vehicles are typically paired with houses and dolls/people figures or blocks (Beatty, 2014; Gestwicki, 2014; Gordon & Browne, 2012; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2013). This is also apparent in Canadian ECE suppliers, where many toy cars and trucks are sold as sets with miniature figures and homes or blocks for house/city building (Louise Kool & Galt, 2014b; Quality Classrooms, 2013b; Wintergreen, 2014b). Chapter 4 describes some of the developmental logics that underpin doll play, in which toy cars become an accessory to, and blocks are perhaps the most iconic material of early childhood education. From the wooden gifts of Froebel, to Patty Hill's “free period” wood blocks, to Caroline Pratt's “unit blocks”, by the 1930s in North America, blocks were a mainstay in early years classrooms (see Hausser, 2002; Meyer et al., 1879; Pratt, 2008/1948; Prochner, 2011). The following

commentary on block play, a response to an excerpt from Caroline Pratt's biography, is suggestive of how blocks are valued in education.

Blocks have endured because they represent what is most basic in learning. They are the tools children use to make sense of their world. It is playthings such as blocks, which are really tools, which open up the world to children. If you are skeptical, watch and listen as I did over fifty years ago. You will hear the most amazing conversations in the block corner. (Miletta, 2008, p. 81).

The pairing of the vehicles *with* the blocks invites imaginative, constructive, amazing things, not necessarily the cars and trucks themselves. (I suppose I should tell that to Zach, Wayne, Ruby, Mateo and the other children in this study!)

To market to market. Even the marketing of toy cars and trucks is not nearly as developmentally located as the dolls described in Chapter 4. ECE catalogues highlight that soft and washable vehicles help develop fine motor skills in “tots” (Wintergreen, 2014b) and purposefully plain vehicles help foster creativity and imagination (Wintergreen, 2014b; Louise Kool & Galt, 2014b). On the larger general shopping websites (i.e., Amazon, Toys R Us Canada) the influence of developmentalism is mainly seen in the categorization by age (as previously described for vehicles advertised in Toys R Us) and the sometimes label of “educational toys” (see Toys R Us Canada, n.d.b.). Toy companies like Fisher Price and Plan Toys (a popular choice in classrooms for wood doll houses, people, and small vehicles because of their natural sustainable material (bamboo) and simple designs) are often more direct about the developmental (educational) value of their toys. Consumers can browse their websites according to which particular developmental skill/process consumers are looking to support/enhance (buy toys for) (see

Fisher Price, 2014; Plan Toys, 2014). But these developmental nods may say more about the shift in general to market toys as educational, than the cars themselves. The New York Times reported that the worldwide market for “edutainment” toys reached \$1.7 billion in 2005 and was projected to reach \$5.5 billion by 2010; apparently the by-product of affluent and educated moms “who consider education a No. 1 priority for their children” (Reyene Rice of the Toy Industry Association in New York, as cited in Wall, 2006, para. 4). Little wonder that cars and trucks now have some links to “educational” value. But like the long history of dolls being marketed (to girls) in terms of developing nurturance and care, the enduring element of toy vehicle marketing remains *action* oriented. Vehicles are usually described in terms of their durability (e.g., rough and tough, heavy duty construction), with images of boys physically, actively engaging with the cars or trucks.



Figure 23. Zach laying on the floor with the cars.

Justifying cars. Yet, it isn't that cars cannot be psychologized, as a Google search for “car psychology” illuminates: what your car says about you, what the colour of your car says about you, you're only as good looking as the car you drive, principles of driving, the psychology of road rage, psychology of car dependence, the psychology of

selling cars, car racing psychology. A search specifically for “toy car psychology” though and it is *gender toy preference* research and their media commentaries that come up. As the previous section explored, the psychologizing of the toy car/truck takes up questions of gender, but what I am suggesting here is that it does not singly try to isolate its “developmental value”. (Though Cherney (2003) seems to have brought the gender and learning value together with her research with toddlers and finding that “play complexity” was only related to playing with “female stereotyped toys”.)

As early childhood education is so deeply mired in developmentalism (Canella, 1997; Dahlberg et al., 2007; MacNaughton, 2005; Pence & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2008) how did the car become such an assumed toy in the classroom *without* the same kind of psychological attention to *how the material matters to children’s development* as is paid to blocks or dolls? Landström (2006), writing about representations of cars and humans in motoring magazines and discussing what she calls a “gendered economy of pleasure”, puts forward that “loved artefacts become successfully integrated in the life of societies” (p. 36). Have (toy) cars integrated into the classroom despite their apparent lack of educational value because they are culturally loved artefacts? Is this a matter of home-life invading the early years’ institution? Knapman (2013) tells the story of how the concept of Matchbox cars (which were produced by the east London company Lesney, with owner operators Lesney and Odell, as described in a previous section) was inspired by a rule at Odell’s daughter’s school that students were only allowed to bring toys that were small enough to fit inside a matchbox. Odell created a “scaled-down version of an existing Lesney toy, the model road roller, packaging it in a matchbox and sending it with his daughter to school. It was an instant hit” (para. 4).

As a result of this invasion, have we scrambled within our developmentally based curriculum and pedagogy texts, guides, and practices to find a way to justify (manage) their presence and use? Boys like cars, so let's make them counters for math (Beaty, 2014; Louise Kool & Galt, 2014c; Wintergreen, 2014b). Since toddlers want to play with cars, we can emphasize their value for fine motor development (Wintergreen, 2014b). The "mechanical nature" of cars might be a way to bring boys to sustained project work, where activities at the art table will support their fine motor development, creativity, and verbal and written expression (Beneke, 1998; see also Gestwicki, 2014). Since real cars and trucks are everywhere, and the children seem so interested, let's make it a themed unit or project to learn about jobs, social responsibility, our community, etc. and highlight their usefulness to children's socio-emotional development (e.g., Gestwicki & Bertrand, 2012; Gestwicki, 2014; Gordon & Browne, 2012; Government of British Columbia, n.d.a, n.d.b.; Government of Manitoba, n.d.).

Private-Public Cultural Phenomena

Maybe the lack of explicitness of toy vehicle *value* in early childhood curricula and theory is connected to its gendered associations. The profession is predominantly female run, the cars predominately considered a male toy. Do female educators not "get" cars? (See the section Tangled Recalls of Car(e)s that follows this tale for more about this.) Yet with this simplified gender logic I would have to assume that male psychologist William Blatz should have loved the cars and considered them more seriously for their (potential) value. Is it cars' association with active movement and high energy that becomes troublesome for early childhood classrooms (while dolls (supposedly) invite much quieter, gentler (girl) play)? Is it cars' overt association with technology, in and of

itself, that has seemingly lessened its development value? As described in Chapter 4 with the dolls, mechanical and technological toys are more frowned upon in early learning environments.

It is not difficult to make the connection between cars as a gendered toy for boys and cars as a gendered technology for men. From its inception, the automobile was claimed as a territory for men; a technology associated with freedom, autonomy and progress (for US accounts see Berger, 2001; Franz, 2005; Scharff, 1991; Volti, 2004). The automobile was a vehicle to mobility (both geographic and economic), the access⁶⁷ of which was a classed, gendered (see Scharff) and racialized (see Franz, 2004; Sugrue, n.d.) project (see also Berger, 2001; Franz, 2005). Yet Scharff's work suggests that the cultural construction of cars as a masculine technology acts as an erasure of women's roles in said technology (e.g., as drivers, consumers, inventors, mechanics, producers, marketers), a technology so central to our (current) society (see also Franz, 2005). Thinking with Scharff, Landström (2006) suggests that this ongoing cultural construction is actually a "cultural phenomena in conflict with everyday experience" (p. 31). As Scharff points out, adult women can love their cars too, a notion also (purposefully) reflected in a recent BMW commissioned research report (Benson et al., 2007, p. 3). Perhaps "academic interest" in toy cars needs to take seriously this consideration. Are toy cars as a gendered script also a "cultural phenomena in conflict with everyday experience"? Are our developmental eyes blind to see the complexity of learning-playing in front of us that we erase the multiplicity of children's (car/e) experiences? What

⁶⁷ In some ways access was feared and regulated through class, gender and race (e.g., who could buy a car, get a license, motor in particular places), but the vehicle also (eventually) opened up avenues of access previously denied (e.g., women's greater access to public life, rural dwellers (often poor, often raced) access to goods and services they could now drive to).

happens when we make space for that which we do not expect? What happens when we don't?



Figure 24. Zach feeding cars.

Thinking with Law's (2001) notion of "interpelation" Landström (2006) suggests, "the car can be viewed as an artefact that constructs subjects" (p. 35) and thus far I have shared several stories that suggest many of these constructions are very gendered. Moss and Petrie (2002) add another thread of subjectification in their work to push for a reconceptualization of children's services to that of *children's spaces*. In it, they raise an interesting point about cars in relation to diminishing public space for children. They suggest that, "by default, the ever increasing use of private transport has played a large part in shaping childhood" (p. 179). With increased concerns for child safety (e.g., being hit by a car, being kidnapped) children are driven to and fro more than in the past⁶⁸. They write: "on the one hand, cars are a source of danger, on the other they are a safe private

⁶⁸ I would argue that (in particular here in North America) the suburban sprawl which began post World War II - the birth of the suburbs: another gendered, classed, racialized and heterosexed project - also contributed to this increase in private transport, and chauffeuring about of children in cars.

place, an extension of home and the private family, insulating children from the perils of the street – but also from a more public dimension of public life” (p. 179). They continue,

The car’s high status as an item of consumption, relating to privacy and individualism, finds an identifiable place within advanced liberalism and “political government which will govern without governing ‘society’” Rose, 1999, p. xiii). It does so by appealing to parents’ perception of what is involved in caring for their children’s safety. At the same time it limits the possibilities for children to use outdoor space. (p. 180)

The children in this study play with toy cars inside the classroom (or inside the outdoor play space fence line), after (for most) being transported from home to daycare in the safety (and privacy) of their family vehicle. In Benson et al.’s (2007) report for BMW, several respondents comment about their car as their “home from home” where they can experience “me-time” “cocooned” in their car. “In many of our conversations it became very apparent how much the car has become an extension of our lives into the public sphere and this seemed particularly telling when it came to discussing family driving” (p. 46).

I drop my children at 6.45am, and then go straight to work for 7am. When I’m in the car on my own, though, I love that. With two young children I suppose that maybe I don’t get a lot of ‘me-time’, and if I find myself driving on my own then that is 15 minutes’ peace and quiet, which is rare. (Female driver, 20, North London, as cited in Benson et al., 2007, p. 23)

The luxury of peace and quiet while alone in a car that this North London driver describes is not afforded to those who battle crowds on busses or subways during their

daily commute. Clicking your child into the car seat of your own private vehicle as opposed to wrestling the stroller into place on public transport keeps (much) unwanted mixings and minglings with undesirables at bay. While Benson et al. describe the automobile as “an extension of our lives into the public sphere” it has also become a vehicle for insulation against the discomforts of (particular) public spheres.

Tangled Recalls of Car(e)s

Angus runs past me again, stepping around the baby dolls he has left on the floor, only this time he returns with a medium sized plastic tractor. The tractor now gets put onto the puddle floor, rolling it a little bit back and forth through the water.

Denise: So now the tractor's in the puddle?

Angus: Errrr. Vrm vrm vrm.

Angus carries the tractor into the water table and starts to drive it through the water with his hand. He begins to scoop water with a bucket and pour it over the truck. He squeezes water from a sponge over top of the baby.

Angus: I'm cleaning the truck.

Denise: You're cleaning the truck now Angus?

Angus: Yeah.

Denise: Yeah? Is that the same way you cleaned the babies before?

No answer. Angus continues to squeeze very white bubbly water from the sponge over the truck sitting in the water table. As he scoops the truck up out of the water, turning it toward the floor, he says:

Angus: Oh no. Make a big mess.

He drives it with his hand across the floor to another area, a dry patch of floor, in the big room. Eventually he carries it back to the water and washes the truck with sponges again. The truck returns to the puddle floor and is driven again to the far side. A turns still driving the truck and looks at me. He begins to stand.

Denise: Is it all clean?

Angus is looking at me but does not answer. He then looks down at the truck, kicks it across the floor and then runs off into another room to play.

This second tangled tale continues to build on to the web of gender, care, children, and cars already described through the previous sections. By focusing on stories of *recall* this tale explores how our cares and experiences are always already entangled with/in our pedagogies and research, and our technologies of production. While memories and experience, care and concern, have all been mentioned or alluded to already in previous stories, this section will delve further into the affect of cars and the not-always-seamless relations this helps to create.

Rethinking Cars with Care

During one of our scheduled meetings to re-view some of the collected artefacts from the study, we (co-researchers) spent some time thinking with the moment of Angus at the water table. As described in Chapter 4, Angus had first engaged with two different baby dolls in the water (pouring water of them), and then on the floor (dropping them, kicking them). In that chapter I commented on the embodied response many of us had to the kicking of the baby dolls across the floor, yet we did not comment in the same way on the portion of the event that saw Angus kick the truck. Was our collective *lack of experience* playing with – loving – cars as connected as our collective experience of

holding – loving – both real and pretend babies? Did this relate to our surprise that Zach and the cars could be in a *caring relationship*? Just as Sandberg and Pramling-Samuelsson (2005) found early childhood educators' own experience as part of what shapes teacher's (gendered) attitudes toward play, did my lack of childhood car-play experience render invisible (to me) a caring relationship with cars?

How do adults interpret children's playwork as gendered? Or do they? (watching examples of a boy-child 'wash' baby, then smash baby to the floor, then kick baby around the floor, do the same to a second baby, then finally get a truck to wash and roll around the floor - is this interpreted as "what boys do"? is this "uncaring" behaviour? is he caring for the truck but not the baby? is it a different kind of care?) (field notes and questions shared with educators, December 6, 2012)

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, we did not take up the “this is what boys do” line of thinking when we talked about this moment. I remember wondering at the time if we would, and afterward if we hadn't dared. I also wondered whether kicking the truck made kicking the babies more palatable; Angus was not purposefully targeting a human-like figure, he was *simply* just kicking toys. Are our different responses to the truck and the baby dolls part of our general anthropocentric lens for seeing/reading/interpreting the world? In our efforts to (re)think cars and care, did we anthropomorphize the cars? And did we simply extend a gendered script from the dolls (girls nurture dolls) to the cars (boys nurture cars)?



Figure 25. Tiffany feeding a car.



Figure 26. Angus kicking a truck.

Despite the lack of our own personal embodied experiences with toy or real cars, once we began to consider the car(e) in the artefacts we (re)visited, our inquiry changed immensely. The camera now followed the cars. The colours, the shapes, the materials, where they moved, what they did, now became present in our artefacts, conversations, and writings. Deanna commented that she thought that she now paid more attention to the children's demonstrated and articulated care for other materials, which in turn impacted her pedagogical actions (December 18, 2012, audio recording of scheduled meeting). My

wondering of car care began to open up stories – experiences – that I had up to this point never considered in relation to pedagogical practice.

Car Love

Benson et al.'s (2007) quote which opens this chapter talks about cars stimulating “complex and unique emotions in drivers” (p. 3) and it refers to drivers falling for their cars; “love at first sight” (p. 3). The report is an excellent example of how cars are a techno-materialsemiotic practice (i.e., affect, discourses of driving and technology, materializations of production and consumerism, all drive around in this BMW research (promotion) report). Like the industrial revolution before, this technology revolution is not separate from our emotions, sensations and experiences.

In order to develop innovations such as iDrive and gesture recognition, and to plan for the long-term future, BMW has undertaken long and close studies of all human behaviour pertaining to cars and driving. Its researchers have studied the emotional and physical aspects of travelling by car: the intimate, personal feelings arising from our personal relationships with our cars; our relationship with other road users; and the car's role in our culture. (p. 5)

As already indicated, this personal relationship with our cars includes their toy replicas. “Like most car-obsessed folks, I have many more toy cars around than a reasonable person with a mortgage should. It's a limited way of satisfying car-ownership urges without turning your yard into an oil-soaked scrapyard” (Torchinsky, 2012, para 1). He continues, “having a kid provides a great excuse to get even more toy cars” (para. 2). Torchinsky's comment raises the question of whom we sometimes buy for when we

purchase toys for children⁶⁹. “Sorting through these [his childhood Corgi, Dinky, and Matchbox die cast model cars] yesterday was a trip down memory lane and reminds me of one of the reasons I love cars so much” (Lange, 2012, para. 2). But as Landström (2007) and Benson et al. (2006) remind this love of cars is not exclusive to boys and men. And remember, it was Odell’s *daughter* that carted off to school that little die-cast car inside a matchbox (Knapman, 2013). My (female) lack of toy car-love experience is certainly not a universal one.

In 1957 my father bought his first car, a 1949 Ford that had a re-built engine and a new radio, soon after he turned 16 and had received his driver’s license. My father paid for his learner’s license and his driving instruction with money he had saved. Early on he had had a paper route, at 12 began to deliver prescriptions (on his bicycle) for a pharmacy, and by 14 he was delivering for a meat shop (where he continued to work as a butcher until he graduated from UBC in 1963). He paid \$395 for the car with money his boss had offer to lend him and which my father paid back tiny bit by tiny bit, week by week. He was the third of my grandparent’s six children and the first person in his family to have a driver’s license, making this 1949 Ford the first vehicle in his family. Both of my grandparents were blind and so my father’s driver’s license and car enabled him to help them in many ways. His license and car were signs of his responsibility, were vehicles for both his autonomy and his independence.

I know this story; it is family folklore. I know what that 1949 Ford looked like, as its image was included in the family photo albums (see Figure 28). I know my father loved that car. (When I emailed him so I could double check the make-year of his first

⁶⁹ Like dolls, toy cars have a large adult collector market (see Knapman, 2013; Mautner, 2013; Williamson, 2014). And also like dolls, a sense of childhood nostalgia is often invoked in marketing toy cars to current parent (male) consumers.

car, he responded with a three-page letter about how he came to be the owner of that car!) I know this story and many others related to my father and his first car. Yet, the idea, the notion that the cars in Zach's hands might actually be *being cared for* struck me as revolutionary. How had I shelved my father's first-car love story so that it had never penetrated my thoughts about children, pedagogy, and curriculum? How was my knowing (and all the memories, feelings, experiences that this *knowing* connects to) contained with/in my family connected moments and spaces?



Figure 27. My father in his first car, 1957.

Even more puzzling might be that I seemed to have also shelved my knowing of my son's love of his toy cars and trucks, both small and large. He was particularly fascinated with all garbage and recycling related vehicles (both real and toy versions). When he was less than two-years old, he and I once spent at least 45-minutes standing on our sidewalk waiting for the garbage truck to get to our street and dump our bins, he wearing his ear protection because he found the noise so loud. He watched a lot truck

work wearing those red earmuffs. One of my sister's favourite memories of my son is Christmas morning when he was two and a half and he received a green, talking garbage truck. His facial expression of absolute surprise and adoration (and the fact that he walked away from all of his unopened presents to go and play with it for quite sometime) helped this to become a new family folklore car love story. Yet maybe my experience with my son and his cars/trucks did impact how I saw Zach's hands wrapped around "his" cars. My son did not experience his love of/for cars by himself. I *lovingly* chose each small die cast car that I could find which replicated working city vehicles. I created a huge dirt pile area in our backyard for his play with his larger digger trucks. I packed up the bag of small travel-sized Bob the Builder vehicles that would go with us *everywhere* in the car. Thinking back to his own childhood fascination with small die-cast cars, Knapman (2013) describes that his childhood cars survive today "tucked away in my parents' loft awaiting the next generation to them for a spin" (para. 2). Like Knapman (2013) and Lange (2012), I have saved these treasured toy vehicles for some (unknown) future use. Knapman concludes his article about the 60-year anniversary of Matchbox cars with: "surely as enduringly brilliant a toy as you'll ever find" (para. 23). Perhaps my son did help me to recognize this brilliance, which I then carried with me into the classroom with Wayne and Zach.

Car Troubles

Yet this brilliance and love, like the dolls described in Chapter 4, is knotted together with tensions, challenges and dangers. Automobiles themselves, while loved in our consumer car culture, hold great potential danger. Safety issues related to vehicles are widespread, and not new. In 2010 the United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a

resolution to establish the Decade of Action for Road Safety, led by the World Health Organization (WHO). Launched by WHO in 2011, the intent of the initiative is to “stabilize and then reduce the forecasted level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing activities conducted at national, regional and global levels” (Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011, p. 5). A 2004 UN report on road traffic injury prevention was highly influential in igniting this project. In that report, it was noted that “about 1.2 million people are killed in road crashes globally each year, and about 20 to 50 million are injured (as cited in Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011, p. 5)

According to Statistics Canada (2013), in 2009, 2,209 people died in motor vehicle traffic collisions in Canada, and 172,883 were injured, 11,451 of whom were defined as serious injuries. While collisions, injuries and fatalities have been steadily decreasing since 1979, vehicle accidents continue to be the leading cause of death for adolescence (Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2008, 2013). “While only 13% of licensed drivers were aged 16-24, 24% of fatalities and 26% of those seriously injured are 16 to 24 years of age” (Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011, p. 16). This has led to the establishment of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs in all Canadian jurisdictions since 2005. Collisions due to driving under the influence of alcohol have also been decreasing but still, “in 2008, coroners’ testing showed that almost 40% of fatally injured drivers had been drinking some amount of alcohol (HBD) prior to the collision” (p. 17). Male drivers accounted for 85% of the HBD drivers and 87% of those whose blood alcohol registered over .08. Pedestrians, as well as riders of motorcycles, mopeds and bicycles are considered “vulnerable” road users, “by virtue of their lack of protection if struck by a vehicle” (p. 26). Pedestrians aged 65 and older, and

those under the age of 16 make up 35% and 6% of fatal injuries respectively.

Vehicle safety standards (e.g., lighting, glazing, braking, roof and door strength) are among the factors that have led to decreased motor vehicle accidents and injuries over the past 40 years, despite a doubling of the population (Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2008). Wall Street Journal recently reported the increase in auto-safety recalls since February, 2014 “amid disclosures that their [Toyota Motor Corporation and General Motors Corporation] failure to report and repair faulty equipment led to multiple deaths and injuries” (Waters, 2014, para. 1). “Ford, Chrysler, Nissan and a handful of smaller carmakers also have announced large recalls in recent weeks” (para. 13). Though 2014 is well on the way to seeing the highest number of car recalls, overall automobiles are undoubtedly safer than ever. Technological advances (e.g., anti-lock brake systems, airbags, electronic stability control (ESC), improved seat belts and child restraints) have also contributed to this safety. However technology has also played a part in increased driver distraction, a significant motor vehicle collision risk. Talking on cellphones, texting or emailing, engaging navigation (GPS) systems are among the newer (technological) distractions impacting road safety; adding to other forms of distraction that have existed for decades (e.g., changing the radio, talking with others, eating/drinking, reading maps/directions, activities outside the vehicle). Impaired driving has likely decreased due to a cultural shift in what is deemed acceptable behaviour regarding drinking and driving. Education campaigns, advocacy groups (e.g., MADD), and tougher driving laws and police enforcement have been significant contributions to this shift. These are being explored in regards to other road safety risk

factors (e.g., distraction, excess speed, fatigue, rage/anger) (Road Safety Canada Consulting, 2011).

Like toy car pedagogies in the classroom, car safety is a techno-materialsemiotic practice (e.g., car technology; law and enforcement; physical roads, stop signs, traffic lights, traffic circles; human action of drinking, speeding, texting; discourses of risk, responsibility, youth, gender). Children's love of and engagement with toy cars are situated within and alongside the risks, dangers, and regulations of the real cars in their lives. How many of the children in this study arrived to their classroom everyday after being harnessed into safety seats in their parents' cars, the car not moving till all are buckled up? How many times are children warned of the very real dangers of cars as they cross the road, walk through a parking lot, as they are told to hold hands or are scooped up into adult arms? What is it to be suddenly larger than this risky object, now in the driver seat (if you will), rather than strapped into a booster in the back? In many ways toys cars, these miniature versions of the real dangerous thing, are avenues for child-car love, exploration, celebration, engagement outside of (certain) risks. But not entirely.

Like real cars, toy cars are subject to inspection and safety standards, only this time for things like small parts that are choking hazards and toxic materials that can leech into their fragile bodies. Like real cars, sometimes toy cars are also recalled. For example, in 2007 Mattel was forced to recall nineteen million toys manufactured in China, including hundreds of thousands of die-cast toys for containing excessive amounts of lead (Story & Barboza, 2007). In 2011 two cars associated with their Hot Wheels line were recalled because they were found to contain arsenic (Moore, 2011). Like the plastic dolls in Chapter 4, Wayne and Zach's toy cars touch practices well beyond their classroom.

Toy cars are just as implicated in the Knotty Tale of Plasticity (see Chapter 4) as the baby dolls, and are just as loved by the children in this study. As raised in Chapter 4, the pleasure these materials invite (from old and young) sits alongside the question of whose (which) bodies come to matter in our practices. “Care is embedded in the practices that maintain the webs of relationality that we form. Also, as a practice care is about an ethos that produces ethical obligation” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2010, p. 167). I referred in Chapter 4 to Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2012) assertion that “*our cares* also perform disconnection” (p. 204) and suggested that caring pedagogies might be less about a search for right (caring) and wrong (uncaring) practices but more about considering how “our cuts foster relationship (p. 204). I will address this further in the final section of this chapter but first I will add to the complexity of obligations for care in webs of relationality with a few touching stories.



Figure 28. Angus holding/touching a car.

Tangled Touches of Car(e)s

Wayne is underneath a small table in the studio where his tracks and cars lead up to. He informs us that he is a sleeping dragon in his cave. Zach stands near, watching Wayne and then Wayne invites Zach in to the cave. Zach climbs under the small table, this dragon cave, to join Wayne and brings the cars he is carrying with him. As Zach situates himself under the table, with his knees bent under his belly and head resting toward and then later on the floor, he tucks the cars under him. He rests atop the cars much to my eye like a mama bird sitting on her eggs in a nest. He is nestled silently under the table. Shortly after, Wayne begins to gently rub Zach's back. "Here you go", says Wayne, leaning over Zach's ear. "I'm rubbing Zach's back", Wayne tells Diana several times while sitting upright again yet continuing to rub Zach's back. Diana is speaking and working with another child in the room but eventually notices Wayne rubbing Zach's back. "Oh, Wayne, you look like you're giving Zach a little rub to go to sleep. Zach likes that rub on his back".

From his crouched position Zach reaches for a car that is outside the cave, not lifting his head from the ground, and drives the car about on the floor. While he does this, Wayne stops rubbing Zach's back and comes out of the cave. "I need that. I need the car. I need the car to go to sleep", exclaims Wayne. He seems to be pointing to a car that Zach has. Zach extends himself outside of the cave to grab another car. He brings it back in and passes it through to Wayne. "I have a car for you". Wayne takes the car and places it on the track he made earlier which leads up to the edge of their table-cave. Zach quickly checks on his cars under his legs. He moves them a little, touches them briefly, but keeps them tucked (safely) under his legs. Wayne returns into the cave and tucks in beside

Zach, bringing the chunky yellow jeep-like car with him. They are both crouched on the floor, knees tucked under their belly. They lay their heads on the floor, Wayne back with the yellow jeep now beside his cheek and Zach with his cars still tucked under his legs. Wayne whispers something that sounds like “sleep”, but his words are not fully audible. They seem to all be resting for a bit. Zach reaches for Wayne’s back and begins to stroke it, gently, back and forth.

Soon Wayne sits up, leaning a little out of the cave with his yellow jeep in hand to let Diana know that he “had bad dreams”. Zach reaches a little further in order to continue rubbing Wayne’s back. “You had bad dreams?” returns Diana. Wayne responds by saying “the car needs help” but he has turned his gaze from Diana to Zach, who continues to rub Wayne’s back. “The car needs help” he says again. Zach is now sitting up moves in toward Wayne and says something about the back rubbing. With Zach’s sitting up position Wayne can see the cars that have been tucked under Zach’s legs and he quickly leans in, pointing at one saying something to Zach and then pointing back at his yellow jeep. Zach is perched on his cars shaking his head at Wayne saying no. They both look in silence toward the cars under Zach’s legs. “I want the red. I want it to drive.” Zach comes off his cars and four cars/trucks can be seen in a line. He looks at them and hands Wayne the white one but Wayne says no. He eventually grabs the white car from Zach’s hand where Zach has now started to roll it on the ground. Wayne reaches it out of the cave, as far as his arm will go, placing it on a block track. “I don’t want it anymore”. With a bit of a scowled face, Zach crawls out from the cave to scoop up the white car, saying he doesn’t want it anymore either. “You can have”, as he drops in front of Wayne, but Wayne quickly tosses it aside. Zach then crawls out of the cave to

pick it up and place it again, in front of Wayne. Wayne says, with a slightly teary voice, "I don't want this, I don't want this", while Zach presses his fingers twice, quickly, into Wayne's cheeks. "I don't want this cause it's very white. I'm going to give it back to Zach", Wayne tells Diana. He places it back in the original car/truck pile that Zach had been sitting on. Zach is back inside the cave with Wayne as they sit beside the car/truck pile. Wayne now tries to take the white car and place it in the tunnel but now Zach pulls it back into the pile. "No mine, I want to put it in the tunnel!" Wayne cries. Zach scoops the pile, two car-trucks grasped in each hand and crawls out of the cave with them. Diana tries to help Wayne with his words, modelling. "You have a lot of cars Zach. Can I have a car please?" Zach tosses the red one toward him.

When reading this narrative, many "touching" moments seemed to be present between Wayne, Zach, and the cars. In her recent writing about companion species, Haraway (2008) asks, "Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?" (p. 3).

This critter – Cayenne – and me, Donna: where do we find ourselves? When my dog and I touch, where and when are we? Which worldings and which sorts of temporalities and materialities erupt into this touch, and to what and whom is a response required? (Gane & Haraway, 2006, p. 145)

When Zach and Wayne hold the cars whom and what do they touch? And what and whom touch them? When others watch/read this moment, what touches erupt? Barad (2012) suggests, "So much happens in a touch: an infinity of others—other beings, other spaces, other times—are aroused" (p. 206). In this third tangled tale I will continue to tease out the gender and care threads in my thinking with cars by paying attention to some moments of touch.

“I Want The Red”

The children in this study seem to touch *and be touched by* the cars often. They were a constant feature throughout my time in the centre, evoking much movement and feeling. There was something about the cars in Zach’s hands, clasped firmly, securely, fingers and plastic so constantly touching, that moved *me* to (re)question my understanding (assumptions) about what constitutes care, as previously described. As I (re)watched the car-child intra-actions, that cars *do something* in the space became increasingly obvious. The cars are not generic to the children. They need particular ones, particular colours, particular shapes, sizes, and textures. In the chapter’s opening narration, Zach asked Diana “where are *my* cars”? They don’t technically belong to the Zach, they are “the centre’s” cars, but for Zach in that moment certain cars appear to have called to him as “his cars”. They matter. They matter deeply.



Figure 29. Zach looking for cars.

When Zach joins Wayne in the dragon cave, he is very careful about tucking “his” cars beneath him. He checks on them. He touches them. He seems to guard them. And Wayne looks to be just as particular about the cars and trucks. He has with him the yellow jeep that he had so carefully worked with for a long time earlier that morning (opening narration). He is specific in his requests to Zach: “I need *that*”, “I want the *red*”, “I *don’t* want *this* cause it’s *very white*”, and “No *mine*, I want to *put it in the tunnel!*”

There are traces of moments from the study that were captured in video when many different children exclaim (usually loudly, forcefully) “no!” or “that’s mine!” as another child reaches for a car or truck that they are engaged with. One developmental interpretation of these moments is that they indicate immature social skills and self-regulation in need of support and intervention. As I indicated in the chapter’s opening narration, this view of toddlers in particular has been part of my training and experience with children. For example, “the development of social skills in an early childhood involves young children in learning to get along with each other. This means they need to share equipment and materials, to take turns using favourite toys” (Beaty, 2014, p. 136). From this perspective Diana’s efforts work to reinforce pro-social behaviour with Wayne and Zach, a pedagogical action that is commonplace in the classroom. Yet this perspective had also limited my ability to see these moments – holding cars, grabbing cars, sitting on cars, throwing cars, chasing after cars - as more than, or not simply just, immature conflict. Drawing on Haraway (2008), Puig de la Bellacasa (2009) writes:

The question of how we learn to live with others, being in the world, is an opening to ‘becoming with’ – to be touched as much as to actively touch. Touch ‘ramifies and shapes accountability’ (Haraway, 2008, p. 36), furthers a sense of

inheriting ‘in the flesh’ and invites us to be more aware about how living-as-relating engages both ‘pleasure and obligation’ (Haraway, 2008, p. 7). As a metaphor of the material embodied relations, which hold the world together, touch intensifies awareness about the transformative character of contact, including visual contact – tactile looks. (p. 310)

What do tactile looks, “fingery eyes” (Haraway, 2008, p. 287), bring to this moment between cars, carpet, cave, blocks, Wayne and Zach? A greater awareness that living as relating does not produce “harmonious wholes” (p. 287)? Our inherited obligations to car(e)s and children? A slowing down to pay attention to touches in, near and far beyond the classroom?

Ohs, Oohs and Ahs

One of the ways that we (all six of us co-researchers) related to this moment between Wayne and Zach was that we were *touched* by the back rubbing that occurred between the two boys. “Indeed, one insight often advanced about the specificity of experiencing touch (commonly supported by reference to Merleau Ponty’s phenomenology) is its ‘reversibility’: when bodies/things touch, they are also touched” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2009, p. 300). When Diana spotted Wayne rubbing Zach’s back she commented with a tender voice, “*Oh*, Wayne, you look like you’re giving Zach a little rub to go to sleep. Zach likes that rub on his back”. When I hear Diana’s voice I imagine her smiling. Probably because this moment evokes a visceral response in me, conjuring sensations of warmth and comfort. When we revisited this moment in our first scheduled meeting, our audible reactions of “ahs” and “oohs” are telling that we were affected by the boys’ touches (audio recording and journal notes, December 18, 2012).

When I have shown the video clip of that moment to more public audiences (e.g., an ECE professional development course in 2013, the AERA workshop in 2013), the moments of back rubbing elicited similar audible responses from much of the audience. What previous back rubbing (touching) experiences are with us as we watch, as we emit our “ohs”, “oohs” and “ahs”? As the previous tale considered, our interpretations and actions do not solely involve the moment between those boys but our experiences are always already entangled with/in it. Touches, as Barad (2012) notes, arouse an “infinity of others” (p. 206).



Figure 30. Back rubbing in the dragon cave.

During this study there were many photographs/videos taken by me and given to me by the educators that presented care in this *human bodies kindly touching other human bodies* sort of way (e.g., children and educators holding hands, children lifting other children, children hugging). A search through Google Images for “caring for children” returns many, many images of touching (human) bodies – holding, hugging, snuggling, sitting on laps, helping with cuts. (It is interesting that when “early childhood education caring for children” or “day care education caring for children” is typed in, most of the *body touching* images disappear and instead images of children at “stations”, and ECE “materials” come up.) In the moment with Wayne and Zach, it is the back

rubbing that jumps out as “care” and evokes an audible response. Impacted likely by our (i.e., the researchers, audiences responding to this moment) experiences, our response to the back rubbing and this dominant image (e.g., the Google images) of what “care” looks like, are likely influenced as well by discourses of attachment (Bowlby, 1953, 1969), bonding (especially skin-to-skin mother newborn/infant, see Klaus, 1998, Klaus & Kennell, 1976), and the importance of “warm, responsive touch, especially for infants and toddlers” (New & Cochran, 2007, p. 101). Yet when I re/view the video, I am drawn to notice that those cars and trucks are actually attended to far more than the boys’ backs during that event. As previously described they are carefully tucked in, checked on, rolled, touched (as well as thrown, thrust, dropped, and slapped to the ground). There seems to me to be fluidity of caring (touching) between human and nonhuman bodies in the moment with Wayne and Zach. There is no marked observable separation between the movements from nonhuman to human to nonhuman etc. Yet how many of these human-non-human touches have I missed in my child-centred explorations of care? By de-centering children in these car(e) moments, are holes poked into bounded gendered (and developmental) explanations of care? What happens if we make space for other images of what care can look like?

The early childhood classroom is actually full of all sorts of (perceived to be) problematic kinds of touching. For health and safety reasons, educators wear latex gloves for messy touching, and children’s mucky (paint, dirt, saliva, mucus) hands are washed regularly, as are the (painted, dirty, licked, mucus dabbed) toys. These messier touches often evoke a different kind of “oh”. When documenting in pedagogical narrations, this is usually when the camera stops (e.g., to support children through an argument or

altercation, to help with a falling diaper or drippy nose). Video recording Wayne and Zach in the dragon cave ended when the tears and conflict over the cars was beginning to take over. While this raises questions as to how/when/why we document, discuss and (re)consider the messiness of practice, stopping the camera is a reflection that the research/educator who is documenting is actually part of the moment (as described in Chapter 3 and as the “baby cars” narration illustrates). We are touched by what we see, hear, feel, and experience, both in the moment itself (on the floor with the children, documenting) and outside the moment (re-visiting the documentation, creating narrations). “Starting with being touched – to be attained, *moved* – touch exacerbates a sense of concern, it points to an engagement that relinquishes the distance of detachment” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2009, p. 300). This sense of concern is not always straight forward, and as Chapter 4 and the previous tale reminded, is always an act of dis/connection (see Barad, 2010, 2011; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012). And as each tale has described, the touches – backs, cars, hearts – touch far more than we (often) see and feel.

Following Trajectories with Cars

In this chapter, I have told several stories of child-car encounters from with/in the classroom that, alongside other car stories, have troubled assumed developmental and gendered logics that underpin their presence in early childhood. Through the tales shared in this chapter, I have continued attending to entanglements of gender, care, childhood, and various technologies in my question of how children, educators and things emerge as gendered caring subjects in early childhood practices. By taking seriously the cars in Wayne and Zach’s classroom, the complexity of this emergence is made apparent. Like the dolls in Chapter 4, the cars are gendered materials that are assumed in early childhood

spaces, both of which evoke much from the children in this study. Doll and car histories (of production, of “origin”, of integration into childhood practices), while different though related, are knotted within the everyday actions we took/take yesterday, today and tomorrow with these materials. Through tracing these histories (some of) the gendered and developmental assumptions become less assured, and the political and ethical embeddedness of our practices more visible. Haraway argues that

Taking this relationship seriously and unwinding who we are here lands us in many concatenated worlds, in a very situated ‘becoming’. Then the fundamental ethical, political question is: to what are you accountable if you try to take what you have inherited seriously? If you take love seriously, then what? You can’t be accountable to everything, so you try to figure out how to think of the world through connections and encounters that re-do you, not through taxonomies. So, here we are in criminal conversation, forbidden intercourse, queer commerce; and I think I/we end up differently accountable – and differently curious – through tracking those linkages than I/we were at the beginning. (in Gane & Haraway, 2004, p. 145)

Again, like with the dolls, am I accountable to the love the children have for these cars? The people who make them far from the classroom? To re-telling a story of a girl child who (first) brings a matchbox sized toy car to school? The car-child moments, the connections and encounters re-visited in the study’s narrations, *re-did* all those involved. As Chapter 4 put forward, children and things *become* through their relating. The gendering and caring of young children like Zach and Wayne in this chapter, emerges with/in a complex web of many relations. Our engagement with these moments *re-did* us

(co-researchers), and our practices as well. Once we thought car(e)s differently, we were never the same. The tracing I have done with the cars has also led me to be “differently curious” and ultimately raises questions about how to be “differently accountable”. We cannot be accountable to everything, but we can, as Haraway suggests, “think of the world through connections and encounters”. Not taxonomies, - simplified, hierarchical, omnipotent categorization – but webs of relations, commonworldings. “Taking seriously these chains of touch” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2009, p. 310) opens up space to consider “the layers of naturecultural relations” (p. 309) that make these touchings possible “while actively speculating on what *could be possible*” (p. 310). The following chapter will consider further paying attention to materialssemiotic becomings and *what could be*, as a political and ethical act in our pedagogical/research/caring practices. In that, the final chapter of the dissertation, I will summarize the study’s provocations for (re)thinking gender-care in the classroom, highlight the value of pedagogical narrations as a methodology for onto-ethico-epistemological post-qualitative inquiries, and touch on the implications of this study for futures practices.

Chapter 6: “Differently Curious”, “Differently Accountable”

“The point is to learn to remember that we might have been otherwise, and might yet be . . .” (Haraway, 1997, p. 39).

Introduction

Gendering and Caring with Young Children took place in a small urban city in Western Canada at a childcare program with 10 children aged 18 months to three years, and with four full-time early childhood educators who participated as co-researchers. We put a post-qualitative understanding of pedagogical narrations to work as the methodology for this study and explored how this post-qualitative methodology broadened and deepened gender and care conversations and revealed new ways of knowing and being. Following a theoretical and methodological framework aligned with material feminism and post-qualitative research, in particular thinking with feminist scholars Barad and Haraway, this study questioned what an engagement with human-and non-human relationality might do to complicate conversations about gender and care. In Chapters 4 and 5, I (re)presented several doll and car stories in, near and far from the classroom where this study took place, as a provocation to be diffractively read through each other, and I considered how children, educators, and things are implicated in gendered caring practices. I have argued that taking seriously the things that children (seem to) take seriously might teach us something about our pedagogies, our taken-for-granted knowledges about gender and care, and ultimately about our becoming of gendered caring subjects.

As I suggested in this dissertation’s opening chapter, my intention was to provoke a shift away from individualist and child-centred explanations and strategies by bringing

a relationality framework to early childhood pedagogies. My aim was to illuminate the political and ethical embeddedness of gendered caring pedagogies. This final chapter teases out a few of the sticky threads and knots from the many tangled tales that I have told in the foregoing chapters. The chapter considers how this study generated complicated conversations about gender and care and added to the growing body of work refiguring ontology in ECE. I address: (1) what this study brings to a reconceptualization of gender and care, (2) the importance of attending to the more-than human in pedagogy and research, and (3) how a post-qualitative material feminist lens shifts understandings and practices of paying attention. This chapter concludes with some considerations as to what care/full attention (as I have conceptualized through post-qualitative and material feminist perspectives) might mean/do for both research and pedagogical practices, and to growing *response*-abilities. This is followed by one (final) gender-care-car-doll tale.

Gender(ing) and Care(ing) with Young Children

I outlined from the start that this inquiry was guided by my overarching curiosity for how conceptualizations/assumptions and practices of gender and care are intra-actively related (Barad, 2007). A key piece of this re-thinking gender and care is the understanding that “separately determinate entities do not preexist their intra-action” (p. 175). Gender and caring do not exist as predetermined traits or practices before hand, with one simply modifying the other, as a traditional view of “cause and effect” claims (e.g., hormones direct behaviour; women are naturally nurturing therefore they are instinctively drawn to care children; babies are drawn to faces therefore they reach for dolls over non-faced toys; gender is socially learned therefore we can re-program boys/men for primary caregiving, and so on). To think of gender and care as

performatively emerging through intra-action means paying attention beyond bounded categories, attending to more than fixed, unified, simplified, explanations (of gender/sex, of care, of knowing and being in the world). It means (re)searching relationalities *in the making*. I have suggested that material feminism helps to loosen the ties that bind gender constructions as explanations for care and vice versa - but this is not to say that I am dismissing that materialdiscursive practices of care and gender “influence” each other. From the stories that I have shared, it is evident that gender is in care and care is in gender. Ruby and the baby dolls (Chapter 4), “mothers” of pedagogy and the establishment of early childhood centres and kindergartens (Chapter 2), Zach and the cars (Chapter 5), have helped to illuminate the (complex) intra-relatedness of gender and care.

However, there are more threads, knots, holes and tangles in this web than simply or only gender and care. As Chapters 4 and 5 show, through our thinking with dolls and cars, emerging gender and caring subjectivities touch many materialdiscursive practices (technologies) in, near and far from the classroom: psychology, consumerism, marketing, production, education, socio-economics, race, culture, and heteronormativity, just to name a few. These analyses speak to the gendering and caring of young children *as anything but* innocent, private, individual practices but rather as always already collective, entangled, political, ethical, pleasurable, painful, contentious, materialdiscursive becomings. I have suggested that we (educators, researchers, parents, children, and others) need to be differently curious about both gender and care in order to better attend to the complexities of children’s worlds. In part, these complicated conversations are needed because there is tremendous diversity in who cares for children and how this care is conceptualized and materialized. Of course, we need to pay care/full

attention because there is and will be diversity in our pedagogical and research practices (e.g., some of the children in our programs are being raised by single fathers and stay-at-home dads, so we should think about father involvement in ECE; we have a lesbian couple who drop off their son to daycare, so we should think about queer-friendly practices and policies). As important as this recognition is, there is a need for complicating conversations for reasons that go beyond this consideration: re-thinking dominant constructions of gender and care challenges us to question how “normal” gets constructed, “what gets to count as nature and who gets to inhabit natural categories” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 50). This re-thinking holds the potential to open up spaces for *thinking and being otherwise*.

The more-than-human. This study has demonstrated how the lens of material feminism can help us take seriously the things that children (seem to) take seriously, enabling us to think in new ways about our pedagogies, our taken-for-granted knowledges, and ultimately about our becoming of caring gendered subjects. This is more than *noticing* that children care about things (and responding accordingly). Rather, thinking with Haraway and Barad, recognizing that “things” like dolls and cars (and children and educators and researchers for that matter) do not pre-exist their relations but rather come to “be” through webs of relations, changes how we conceptualize (and respond) in/to these relationships. My attention to cars as cared for (Chapter 5) shifted the way I looked at, documented, discussed and questioned the car—child moments of this study. Zach and Wayne and the cars could no longer be seen as “boys” and “cars” who meet as already predefined entities (e.g., cars are boy toys, boys are action oriented thus attracted to cars, toddlers can not share so they will hide things they like). This made me

differently curious about their car events (traces) that we captured and discussed, differently curious for the next, and the next, becoming.

Thinking with the more-than-human world is a challenge to the premise of human exceptionalism that permeates most (humanist) early childhood qualitative research and pedagogical practices. By not starting with the child (or the educator), but instead (re)figuring the material being engaged with (in this case dolls and toy vehicles), different questions and possibilities emerged. Again, this is about recognizing practices as always already materialdiscursive phenomena (Barad, 2007). The baby cars that rolled over the roof of the wooden doll house, the factory that pressed the plastic into moulds to shape those cars, the bodies of those workers and Ruby, Mateo and Zach, the gendered assumptions of cars and dolls and caring, and the hi/stories of toy cars and materials in education are all entangled in the baby cars event captured on video (Chapters 4 and 5).

Recognizing the discursive and the material as co-constitutive is of utmost importance for re-imagining gender care understandings and practices, for being differently curious about how dolls and cars, girls and boys, ideas and practices matter. This perspective kept us from getting stuck in queries as to why *Angus* kicked the dolls (and truck), why *he* held a small car to his face for so long and in such a contemplative manner, what this all said about *him*. It helped us avoid scrambling for conclusions as to why during the investigation *Ruby and Hailey* so regularly carried around a *doll*, and *Zach* small *cars*. Conceptualizing the material and discursive are co-constitutive dismantles understandings of gender and care as pre-existing traits or practices, where one comes to interact, modify, the other. The dolls, cars, children, educators, and researchers in this study performatively emerged through intra-action. This perspective

pushed us to question *how* cars come to matter in the dragon cave, *how* brown and white dolls come to matter in the bubbles in the water table and on the floor. What is produced in the intra-action of the event?

Paying attention. I have also suggested that a material feminism lens shifts understandings and practices of “paying attention”. If “we” become anew in/through/with *each encounter*, then very careful attention is indeed required (Lenz Taguchi, 2011). This is not the same attention as an objective science that believes if we just try hard enough, if only we *really* cared (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011), we will “get it right”, for as St. Pierre and Pillow (2000) aptly put forward, “we have never gotten it right” (p. 4). Pacini-Ketchabaw (2012b) summarises it as this:

There is nothing simple about these entanglements. No generalizations can be made as to how we practice, what we do, or how we respond. Each encounter requires a different kind of attention. There are no shortcuts for any of us. (p. 313)

There is *work to be done*. If we are a modest witness, as Haraway (1997) suggests, in our work to pay attention, to attend, to attest, we are neither disengaged (transcendent) nor dormant in our response(abilities). “The point is to make situated knowledges possible in order to be able to make consequential claims about the world and on each other” (p. 267). Thinking with Haraway, these claims and our actions are always situated, always collective, always “resolutely historical” (Haraway & Goodeve, 2000, p. 160).

Valid witness depends not only on modesty but also on nurturing and acknowledging alliances with a lively array of others, who are like and unlike, human and not, inside and outside what have been defended boundaries of hegemonic selves and powerful places. (Haraway, 1997, p. 268)

Desires for “justice and democratically crafted and lived well-being” (p. 267) were often, as Haraway notes, often “the dreams of the players in the first Scientific Revolution, that first time machine of modernity as they sought to avert the terrors of civil war, absolutist religion, and arbitrary monarchs” (pp. 267-268). Working for/to/ward justice-to-come with/in a material feminism lens touches the legacy of seventeenth century science and philosophy. Yet to be a Harawayian witness in/of our pedagogical and research practices - to be surprised, to be engaged, to encounter with knowing *and not* knowing, with/in the entanglement of what you were/are/will be, always partial, always becoming - is a rather different form of *paying attention to* than that which has been inherited from the modernist machine of the scientific revolution.

When I recorded Angus at the water table with baby dolls, my histories and assumptions, the capabilities of the camera and my computer, me, Angus, the water and bubbles, the dolls and truck all intra-acted in that moment. When we discussed this and other “caring with cars” moments, the histories and assumptions of my co-researchers, which images and videos I chose, how I cut them together, the volume of the computer, the size of the room, the comfort of the chairs and so on, intra-acted to produce a new moment. When we returned to the classroom, we were different than we were before - differently curious, but differently accountable as well. As I continued my exploration and analyses, layering stories, tracing threads and knots, my curiosity and accountability continued to grow/change. The hi/stories, productions, developmental rationales of/for dolls and cars in the classroom, the children’s love and conflict (with each other at times) for them, my love and conflict over them. Which stories do I tell? In the midst of gathering and compiling many, many doll hi/stories, including pages of plastic perils and

problems, I shared these with one of the co-researchers in this study. She responded by asking me why/how she should/could care about these dolls amidst all these problems. Indeed. Then images of Mateo and Ruby, my own son and daughter, holding, snuggling, smiling at baby dolls interfered with any possibility of a straightforward tidy declarative statement about dolls in ECE.

Each time I trace a tangle and add a few threads that first seemed whimsical but turned out to be essential to the fabric, I get a bit straighter that staying with the trouble of complex worlding is the name of the game of living and dying well together on terra. (Haraway, 2012, p. 313)

Post-Qualitative Doings

In *Gendering and Caring with Young Children* I put my post-qualitative understanding of pedagogical narrations to work as the study's methodology. As I have suggested elsewhere (Hodgins, 2011b, 2012), pedagogical narrations hold tremendous potential as an avenue for attending to the complexity of childhood, of pedagogy, and of research itself (see also Hodgins et al., 2013; Hodgins et al., 2011, 2012). My material feminist framework shaped my practice with pedagogical narrations in terms of what was documented (e.g., not only children), what we paid attention in our analyses (e.g., what materials *do*, rather than (only) what children *say*), and our consequent actions (e.g., pedagogical shifts in attending seriously to the materials in the classroom). With both post-qualitative and material feminism, the co-researchers and I engaged pedagogical narrations as an avenue for sustained curiosity about materialsemiotic phenomena regarding gender and care. Through/with/in pedagogical narrations we attended to dolls, cars, children, and ourselves to *learn with*, rather than know about (Taylor, 2013).

Haraway (1994) has presented her diffractive reading of key discourses in technoscience, cultural studies, and feminist, multicultural, antiracist theory and projects through a game of cat's cradle, in her effort to "argue for a certain kind of practice of situated knowledges in the worlds of technoscience, worlds whose fibres reach deep and wide in the tissues of the planet" (p. 64). I like to think of my understanding and practice of pedagogical narrations as a serious game of cat's cradle. One person can play, building many patterns and knots. Many aspects of pedagogical narrations are "solitary" moments (of writing, of photographing, of re-flection). But, like in a game of cat's cradle, one person is not "able to make all the patterns alone" (p. 70). This is a game that invites collective work. Passing back and forth, on the hands of many players, "new moves" can be added "in the building of complex patterns" (pp. 69-70). Sometimes things result in rather messy, tied up configurations that take some bit of work to detangle. Sometimes you end up with beautiful web-like complicated patterns. Recently I have been teaching my daughter to play cat's cradle with me. One evening after dinner she, my mother and I passed the patterned string configurations from one to the other, often tangling then detangling and starting over again. We are playing with a few patterns that I knew as a girl (and my mother knew as a girl). In many ways' cat's cradle (and pedagogical narrations) is a game of remembrance and inheritance. But every once in awhile our finger grabs a line and we move the string into a pattern we have never seen before nor understand how it got there. I think we need to stretch ourselves to experiment with more surprises in our pattern making, "invent promising knots, and suggest other figures that will make us swerve" (p. 66). I have put forward that provocation – to stretch ourselves to be surprised - in terms of child studies research and our considerations of gender and care in early

childhood practices. I have presented pedagogical narrations in this study as a post-qualitative methodology that is at once solitary and collective, private and public, indebted to inheritance and committed to new patterns. Like cat's cradle, if we learn to play well, with care/full attention, "we might learn something about how worlds get made and unmade, and for whom" (p. 70).

Caring methodologies. The co-researchers and I understood the moments of practice captured through pedagogical narrations as incomplete traces of an event and not a (re)presentation of what really happened. We understood that the material artefacts of this study – photographs, videos, written narratives, recorded dialogues - became part of the generation of something new. With this understanding, we did not seek to know about and promote the "right" way to care for children or the "right" way for boys and girls, men and women, to act. Rather, we engaged in pedagogical narrations to generate multiple stories that might in turn open up possibilities for diverse practices of gender and care in ECE spaces. By making visible moments of practice, our assumptions and questions, and our embodied and emotive responses, we complicated our gender and care conversations *and* our (re)searching practices. The layered and interfering stories that I have shared further produced gender and care complexities, making visible many hitherto unseen webbed relations. My aim was to offer the many stories that I have told as matters of care, rather than matters of fact (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011). The classroom dolls and cars that I play with in my analyses in Chapters 4 and 5 acted as figurations for making "explicit and inescapable the tropic quality of all material-semiotic processes" (Haraway, 1997, p. 11). Thinking with dolls and cars as matters of care as opposed to matters of fact (e.g., boys like cars, children are drawn to faces, dolls help develop nurturance), opens

questions of how we (e.g., educators, researchers, parents, children) “can participate in their possible becomings” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 100).

As already described, this attending to the more-than-human, this kind of paying attention, provides no short cuts for any of us. It is “time-consuming, expensive, hard work, as well as play” (Haraway, 2008, p. 83). And the details – which stories we tell, which knots we pick at, which thoughts we think – matter. “The details link actual beings to actual response-abilities. Each time a story helps me remember what I thought I knew, or introduces me to new knowledge, a muscle critical for caring about flourishing gets some aerobic exercise” (Haraway, 2012, p. 312). In Chapters 4 and 5, I suggested that caring pedagogies require that we stay with the complexities, share in the suffering, “grapple with the dilemmas and tensions that inevitably arise when we co-inhabit with differences” (Taylor & Giugni, 2012, p. 113). The same is needed for caring methodologies.

In Chapter 3 I put forward that, from a post-qualitative perspective, pedagogical narrations are never innocent, complete, or transcendent, but always already political, ethical, implicated acts. I shared several questions that my colleagues and I have wrestled with (and continue to) in our work with pedagogical narrations (Hodgins, Kummen, Rose et al., 2013). In many ways they are questions that resonate with post-qualitative research in general (e.g., resisting desires for clarity and single answers, embracing complexities and disorders, living in questions’ capacities to provoke and call forth possibilities), and in other ways are quite specific to pedagogical research and the practice of documentation (e.g., questioning while living in pedagogic action, mitigating risks of narrations acting to govern and maintain hegemonic ways of constructing and being with

children). Maybe, with help from Puig de la Bellacasa (2011) and her thinking with Haraway, we might look at this post-qualitative working of pedagogical narrations as a *caring* methodology. “Caring is more about a transformative ethos than an ethical application. We need to ask ‘how to care’ in each situation” (p. 100). *Learning to play well* - again and again and again. This is not, as Puig de la Bellacasa makes clear, only an epistemological project, and certainly not one for constructing epistemological (moral) standards.

But formulating the necessity of care as an open question still adds a requirement to constructivism: cultivating a speculative commitment to contribute to liveable worlds. As a transformative ethos, caring is a living technology with vital material implications for human and non-human worlds. (p. 100)

The chapter’s concluding section considers what practices of/with care might do for growing *response-abilities*.

Growing *Response-abilities*

I have been asked several times by friends, when they hear that I have been “analyzing dolls and cars” in early childhood, what my verdict is. Am I for or against the cars and dolls? I am neither. This is not about telling educators, practitioners, parents, or children what materials I believe to be best. Thinking with dolls and cars highlighted that those material choices are never simple and are never outside of political and ethical consequences. Again I will lean on Foucault’s (1983) assertion that “everything is dangerous” (p. 231) and therefore we “always have something to do” (p. 232). There are no pure, innocent materials. But also, the dangers are not all equal. What I find paramount in Foucault’s words is the statement: “I think that the ethico-political choice

we have to make every day is to determine which is the main danger” (p. 232). This is one of the greatest challenges of practices. Who decides which cares matter or which bodies (human and non-human) matter? Whose definitions of “best”, “natural”, “gender”, “care”, and so on, count?

This research study illuminates the need to ask these questions but also to know there are no simple, single answers. Stay with the complexity, stay with the trouble; that is what the many doll and car stories I tell provoke. We (researcher, educators, practitioners, families, children) cannot blindly follow prescribed assumptions and solutions, and must let go of the illusion that we will find The Right Way if only we care and try hard enough. As I have described, a post-qualitative paying attention is facilitative for integrating this complexity into the daily, mundane routines of practice (i.e., what and how do we pay attention to, plan, analyze, respond to, act), and for encouraging children’s engagement and participation in them. This kind of caring (in a Harawayian sense) is not because we must prepare children for complex futures. We cannot know their future world, though what we do today is certainly never separate from what children will inherit tomorrow. This is because children already live in complex heterogeneous commonworlds. Their and our being/action is now. So how do we create spaces for this? We might do more to “invite the risk of response” (Haraway, 2010, p. 95).

Possibilities for Practices

In terms of early childhood education there are three connected avenues that are integral to facilitating this kind of pedagogical practice: pre-service ECE teacher training, ongoing ECE professional development, and ECE research. *Gender and Care with Young*

Children is situated within ECE research but the provocations we (the co-researchers and I) offer through this study could provide educators in training and other educators currently in practice a springboard for (re)considering not only conceptualizations and practices of gender and care, but also how educators act/choose/reflect/share in commonworlding pedagogies. Our post-qualitative use of pedagogical narrations is an example of how educators might embrace, question and engage with the complexity of heterogeneous human and non-human relationality. With post-qualitative and material feminist thinking, we have taken pedagogical narrations beyond a tool to make visible children's "100 languages" of learning (Malaguzzi, 2008/1996; Rinaldi, 2006). What might this re-thinking of documentation practices do for training pre-service educator and for working with current educators on the floor? Lenz Taguchi (2010, 2011, 2013) has asked similar questions of pre-service training and pedagogical documentation. Kummer (forthcoming) has built on this work in her research with pre-service ECE students and their work with pedagogical narrations in their (university) classroom. Pacini-Ketchabaw and colleagues (forthcoming) are also asking these questions: How do we practice with/in heterogeneous commonworlds? How do we engage pedagogical narrations post-qualitatively to investigate complexity and build pedagogies of/for curiosity? Thompson's (forthcoming) research has also demonstrated the value of this approach to pedagogical narrations for current educators (re)searching and sharing stories of complexities. *Gender and Care with Young Children* adds to this scholarship and innovative practice but there is more work to be done.

I cannot assert that pedagogical narrations is *the* post-qualitative methodology for attending to human and non-human relationalities and complexities in ECE. Several

educator researchers are providing provoking and important work in this area that follows other methodologies (e.g., Blaise, 2013a, 2013b; Gallacher, 2006; Jones et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2012; Lind, 2005; MacLure et al., 2010; MacRae, 2012; Rossholt, 2009; Taylor, 2013; Taylor & Blaise, 2014; Taylor, Blaise & Giugni 2013; Taylor & Giugni, 2012). However, as a pedagogical practice that the government of British Columbia is promoting to early childhood educators through the *Early Learning Framework* (Government of British Columbia, 2008a, 2008b), it is of utmost importance that research and pedagogical practices challenge its take-up as a dogmatic, static, truth-telling device (see also Elliott, 2010; Hodgins, Kummen, Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2012; Kummen, forthcoming; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., forthcoming; Thompson, forthcoming). This study puts forward a post-qualitative understanding of pedagogical narrations that both promotes and troubles its potentiality. It is a methodology that invites a “range of materially innovative methods” (Law, 2004, pp. 153-154), only a fraction of which this study employs. There are many other possibilities for different forms of narrations that this study did not engage with (e.g., artwork, children’s stories) and ways to share stories (e.g., multi-media, artwork, different/new forms of public forums).

One avenue that warrants further investigation is conversations with parents. Kocher and colleagues (2010) have pointed to the potential of pedagogical narrations as an avenue for dialogue between educators, children and parents (see also Dahlberg et al., 2007; MacDonald, 2008; Rinaldi, 2006). There is significant room to investigate engagements with parents through pedagogical narrations, not as an informing strategy or a taking of “parent perspectives” to be applied in the classroom, but as possibilities for generating, illuminating and maybe even transforming complicated conversations. I

recognize this is (historically) dangerous ground. How do we *engage with* and not aim to train/educate parents? This question/tension is just as relevant for pre-service training and ongoing professional development (for more on this tension see Kummen, forthcoming; Thompson, forthcoming).

As I explained in Chapter 3, *Gender and Care with Young Children* is a sub-study of a larger research project that engaged early childhood educators in practitioner action research in order to implement and disseminate pedagogical approaches outlined in the *BC Early Learning Framework* (see Government of British Columbia, 2008a, 2008b). I also pointed out that this study's co-researchers and I worked together on another research project that investigated art materials in order to engage non-traditional approaches to materiality in early childhood classrooms (see Pacini-Ketchabaw, Kind, & Kocher, 2012). We have worked closely with the educators and children in these inquiries and this has led to several publications by the lead investigator Pacini-Ketchabaw (Clark, Pacini-Ketchabaw & Hodgins, forthcoming; Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2012a, 2012b; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2014) and by some of the educator co-researchers in these projects (Elliott & Yazbeck, 2013; Yazbeck, 2013). These have been extremely impactful to many of us who have participated in them (see Elliott & Yazbeck, 2013; Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2014; Yazbeck, 2013). However, we have not seriously or deeply engaged parents and families in these projects. How do these investigations ripple in/with their impact? Do they reach families and in what ways? Further, what might material feminist and post-qualitative understandings of knowing and being in/of the world bring to conversations and work with parents in ECE? What might parents bring to these complicated conversations?

I am particularly interested in what a material feminist re-conceptualization of gender and care might do to practices, both institutional and familial, that touch ECE in some capacity. *Gender and Care with Young Children* explored how a material feminist understanding of cause and effect dismantles bounded and simplified gender/care explanations. I have suggested that pedagogical practices need to pay attention, not to the multiplicity of who/what “we” are, but rather to that which/whom we are always already on the verge of becoming. Is there room for these kind of complicated conversations about gender and care not only with the parents/families of children in our ECE classrooms but in other venues as well? School age parent initiatives? Prenatal classes? Parenting programs? What might this bring to conversations about what many consider to be a truly new era in parenting with fathers “establishing new territory” (DeGeer, Humberto, Minerson, & White Ribbon Campaign, 2014, p. 10) and fathers “radically revisioning masculine care and ultimately our understanding of masculinities” (Doucet, 2006, p. 237)? Might it help us to move beyond the trap of “just the same as” and “just as good as” (Epstein, 2009, p. 14) justifications for/about diverse parenting (e.g., non-heterosexual)?

Epstein’s edited volume, *Who’s Your Daddy?*, shifts from “a limiting framework of defensiveness to one of exploration, curiosity, and possibility” (p. 16) and it (re)presents many stories of complexities of practices, this time relating specifically to queer parenting. The spaces that Epstein has helped to create in practice, including her edited collection, invite a questioning of how “normal” gets constructed, instead of simply expanding the net of what/whom gets recognized as “normal”. My hope is that *Gendering and Caring with Young Children* has contributed to this kind of questioning.

“Queering specific normalized categories is not for the easy frisson of transgression, but for the hope for liveable worlds” (Haraway, 1994, p. 69). Future research would do well to investigate the potential for queering understandings and practices of care in various parent/family settings. And while *Gendering and Caring with Young Children* addressed gender care entanglements with threads of race, sexuality, and socio-economics, much more work is possible with/in material feminist inquiries to explore gender and care entanglements in relation to neocolonialisms, racialization, heteronormativity, dis/abilities, and so on.

Extending these inquiries to policy development could shift conversations about practices such as parental leave and care support from simplified, individualized gendered problems/solutions to complex, relational, political and ethical understandings and actions. What might a material feminist perspective of gender and care, as explored in this study, do to opening up policies that reach/support multiple formations of family, multiple understandings of care? It might result in social statistics, work place policies, and community supports better able to attend to the growing complexities/multiplicities of family and institutional (gender) care. But perhaps it might, again, mean more than working to widen the net (i.e., capture more categories of family, institutions, gender, care). Perhaps it might mean working to change/challenge/question the parameters altogether.

Refiguring ontology in ECE. In summary, the research reported in the foregoing chapters contributes to the increased attention to refigure ontology in ECE. *Gender and Care with Young Children* adds to the limited but growing research that engages pedagogical narrations from a post-qualitative perspective but goes further by naming,

theorizing and utilizing pedagogical narrations as a methodology – a philosophy of method – rather than a method within other forms of educational research. Pedagogical narrations as a post-qualitative methodology presents exciting possibilities for research in the early learning classroom that could ripple up to school-age environments as well as out to environments outside of children’s classrooms (i.e., teacher education, ECE professional development, parent/family resource programs and centres). As a pedagogical practice that the government of British Columbia is promoting, *Gender and Care with Young Children* importantly provides an example and argument for a post-qualitative perspective of pedagogical narrations that will challenge it from becoming a sedimenting research and pedagogic practice.

The attention paid to ontology in this study is not separate from epistemology and ethics and therefore presents a way that practices may approach onto-ethico-epistemological inquiries. My push for learning to play well is not the same as a push for “best practices”. *Gender and Care with Young Children* provides an example and an argument that caring pedagogies and methodologies are those that practice with/in complexities and multiplicities. I have asserted through this study that children always already live in heterogeneous commonworlds and that practitioners need to *think with* children to attend to and act with/in natureculture complexities. Part of this attending includes serious play with the material world, turning “things” from matters of fact to matters of care. It is not simply (only) that materials are important (to/for children) but that we (children, educators, researchers, dolls, cars, etc.) are always already transformed through our entangled relatings.

Reconceptualizing gender and care. The research reported in the foregoing

chapters contributes to a reconceptualization of gender and care by using a material feminist lens to shift from predetermined traits or practices that exist beforehand to that which is performatively emerging through intra-action. *Gender and Care with Young Children* is more than how we *think about* gender and care but rather how we might *think with* the (always partial and incomplete) *being and becoming* of gendered caring subjects *in the making*. This study demonstrated that gender and care are not only entangled with each other, but that there are many other materialsemiotic threads (i.e., psychology, education, marketing, consumerism, race, socio-economics, sexuality, production, technology, and so on) in these entanglements. *Gender and Care with Young Children* illuminates that attending to the mattering of gender and care means tracing these webs of relations, including “our place” with/in them, in order to act/play well in their/our ongoing becoming. My hope is that *Gendering and Caring with Young Children* has contributed to efforts to queer normalized categories such as “care”, “gender”, “parent”, in order to facilitate practices that are open to multiple possibilities of what it is to care for children. This study is an example and argument for complicating conversations about care from simplified, individualized gendered problems/solutions to complex, relational, political and ethical understandings and actions.

Moving Forward

In Olsson’s (2009) final chapter of her book, *Movement and Experimentation in Young Children’s Learning*, she writes: “It is not by accident that this study ends with an invitation to a new project. This is how we work” (p. 189). In many ways I have done something similar toward the end of this chapter in the section Promising Practices. I have pointed to how *Gender and Care with Young Children* ultimately invites more

questions, more action, more relatings, within the many practices that this study touches (e.g., policy development, teacher training, parenting, childcare, implementing curricula, purchasing materials, research, storytelling). It is a push for practicing the “risky obligation of curiosity for that is how responsibility grows” (Haraway, 2008, p. 287). I do not end this dissertation with certainty and firm conclusions, in the sense of this is *the* way forward and here is a road map for “best” practice. I am rather certain, though, about uncertainty, firm on unknowability. “A way of caring over here, could kill over there” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 100). I do offer a conclusion, however, that “we” must still act with/in/through our situated knowledges and partial yet always connected relationalities; “we” are (collectively) accountable.

We are responsible for the world of which we are a part of, not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing but because reality is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped. (Barad, 2007, p. 390)

A (Final) Story

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I have been surrounded by dolls and toy vehicles. They are obviously in my data, the photographs, video and memories from/of this study, as well as the books, articles, catalogues and websites that I have (re)searched through. But they are also in trunks in my attic, under my children’s beds, on shelves in their rooms, in toy baskets, sometimes on counters, and even occasionally on my desk. They appear and reappear in the memories of my computer screen saver, my mind, my body, and my heart.

In the attic are train engines that used to be my father-in-law's, trains and large metal trucks (one orange dump truck, one yellow flat bed) that were my husband's when he was a boy. One of my mother's old dolls, a painted yes/no early plastic composite doll – her head shakes when you press her bellybutton – rests in one of the trunks. I suppose it isn't surprising that the old saved toys are trains for a boy and dolls for a girl. My mom's old doll is near one of my childhood dolls and the baby doll clothes my grandmother and great aunt sewed for me when I was little. These are packed with some of my childhood stuffed animals, rag dolls, collector dolls from various countries my father brought back from business trips. I brought the doll clothes out awhile ago for my daughter's dolls – funny, I never brought them out for my son, perhaps I didn't know they were there – but I put them back fairly quickly as she (in my estimation) didn't care for them well enough. So they sit packed up in the attic, waiting. For what, I'm not so sure. They are beside the bag of knitted Barbie clothes that my great aunt made me. I actually cried when I re-discovered these in my trunk in the attic. I thought they had been lost in one of the many moves I have made in my life. But they are there, in my attic, preserved (memories). I haven't shown these to my daughter. Barbie's not really welcome in my house now. Well, not outside the attic I suppose. I guess it's my feminist thing. I just can't get past those unrealistic curves and high heels. But wow did I adore her when I was young. When my sister was born I won the prize for best guess on the baby's weight, height and sex - the Barbie camper van! I was just about 5 years old. It never dawned on me that the contest was probably rigged in favour of the youngest kid to not feel so badly that this new baby was coming into the house. I was actually really excited to have a new sister.

Though the red faced tiny bundle that came home from the hospital was not exactly the playmate sister who would jump rope with me in the driveway that I envisioned.

The more I write about dolls the more I notice. I wonder why my mother kept her doll? I think it was my grandmother who kept the doll actually. Maybe she passed it on to me. I always remember having it on my shelf in my room as a girl. It seems likely that my mother would have a doll, being a girl thing and all, but she didn't really care for them. She loved her cap guns and playing cops and robbers with the boys (they actually called it cowboys and Indians, but that's just so difficult to write). When she was two she had a serious eye operation and afterward was given a beautiful, I imagine very expensive for my grandparents, doll buggy. She didn't play with it much. My aunt, her older sister by two years who ADORED dolls, was SO angry. There are photos that capture a less-than-impressed older sister, my mother and that buggy. More family folklore. Ironically my aunt had a daughter who basically hated to play with dolls and my mother had me; I LOVED my dolls. My cousin's dolls and stuffed animals sat on her shelves, pristinely kept. Mine were smudged and kind of dirty, well worn and tattered. Like my daughter's. And my son's actually. They both have worn out a few stuffed animals and the baby dolls were certainly carried around from place to place.

The more I write about the classroom dolls and cars, the more I remember. My son, carrying one of his baby dolls into Thrifty's grocery store and an older gentleman stopping to comment on how lovely this was. That doll is in the attic. Saved. They're near the cars and trucks that he played with and cared for SO much when he was little. Like my father-in-law saving my husband's childhood trains and trucks, I have carefully tucked these away. Who or what are we caring for as we save the dolls and trucks and

cars of our (another child's) childhood? My son's dolls are near my daughter's and the carefully wrapped up doll buggy my mother bought for her when she was two. Funny. It was so important to her that she be the grandmother that buys her a special doll buggy. Did her doll buggy mean more to her than she remembered? Or is that just what grandmothers are (she thinks) supposed to do for their granddaughters? My mother-in-law, another not-so-much-of-a-child-doll-lover, has bought dolls for both my daughter and my son. We feminists love buying dolls for boys. I think a 13-year-old liberal feminist must still live inside me somewhere, and her simplified equalitarian values pop up now and again.

But my daughter did love her dolls; more than even I did I think. Certainly as much as my son loved his cars and trucks. There, I've admitted it - the gender stereotype. Of course they did each have and play with the other (she had cars, he had dolls). And of course I make sure to point that out. My daughter is currently obsessed with Maplelea Dolls (the Canadian version of American Girl dolls). My writing is interrupted by requests for printing pictures from their website, for showing me her larger-than-it-should be birthday wish list of clothes and accessories for her doll Leonie. Leonie spent almost a week standing on my desk, staring at me while I wrote. Finally one day I picked her up and carried her back to my daughter's room, contemplating the absurdity of writing about the dilemmas of plastic toys while being watched by this Canadianized, 18-inch, made in China, plastic doll. How did I not pay better attention to where my child's toys were coming from? Where did my baby doll in the attic come from? My mother's? Lately, to get to my desk to write these chapters, I have had to step over an old tablecloth laid out on the floor of my (home) office that holds scattered about partially connected

pieces of a model rocket my son is building. It was a gift for his 11th birthday that my husband very enthusiastically picked out. He also, very carefully, chose the model trains for both of our children, which he efficaciously helped them build. Who are these gifts for? They're planning to launch the rocket – they expect it will go 250 feet in the air – from an open field near their school. (When they finally do, the launch attracted quite the crowd from neighbours, dog walkers and other passers-by. Almost as exciting to my son and daughter as the launch itself!)

I am surrounded by dolls and toy vehicles.

There is no simple gender care here. But, I don't think there ever was.

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Appendix A



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Participant Educator Information Letter and Consent Form

Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services Sub-Study

September 21, 2012

You are invited to participate in the study “Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE”. This is a sub-study of the research study entitled “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services”. Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw is the lead Principal Investigator of the “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services” study and Denise Hodgins is a co-Principal Investigator. This sub-study “Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE” will be the focus of her doctoral dissertation research.

Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw is a Professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by e-mail at vpacini@uvic.ca or by phone at 250-721-6478.

Denise Hodgins is a doctoral candidate in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by e-mail at dhodgins@uvic.ca.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services” research project is to engage with University of Victoria Child Care Services’ early childhood educators in practitioner action research in order to implement and disseminate pedagogical approaches outlined in a recent document, *BC Early Learning Framework*, published by the Ministry of Education in British Columbia. (The information letter about the “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services” research project is attached as an appendix for your information.)

The sub-study “Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE”, will specifically explore questions related to the relationship between care practices and gender. The purpose of this sub-study is to generate new knowledges about care, how it is understood, practiced and facilitated within early childhood education spaces, that are not simply bound with gender binary (e.g., male/female, men/women, boys/girls) explanations. The focus of the sub-study fits with several learning goals outlined in the BC Early Learning Framework’s “Areas of Learning” of *Well-being and Belonging* and *Social Responsibility and Diversity*.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will provide participating educators and young children with further insights into the practices of the child care centres. The research will also allow UVic Child Care Services to position itself as a leader in early childhood education pedagogy in BC and Canada. The work conducted by UVic Child Care Services' educators will contribute to (a) knowledge building in the field of early childhood education pedagogy, and (b) improving early childhood education practices for children and families in BC and Canada.

This sub-study's research focus on the relationship between gender and caring practices is timely given the increasing attention paid in research, practice and policy development to gender in both education (e.g., boys' and girls' academic performance and social conduct, the feminization of education, the recruitment of male educators) and in parental caregiving practices (e.g., parental leave, work-family balance, initiatives to increase father involvement). It is also timely given the call for early childhood educators in BC to help facilitate children's development of social responsibility and respect for diversity as described in the BC Early Learning Framework. Research of this type is important to contribute to the dialogue about gender and care in research, practice and policy development in order to open up possibilities for understanding, engaging in, and facilitating multiple, diverse practices of caring for children.

To deeply consider the relationship between gender and care in early childhood education is not to question the importance of caring for children (whether male or female, adult or child, in day-to-day interactions or during make-believe play) but rather it is to link the assumptions that care practices operate from. Ongoing reflection is necessary if we are to successfully facilitate practices that are open to multiple possibilities of what it is to care for children and the benefits this brings to individuals, families, communities and society at large.

Participants Selection

You are being asked to participate in this sub-study of the research study entitled 'Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services' because you are an early childhood educator in one of the UVic Child Care Services' centres.

What is Involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include engagement with the BC Early Learning Framework's pedagogical approach, namely pedagogical narrations.

“British Columbia has adopted the term pedagogical narration to refer to a process to make children's learning visible. Pedagogical narration is the process of observing, recording, and, individually and collectively, interpreting a series of related ordinary moments in your practice. The process should be ongoing, cyclical and based on the art of critical reflection on the part of a community of learners. Pedagogical narration makes children's learning visible and helps us reflect upon the educator's practices.” (p. 17)

This process will involve recording of moments of practice (both by yourself and by the researchers), and engaging in individual and collective discussions with you (both during activity time and in scheduled meetings) based on the recordings. Children and educators in early childhood education spaces engage in acts of caring every day, both through make-believe play and their daily interaction. This sub-study will focus in on those moments of practice as they relate to the topic of the sub-study: the relationship between caring practices and gender. Discussions will focus on collaboratively exploring how gender and care emerge in early childhood education practices. The purpose of these discussions will be to:

- (a) make visible the learning that takes place in everyday practices in the program;

- (b) deepen and extend the activities observed; and
- (c) follow children's interests and curiosities.

My experience in the child care settings tells me that young children regularly engage in acts of caring for young children (both real and imagined) through their interactions in these spaces with materials, other children, and educators. Both research and my practice experience tell me that acts of caring for young children are guided by particular beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about gender and that, perhaps, ideas about gender are guided by particular beliefs, attitudes and assumptions about what constitutes caring for young children. Through collective engagement with pedagogical narrations, this study will explore the following questions:

- How do gender and caring emerge in ECE practices?
- How do children and educators emerge as viable gendered caring subjects in these practices?
- How do narrations produce gendered caring practices and entanglements?

Notes will be taken during/after discussions by the researchers. Some of the scheduled meetings will be video or audio recorded for later revisiting.

Ordinary moments will be recorded using video, photographs, and field notes. Videos and photographs will be taken of you only with your permission. See note below.

You will have access to the data collected from your own program and act as co-researcher in the process of the research.

The collection of observations will begin after September 27, 2012. It is anticipated that data collection for the purpose of this sub-study will end by February 28, 2013.

You will participate in the project during your regular working hours. Some of the discussions will take place during staff meetings. You might or might not choose to dedicate additional time to your own analysis of the pedagogical narrations. If so, you will determine the minimum/maximum amount of time beyond work hours devoted to this project. When scheduled meetings take place outside of working hours, if you choose to attend you will be provided with professional development hours.

It is important to note that engaging in pedagogical narrations (i.e., recording moments of practice through photos, video, note taking, etc., and engaging in discussions with those recorded moments as prompts for thinking and dialogue) is *not* about telling one story or determining a consensus of what happened and why. As Berge (2010) describes, pedagogical narrations

Act as an inspiration and a possibility to enlarge our shared thought and our shared understanding These stories are not offered as the 'truth' or an example of 'best practice'; instead they suggest possible realities, ways of seeing . . . that invite conversation and that inevitably change the public dialogue. (p. 72)

To understand pedagogical narrations in the way means that children, educators and researchers who engage with pedagogical narrations in this sub-study are not looking to understand and promote the "right" way to care for children or the "right" way for boys and girls, men and women, to act. Rather, participants will be engaging in pedagogical narrations to generate multiple stories, many ideas, which might in turn open up possibilities for diverse practices of care in early childhood education spaces.

Compensation

If you agree to participate in this study, we will issue a certificate of participation for the meetings that take place outside working hours which could be used towards your professional development hours. Please note that this certificate must not be coercive. It is unethical to provide undue compensation or inducements to research participants. If you would not participate if the compensation was not offered, then you should decline. If you agree to participate in this study, this form of compensation to you must not be coercive.

Researcher's Relationship with Participants

Since January 2011, one of my roles as a Professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at UVic has been to act as a pedagogical leader to the educators with UVic Child Care Services. Denise Hodgins has worked with me as a pedagogical leader to the educators with UVic Child Care Services since that time. Our involvement in Child Care Services has been to work with the Early Childhood Educators in their pedagogical/programming as part of an effort towards creating further collaborations between academic departments at UVic and Child Care Services. This work does not involve assessment of the children or the educators at the centre. In the same way that our ongoing work at the child care centre is not a means to evaluate your practice, this research does not attempt to conduct an evaluation of you or your practice.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you. Engaging in discussions related to your pedagogical narrations during staff meetings might detract your team from other issues. An inconvenience for children and for you might be the interruption or intrusion of being recorded while engaged in daily activities. If this occurs, recording will be stopped. A potential inconvenience to you if you choose to be part of the project outside working hours is that time will be taken from other non-work related activities of your life.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include further insights into the process of pedagogical narrations and your own practice. By participating in pedagogical narrations as a research study, which will analyze selected data for dissemination beyond UVic Child Care Services, this research study may generate potential benefits to society, such as the possibility of increased understanding about the processes of pedagogical narrations, and potential benefits to the state of knowledge, such as increased understanding of the relationship between gender and caring practices in early childhood education.

Voluntary Participation

It is possible that you may feel influenced to participate because of Child Care Services' involvement in bringing us in as pedagogical leaders and their agreement to this research project being conducted at UVic Child Care Services. It is important to stress that your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you feel influenced to be involved because of this perceived power-over relationship, you should decline participation. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. Your decision to participate or not to participate will not affect your employment in any way.

If you do withdraw from the study your data will only be used after you sign an authorization form. However, please note that it will be very difficult for us to remove what you have said during the group sessions. This is due primarily to the fact that after removing one person's

dialogue in a discussion, the entire conversation might not make sense in total. We will minimize your data to respect your decision to withdraw while ensuring that we can still gain a good understanding of other participants' experiences and insights. When photos/videos are involved, we will crop the images and delete clips that involve you.

If you withdraw from the study, you will still receive a certificate for the professional development hours you have completed up to the withdrawal date. If you do withdraw from the study, and no other educators from your centre are participants in this study, the children participants from your centre will also be withdrawn from the study. Their data will only be used after their parents sign an authorization form.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, we will remind you of your rights to withdraw consent at any time during the process of the research every time a new pedagogical narration begins.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

In terms of protecting your anonymity, your name will not be revealed in transcripts, reports, or publications that we produce and any information you provide will remain anonymous. We will change such things as your name, details about you and any kind of information that identifies you. Our research results will not reveal your identity.

You might however want to consent for us to reveal your identity when you are co-authoring articles/chapters/ presentations with us. We will ask for your consent every time an opportunity for publication arises.

In addition, given the collaborative nature of this research, you might decide to waive your confidentiality. See below.

Please note that other educators involved in the project will be able to recognize you. We will ask that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group by not revealing participant discussions with others outside of the group, including the identity or identifying information of other participants. We cannot guarantee that all group members will keep everything that is said in the group confidential. In addition, you will be able to be identified by your own childcare setting community (i.e., colleagues in other centres, families) and potentially by other child care settings in the community (given the size of our community).

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring that no one other than the researchers will have access to the information you provide. Notes, audio and videotapes will be stored in locked cabinets. Those with access to the data (research assistants) have signed a confidentiality agreement with the principal investigator to ensure your confidentiality

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- You will be invited to disseminate your own work on pedagogical narrations produced in your classroom in articles in professional magazines, and at conference presentations.
- Pedagogical narrations will be displayed both in the centre and outside the centre.
- Researchers will use the data in publications and presentations (chapters, articles in refereed and professional journals, academic and professional conferences).

- Research assistants will use the collected data in their doctoral thesis.

Disposal of Data

Data collected will be stored by means of locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files at the Unit for Early Years Research and Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw's office (HSD B132), both at the University of Victoria. Data collected will also be stored by means of locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files at the home of Denise Hodgins. Data will be stored for a maximum period of 5 years. All forms of data will be destroyed by April 1, 2017. Electronic data will be deleted, paper copied will be shredded and audio and video records will be erased.

Contacts

You are encouraged to ask any clarifying questions with regard to your participation in this research and we will answer your questions to the best of our knowledge and your satisfaction. Our contact information is provided at the beginning of this letter.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca). As well, you may wish to contact the Human Research Ethics Office with any concerns about your rights and treatment in connection with this research project, particularly if you are not comfortable contacting the researcher or the manager of UVic Child Care Services because of your relationship with them and the sense that you may have of their investment in the research project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Participation *with* Visually Recorded Images/Data

Participant to provide initials:

- Photos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____
- Videos may be taken of me for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____

*Even if no names are used, you may be recognizable if visual images are shown in the results.

Participation *Without* Visually Recorded Images/Data

Participant to provide initials:

- I consent to my participation without taking photos of myself _____
- I consent to my participation without taking videos of myself _____

Name of Participant
Date

Signature

WAIVING CONFIDENTIALITY

I agree to be identified by name / credited in the results of the study.

_____ (Participant to provide initials)

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Authorization to use data upon withdrawal from the project

Upon my withdrawal from the research project entitled “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services”, I hereby grant Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw the right and permission to use my data in the following ways:

- In articles, book chapters, conference presentations and Doctoral Theses.

Print Name

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix B



University
of Victoria

School of Child & Youth Care

PO Box 1700 STN CSC
Victoria BC V8W 2Y2 Canada
Fax (250) 721-7218
Web www.cyc.uvic.ca

Undergraduate Program

On Campus & Distributed Learning
(250) 721-7979/6278

Graduate Program

(250) 472-4857

Parents' Information Letter and Consent Form

**Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE
A Sub-Study of the Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services Research Study**

December 5, 2012

To the Parents/Guardians of Children Enrolled at University of Victoria's Child Care Services:

Your child is being invited to participate in the study "Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE". This is a sub-study of the research study entitled "Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services". Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw is the lead Principal Investigator of the "Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services" study and Denise Hodgins is a co-Principal Investigator. Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw is conducting this study with the permission of the manager of Child Care Services and the educators in your child's centre. This sub-study "Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE" will be the focus of her doctoral dissertation research.

Dr. Pacini-Ketchabaw is a Professor in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by e-mail at vpacinik@uvic.ca or by phone at 250-721-6478.

Denise Hodgins is a doctoral candidate in the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria and you may contact her if you have further questions by e-mail at dhodgins@uvic.ca. This sub-study will be the focus of her doctoral dissertation research.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the "Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services" research project is to engage with University of Victoria Child Care Services' early childhood educators in practitioner action research in order to implement and disseminate pedagogical approaches outlined in a recent document, *BC Early Learning Framework*, published by the Ministry of Education in British Columbia. (The information letter about the "Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services" research project is

attached as an appendix for your information.) The Framework and related documents can be accessed at the Ministry of Education website (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/pdfs/early_learning_framework.pdf).

The sub-study “Exploring the Relationship between Gender and Care Practices in ECE”, will specifically explore questions related to the relationship between care practices and gender. The purpose of this sub-study is to generate new knowledges about care, how it is understood, practiced and facilitated within early childhood education spaces, that are not simply bound with gender binary (e.g., male/female, men/women, boys/girls) explanations. The focus of the sub-study fits with several learning goals outlined in the BC Early Learning Framework’s “Areas of Learning” of *Well-being and Belonging* and *Social Responsibility and Diversity*.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because it will provide participating educators and young children with further insights into the practices of the child care centre. The research will also allow UVic Child Care Services to position itself as a leader in early childhood education pedagogy in BC and Canada. The work conducted by UVic Child Care Services’ educators will contribute to (a) knowledge building in the field of early childhood education pedagogy, and (b) improving early childhood education practices for children and families in BC and Canada.

This sub-study’s research focus on the relationship between gender and caring practices is timely given the increasing attention paid in research, practice and policy development to gender in both education (e.g., boys’ and girls’ academic performance and social conduct, the feminization of education, the recruitment of male educators) and in parental caregiving practices (e.g., parental leave, work-family balance, initiatives to increase father involvement). It is also timely given the call for early childhood educators in BC to help facilitate children’s development of social responsibility and respect for diversity as described in the BC Early Learning Framework. Research of this type is important to contribute to the dialogue about gender and care in research, practice and policy development in order to open up possibilities for understanding, engaging in, and facilitating multiple, diverse practices of caring for children.

To deeply consider the relationship between gender and care in early childhood education is not to question the importance of caring for children (whether male or female, adult or child, in day-to-day interactions or during make-believe play) but rather it is to link the assumptions that care practices operate from. Ongoing reflection is necessary if we are to successfully facilitate practices that are open to multiple possibilities of what it is to care for children and the benefits this brings to individuals, families, communities and society at large.

Participants Selection

Your child is being asked to participate in this sub-study of the research study entitled ‘Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services’ because he/she is enrolled in one

of the UVic Child Care Services' Centres and one or more of the educators at your child's centre have agreed to participate in this study.

Description of the Research

The research includes the recording and analysis of the processes involved in 'pedagogical narrations' (as explained in the BC Early Learning Framework). The Framework and related documents can be accessed at the Ministry of Education website (http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/pdfs/early_learning_framework.pdf).

“British Columbia has adopted the term pedagogical narration to refer to a process to make children’s learning visible. Pedagogical narration is the process of observing, recording, and, individually and collectively, interpreting a series of related ordinary moments in [everyday] practice. The process [is] ongoing, cyclical and based on the art of critical reflection on the part of a community of learners [including the educators and researchers]. Pedagogical narration makes children’s learning visible and helps us reflect upon the educator’s practices.” (p. 17)

This process will involve recording of moments of practice (both by the educators and by the researchers), and engaging in individual and collective discussions with the children and the educators about what takes place in the recorded moments. This sub-study will focus in on those moments of practice as they relate to the topic of the sub-study: the relationship between caring practices and gender. Collective discussions will explore how gender and care emerge in early childhood education practices. The purpose of these discussions will be to:

- (a) show the learning that takes place in everyday practices in the program;
- (b) deepen and extend the activities observed; and
- (c) follow children’s interests and curiosities.

Ordinary moments of practice as well as later discussions about these moments will be recorded using video, photographs, and field notes. Videos and photographs of your child will be taken only with your permission. See note below.

The educators in the centre will act as co-researchers in the process of the research.

The educators and the researchers will be involved in an analysis of the moments of practice recorded using the British Columbia Early Learning Framework as a guide. Educators may choose to incorporate ideas generated by these analyses into the daily practices for further observation and interpretation.

It is important to note that engaging in pedagogical narrations (i.e., recording moments of practice through photos, video, note taking, etc., and engaging in discussions with those recorded moments as prompts for thinking and dialogue) is *not* about telling one story or determining a consensus of what happened and why. As Berge (2010) describes, pedagogical narrations

Act as an inspiration and a possibility to enlarge our shared thought and our shared understanding These stories are not offered as the ‘truth’ or an example of ‘best practice’; instead they suggest possible realities, ways of seeing . . . that invite conversation and that inevitably change the public dialogue. (p. 72)

To understand pedagogical narrations in the way means that children, educators and researchers who engage with pedagogical narrations in this sub-study are not looking to understand and promote the “right” way to care for children or the “right” way for boys and girls, men and women, to act. Rather, participants will be engaging in pedagogical narrations to generate multiple stories, many ideas, which might in turn open up possibilities for diverse practices of care in early childhood education spaces.

Some of the information collected and the ongoing analyses might be displayed in the centre and will be communicated to you in regular updates via the centre’s newsletter. This will allow you to be aware of the activities in which your child is participating as well as the learning that takes place in everyday practices at the centre.

The collection of observations will begin after December 1, 2012. It is anticipated that data collection for the purpose of this sub-study will end by February 28, 2013.

Your child will participate in the project during his/her regular hours at the child care centre. Pedagogical narrations are part of the regular pedagogical practices of UVic child care services. Children and educators participate in pedagogical narrations as part of the regular activities and events of the child care program. This project is distinct from the regular pedagogical activities of the centre in that selected data will be collected from the regular narrations for analysis and dissemination beyond the centre.

Inconvenience

The only inconvenience for your child will be the possible interruption that taking photographs and videos will create. Since both photography and video are currently used in the centre by the educators, the main interruption will be the presence of the researcher collecting the observations. It is expected that the children will eventually become familiar with the presence of the researchers and this will stop been intrusive.

Risks

There are no known or anticipated risks to your child by participating in this research.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your child’s participation in pedagogical narrations include his/her involvement in his/her own learning processes. You might also benefit as you will be able to participate in discussions regarding the learning processes your child is involved in an ongoing basis.

Participating in pedagogical narrations will also provide the educators with further insights into this process and their own practice.

By participating in pedagogical narrations as a research study, which will analyze selected data for dissemination beyond UVic child care services, this research study may generate potential benefits to society, such as the possibility of increased understanding about the processes of pedagogical narrations, and potential benefits to the state of knowledge, such as increased understanding of the relationship between gender and caring practices in early childhood education.

Voluntary Participation

It is possible that parents and/or children may feel influenced to participate because of their relationship with the participating educator(s) who are acting as co-researchers in this study. It is very important to stress that your child's participation in this research must be completely voluntary. Your decision to give your child permission to participate or to not give your child permission to participate will not affect your access to childcare services at UVic, nor your relationship to your child's care providers. There are no consequences that arise from giving or withholding your permission for your child to participate in this study. If you do decide to give permission to your child to participate, you may withdraw your child at any time without any consequences or any explanation.

Similarly, your child's educator(s), who have agreed to participate in this study, have done so voluntarily. They also have the right to decide to withdraw from the study without any explanation or consequences. If all of the educators at your child's centre decide to withdraw their participation from this study, all of the participating children in your child's centre will also be withdrawn from the study. Again, there will be no consequences to this withdrawal and it will not affect your access to child care services.

Your child will also be invited to participate in this research and they have the right to assent or decline their participation. Your child will also be told that they have the right to choose to not participate at any given time. The children will also choose whether or not their photos/work/observations can be used for analysis.

If you or your child decides not to participate, this will not affect your child's ability to participate in the ongoing activities and events of the child care program. Photographs, videos and written records of your child will not be taken for the purpose of this research. Should part of his or her body be in a photo or video, it will be cropped or blurred from the photo or video.

If you do withdraw your child from the study, or they are withdrawn because the educators at his/her centre have withdrawn from the study, his/her data will only be used after you sign an authorization form. However, please note that it will be very difficult for us to remove what your child has said during group discussions. This is due primarily to the fact that after removing one person's dialogue in a discussion, the entire conversation might not make sense in total. We will minimize your child's data to respect your decision to withdraw him/her while ensuring that we can still gain a good understanding of other children's experiences and insights. When photos/videos are involved, we will crop the photographs and blur the image from the video.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent for your child to participate in this research, the educators will remind you of your rights to withdraw consent at any time during the process of the research in newsletters.

Anonymity & Confidentiality

Photographs and/or video recordings of your child will only be taken with your permission. Any photographs and/or video recordings taken will not be revealed in transcripts, reports, or publications that we produce unless we have your permission.

In terms of protecting your child's anonymity, your child's name will not be revealed in transcripts, reports, or publications that we produce and any information you provide will remain anonymous. We will change such things as your child's name, details about your child and any kind of information that identifies your child. Our research results will not reveal your child's identity or your family.

However, participants involved in the childcare centre your child attends/and those who know your child will be able to recognize him/her in the photographs/video-recordings. We ask all personnel and parents in the child care centre to respect the confidentiality of the child by not revealing the identity or identifying information of other participants with others outside of the centre. We cannot guarantee that all members will keep all the information confidential. In addition, community members may identify your child.

Your child's confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring that no one other than the researchers and educators will have access to the information your child provides. Notes, audio and videotapes will be stored in locked cabinets. Those with access to the data (research assistants) have signed a confidentiality agreement with the principal investigator to ensure your confidentiality

Your child's confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by ensuring that no one other than the researchers will have access to the information your child provides. Notes, audio and videotapes will be stored in locked cabinets. Those with access to the data (research assistants) have signed a confidentiality agreement with the principal investigator to ensure your confidentiality

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways:

- Educators will be invited to disseminate their own work on pedagogical narrations produced in your classroom in articles in professional magazines, and at conference presentations.
- Pedagogical narrations will be displayed both in the centre and outside the centre
- Researchers will use the data in publications and presentations (chapters, articles in refereed and professional journals, academic and professional conferences).
- Research assistants will use the collected data in their doctoral thesis.

Disposal of Data

Data collected will be stored by means of locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files at the Unit for Early Years Research and Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw's office (HSD B132), both at the University of Victoria. Data collected will also be stored by means of locked filing cabinet and password protected computer files at the home of Denise Hodgins. Data will be stored for a maximum period of 5 years. All forms of data will be destroyed by April 1, 2017. Electronic data will be deleted, paper copies will be shredded and audio and video records will be erased.

Contacts

You are encouraged to ask any clarifying questions with regard to your child's participation in this research and we will answer your questions to the best of our knowledge and your satisfaction. Our contact information is provided at the beginning of this letter.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca). As well, you may wish to contact the human research ethics office with any concerns about your and your child's rights and treatment in connection with this research project, particularly if you are not comfortable contacting the educator-researcher or someone else at the centre because of your relationship with them and the sense that you may have of their investment in the research project.

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of your child's participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Participation *with* Visually Recorded Images/Data

Parent/Guardian to provide initials:

- Photos may be taken of my child for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____
- Videos may be taken of my child for: Analysis _____ Dissemination* _____

*Even if no names are used, your child may be recognizable if visual images are shown in the results.

Name of Child

Name of Parent/Guardian
Date

Signature

Participation *Without* Visually Recorded Images/Data

Parent/Guardian to provide initials:

- I consent to my child's participation without taking photos of my child _____
- I consent to my child's participation without taking videos of my child _____

Name of Child

Name of Parent/Guardian
Date

Signature

Authorization to use data upon withdrawal from the project

Upon my withdrawal from the research project entitled “Pedagogical Explorations at UVic Child Care Services”, I hereby grant Dr. Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw the right and permission to use my child’s data in articles, book chapters, conference presentations and Doctoral Theses.

Print Name

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.