Producing the academic apparatus of the early career researcher-musician-educator

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Abstract   In this chapter the notion of 'assemblage' is put to work in order to understand how the early career researcher-musician-educator comes to be formed from the milieu. An analysis of the relationship between research as knowledge production and the artistic desire for aesthetics and affectivity is undertaken to trouble the boundaries that separate education research and arts practice. The complexities of working both as an artist and a beginning academic in the enterprise university are examined and an argument made for using music as a concept for research-creation, experimenting with possible points of dissonance and consonance, in order to shift thought and practice

Keywords   enterprise university, music, research creation, assemblage, Deleuze

Introduction

> *Go down, down beneath the waterfall*
> *and look behind the second wall*
> *and see if you can find it*
> *by digging through the undergrowth*
> *until you find the secret door*
> *the one that lets you in*
>
> (Drawn from Bees[1], Whistling Bone)

Within the contemporary academy, arts-based education research has a long tradition, and there are numerous methodological approaches that have been taken up by scholars who wish to engage with the arts in their inquiries (see Barone & Eisner, 1997; 2011). However, I am not so interested in exploring how arts-based research methods might work in terms of data collection, analysis and research methodology, but am rather more attracted to understanding how art forms different assemblages, where art connects to research, connects to education, connects to something else, and so on. The increasing pressure on academics, particularly early career researchers, to perform in ways that run counter to their aesthetic, personal, political and professional identities is a matter of serious concern. As someone who lives in the world through

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[1] Drawn from Bees (www.drawnfrombees.com) is an alternative rock band from Brisbane, Australia. I am one of two principal song-writers in the band and also play bass, guitar, keyboards and sing. I have played in bands since I was 12 years old, as well as composing and orchestrating for musical theatre, music production and experimental music-making. I share this to give some sense of the enormous importance of music in my own history and sense of how I have come to be.

music, I am wary of regimes of control (Deleuze, 1992), both institutional and personal, that seek to limit what is knowable, speakable, thinkable, and doable (St. Pierre, 2011).

What does it mean to be an early career researcher whose work crosses in-between education research and arts practice? How are the boundaries that separate education – research – arts conceived of and maintained (Knowles & Cole, 2008)? Where are the possible points of rupture, of dissonance and consonance, which enable a shift in thought and practice? These are a few of the many questions that follow me as I work within an academic apparatus, the *enterprise university* (Marginson & Considine, 2011), which requires particular quantifiable and bounded performances of research and scholarship from its academic subjects.

The enterprise university and its accompanying signifying practices are apparent in the multiple daily practices and identities of academics (Davies & Petersen, 2005), including teaching and scholarship, service to community and research endeavours. Murphy and Done (2015) describe the enterprise university as a site of soulless performativity, where the ceaseless intensification and mutation of education marketisation drives increasingly standardised and bureaucratised academics' lives. While this is a pretty bleak assessment of universities as knowledge-production institutions, I think that it provides a starting place for understanding how academics come to be shaped within available grids of intelligibility as knowledge producers within particular institutional discourses.

What I seek to do in this chapter is to use a coming-together of experiences as an early career researcher and a musician and an educator to look at the relationships between research as knowledge production and the artistic desire for aesthetics and affect. There are multiple tensions and contradictions apparent in the academic apparatus that warrant particular interrogation, as they present a complex interplay of conflicting pressures on how we become produced as academic subjects. I start by considering how Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notion of *assemblage* is useful for considering the apparatus of academic work and identities, followed by a critique of the role of the enterprise university in forming early career researchers' aspirations and identities, before turning to how music might function as a conceptual apparatus for thinking, doing and being differently within the enterprise university.

Forming the early career researcher

If I'm a brick and you're the sea
I could sink for days
floating past the old mistakes
we've got time to waste

(Drawn from Bees, Cables in the Sky)

The notion of *assemblage* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) is a useful one for attempting to describe how the early career researcher is formed from the milieu. Why this particular formation that we call the early career researcher and not some other? What are the particular historical and social contexts that need to be accounted for when attempting to give an explanation of this assemblage? Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 36) describe assemblages as having "elements (or multiplicities) of several kinds: human, social, and technical machines" (p. 36). These multiplicities form connections and create pathways for flows and forces to follow as bodies are brought into relations with each other. The early career researcher could be thought of as a

body-machine, an "embodied affective and intelligent entity that captures, processes and transforms energies and forces" (Braidotti, 2008, p. 30).

While assemblages are never stable or constant, they do provide us with some measure of making sense of our coming-to-be. The "non-subjective assemblage of humans, time, space, physical objects, and everything else" (St. Pierre, 2011, p. 618) forms a certain space within which we might come to understand the world and our works within it. As such, the early career researcher can be understood as an arrangement of discursive, non-discursive, material and virtual flows, forces and relationships between bodies in motion. I think of it as musical: the resonances and harmonics of things vibrating in consonance with each other.

The apparatus that forms and sustains the early career researcher is a machine. As Braidotti (2007) explains, "the human organism is an in-between that is plugged into and connected to a variety of possible sources and forces. As such it is useful to define it as a machine" (p. 30). We plug in and we start up, producing outputs in the service of the larger machines of institutional academia, connecting and disconnecting from various nodes depending on the functions to be fulfilled at any given moment. Furthermore, St. Pierre (2011) posits that we are products of theory as much as practice and that when we put new theories to work, we are engaging in an active process of changing the world itself. It is in this productive, creative act of change that I find the energy that sustains my endeavours as an early career researcher who is trying to navigate the complex and contradictory terrains of the contemporary academy.

For example, what constitutes 'value' and 'success' in the institutional discourses can sit uncomfortably against what individual academics might recognize as signifying value and success in their intellectual endeavours (Davies & Petersen, 2005). As academics, we are continuously "constituted and regulated through technologies of audit and writing" (Bansel et. al, 2008, p. 673). The drive to produce research outputs that can then be easily quantified, sorted and ranked through devices such as citations, impact factors and so on is very real and one that is felt particularly keenly by early career researchers (Petersen, 2009). The pressure of being constructed as a successful academic much depends on the quantity and types of writing that is produced.

Yet, there is also some promise in writing that breaks free and takes flight; perhaps a more musical writing. As Deleuze and Guattari (1986) explain, "writing has a double function: to translate everything into assemblages and to dismantle the assemblages. The two are the same thing" (p. 47). Yet, at the same time, Deleuze and Guattari are very careful to make sure that we understand that "writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come" (1987, p. 5). I wonder whether these realms that are yet to come might be realisable within the specific constraints of the enterprise university, to which I now turn.

The enterprise university meets researcher-musician-educator

Duck and cover boy
find a place where you can hide your pile of toys
and these monsters, they will come to make their noise
turn your back and I will take these fears away

(Drawn from Bees, All the World's a Stage)

The ideal academic is one that is constructed as an entrepreneurial knowledge worker in a global higher education market, competing for ever-inflating metrics of success (Burrows, 2012) that seek to label, measure, rank, classify and contain what is acceptable and permissible within the system. Markets act as the 'new monster' of late capitalism (Deleuze, 1995), seeking to code and control all aspects of society (Deleuze, 1992). Of course the university is not immune. As Davies (2009) argues, researchers have become "shaped as entrepreneurial subjects who will be productive in the service of capitalism" (p. 628).

Within the enterprise university, research becomes "product oriented with productivity regularly assessed and tied to individual and institutional survival" (Davies & Bansel, 2005, p. 49). Regular internal and external assessments of research productivity, outputs and quality fulfil the promise of containing academic work into a narrow understanding of 'what counts'; i.e. that which can be counted. This can stand in stark contrast to what counts for researchers themselves (Honan, Henderson & Loch, 2015), with serious personal and social costs attached.

Ball (2015) recognises the urgency and the danger in the current context of research productivity and performance regimes, as "once in the thrall of the index, we are easily reduced by it to a category or quotient — our worth, our humanity and complexity are abridged" (p. 258). There is a troubling violence in the system that produces very real effects in the lives of academics. The following passage from Honan, Henderson and Loch (2015) provides a visceral reflection on how these processes can be felt:

> Neoliberal apparatuses of the university work to construct ourselves as lacking. We lack the qualities of a 'good' teacher according to our student evaluations, we lack the qualities of a 'good' researcher according to the metrics that quantify our inputs and outputs, we lack an Australian Research Council grant, we lack a publication in a "Tier 1" journal, we lack tenure, we lack a promotion, we lack the ability to cross the country for a conference, we are voids. There are huge gaping holes in our credibilities as academics and we spend our days and nights, hours and hours, trying to plug up the holes, trying to stuff them with the cotton wool stuffing of appeasement, of reassurance, endlessly completing futile and empty tasks, searching for that moment of completeness, of success (p. 47).

However, as with all things that we seek to label as part of neoliberalism (or at least that part which is constructed as the Other, the bogeyman of free-range researchers working in universities unshackled from the stultifying constrains of neoliberal governmentalities), there is a dangerous double-capture at play. We, as academics within the system, are as much a part of the problem as anything else. What would happen if all researchers were to stand up and say "No, we will not be measured and counted in these ways"? Is such an event really possible, given that we ourselves are complicit in our own subjection to the enterprise university? Do we desire it to be so?

Deleuze and Guattari (1983) speak of desire as a machine; rather than the psychoanalytical treatment of desire as coming from lack, they claim that desire is productive and an active force of change. They describe how artists, along with revolutionaries and seers, "know that desire clasps life in its powerfully productive embrace, and reproduces it in a way that is all the more intense" (p. 27). Semetsky (2009) describes how desire as a creative force produces reality, including the subjects of experience and objects of knowledge that we come to take for granted. Indeed, we desire "not because we lack something that we do not have, but because of the productive force of intensities and connections of desires" (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 86).

Petersen (2009) asks us to consider how we become "complicit in upholding practices and desires that we also and otherwise reject. What does desire for promotion, for instance, make us vulnerable to? How are such desires produced and upheld, and how are they constituted as

legitimate?" (p. 419). Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) argument comes to mind, where the focus on molar-fascisms overshadows the multitude of micro-fascisms that come to inhabit our daily practices – the multiple ways that we inevitably seek our own oppression.

At the same time, I understand that when it comes to a question of survival as an early career academic, there are no easy choices. It is not a good idea to tell the university "No thanks!" when the annual research audit is undertaken, as the effects on work allocation and tenure are devastatingly immediate. Bansel et. al (2008) remind us that:

> Academics are involved in at least two separate and sometimes contradictory tactics of survival. One involves anticipatory compliance with governmental funding bodies, and the production of what they regard, or might come to regard, as countable. The other involves subversive tactics, in which one makes use of the resources of the institution in order to do work that is responsive to a different discourse from the one enshrined in the technology of audit (p. 677).

Furthermore, perhaps we are at risk of becoming what Ball (2015) describes as, "transparent but empty, unrecognisable to ourselves in a life enabled by and lived against measurement" (p. 259). When there is only one possible way of being recognized as a successful, productive and engaged contributor to the academic apparatus, other possible ways of being and knowing are foreclosed. This is something that needs to be resisted, particularly by early career researchers; for if not us, then who? A critical part of this is to better understand the conditions of our labours as academics and the ways in which we come to be formed (Burrows, 2012). I think that Braidotti (2008) offers some insight for how we might begin; claiming that we need to "learn to think differently about ourselves and our systems of values, starting with the accounts of our embodied and embedded subjectivity" (p. 27).

There is a "need amid the chaos to slow – things – down" and attempt to engage in slow scholarship (Mountz et. al, 2015, p. 1238). This is a powerful call indeed. Stop. Listen. Think. Breathe. Just…slow…down. In the accelerated and compressed time of the enterprise university (Davies & Bansel, 2005), there seems to be little room for slowing down as ever-increasing pressures to perform against measurements of productivity collapse with multiple simultaneous deadlines for papers, grant applications, performance reviews, course materials and so on. However, the call for slow scholarship "cannot just be about making individual lives better, but must also be about re-making the university [and] therefore about cultivating caring academic cultures and processes" (Mountz et. al, 2015, p. 1238). I wonder, what does a more caring university look like? Can it still be an enterprise university if we all resisted enrolment in its work intensification and instead practiced care-full and slow scholarship that connected deeply to the rich veins of our individual and collective knowledges?

What happens when the enterprise university meets the artist, the painter, the dancer, or the musician? Are there particular tensions and contradictions between the desire to perform an academic subjectivity that meets the demands of the enterprise university while also undertaking creative works that nurture and sustain us? Picket-lines and violent resistance are problematic for an early career researcher who is aware of their existential fragility. However, there are other ways and means of working both within and against the grain of the enterprise university. For me, music is one such space of possibility.

Music as a concept for research-creation

Stick around with a taste for the human race

I'm a cow but I know that I've got no eyes
catch a fish, serve a dog on your plate
I'm a madman, stop, he's okay

(Drawn from Bees, Always the Last)

St. Pierre (2004) claims that "we are in desperate need of new concepts" for an educational model that has caused significant harm and "marginalised subjugated knowledges" (p. 286). This powerful call to create new concepts is something that I take seriously in my own attempts to negotiate the multiple contradictions and tensions of being a musician who happens to work as a researcher in a higher education institution. For the purposes of illustrating my case, I focus briefly here on music as one particular concept for thinking differently about the academic apparatus of the early career researcher. In doing so, I hope to open up some possible lines of thought, which might allow new figurations and forms of arts-education-research to emerge.

Bogue (2003), speaking of Deleuze's treatment of music in his philosophical works, considers that "music is perhaps the most material of the arts, the most elemental and cosmic" (p. 188). It offers a particular milieu for "actualising and thinking about an ontology of change, effects of becoming, and their promise for life" (Kielian-Gilbert, 2010, p. 200). There is a power in music that goes well beyond our capacity for reason, for cognition, for language. Deleuze (1997) wonders how language becomes swept up "in its entirety, sending it into flight, pushing it to its very limit in order to discover its Outside, silence or music" (p. 72).

Music involves the intuitive, affective domain of human knowing and being, which Deleuze (1991) explains, "leads us to go beyond the state of experience toward the conditions of experience" (p. 27). Music is very real, even if words fall apart when we attempt to describe it. St. Pierre (2011) connects into this sense, where she says that "words are always thinkable, sayable, and writable only within particular grids of intelligibility, usually dominant, normalised discursive formations" (p. 621). This is felt keenly in the language choices that are available to researchers in our speaking and writing acts. Each time we put words together there is a political decision being made: what to leave in, what to take out, where to put our words, who to speak to, who to write with and against. These are not neutral choices and the words simultaneously fall apart on us yet also capture us in their specific and localised grids of intelligibility.

I am interested in the possibility of music offering a way out, of a freedom or a break from language. Campbell (2013) explains that, music is "absolutely implicated with thought, and at its best, is indicative of new directions for thought that are arguably uncapturable in any other medium" (p. 1). This gives me hope, particularly when I consider how music has the capacity to break apart the over-coded striations of the refrain of the academic apparatus. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) speak of the refrain as the repetitions of territories or the formation of strata. The enterprise university is layered with refrains. Yet, the notion of refrain is also deeply intertwined with music. They say:

> The refrain is rather a means of preventing music, warding it off, or forgoing it. But music exists because the refrain exists also, because music takes up the refrain, lays hold of it as a content in a form of expression, because it forms a block with it in order to take it somewhere else (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 300).

Deleuze and Guattari's point above is that music is able to take the refrain somewhere else, by simultaneously escaping and working within its limits, being both a force of territorialisation and de-territorialisation. When Varèse (1966), describes working in rhythms, frequencies and intensities, this is how I see the possibility of breaking free from the limits of the refrain of the

enterprise university, which involves endless repetition and ceaseless activity in the production of academic outputs.

Bogue (1996) describes how music engages rhythms and patterns that organize the world (think publication metrics, research quality audits and the like) in order to undo the work of the refrain. Music has a de-territorialising force, a capacity to make anew the world in both its forms of content and expression (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). The early career researcher-musician-educator is formed from the milieu, an assemblage of human and non-human machines, including the rhythms, forces and flows of musical blocs of sensation and forms of content.

There is a discerning aesthetic in music, one that is politically, socially and economically multidimensional (Kielian-Gilbert, 2010, p. 200). Music, particularly from a Deleuzean perspective, is about the integration of sensations and forces. Indeed, Bogue (2003) describes how music "makes perceptible the most elemental forces, but in such a way that our corporeal experience of these forces tends to 'disincarnate' and 'dematerialize' our bodies" (p. 189). In other words, music takes us outside of ourselves, to become and feel something else. As Colebrook (2014) says, "music refers to the relations established among expressive qualities and their capacity to create forms, territories, identities and to open to the cosmos" (p. 113). Rhythm may be the milieu's answer to chaos (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) yet at the same time, "chaos is not the opposite of rhythm, but the milieu of all milieus" (p. 1837).
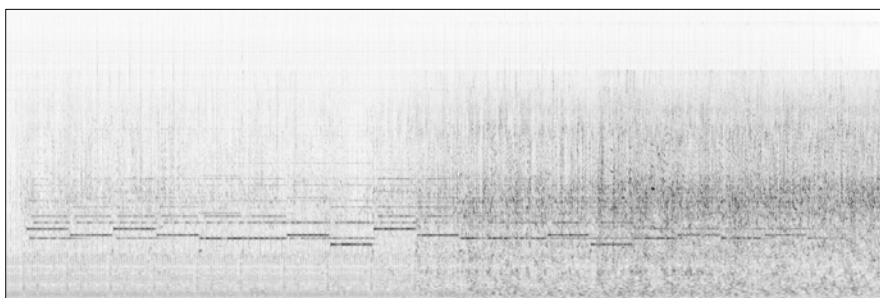

Fig. 1. Rhythms, Frequencies, Intensities, and Durations

I am interested in how music might operate as a conceptual apparatus for educational research-creation. I am also interested in how music operates as a vehicle for post-representational thought (MacLure, 2013), where the focus shifts from an epistemology of knowing to an ontology of being. As Manning and Massumi (2014) argue, "This idea of research-creation as embodying techniques of emergence takes it seriously that a creative art or design practice launches concepts in-the-making" (p. 89). It is the speculative, pragmatic movement of research-creation that I think might be useful as I continue to work with a musical ontology, living and learning with music in my hope for a more musical mode of thought in my research practices.

This is difficult work to do, and one that I am still experimenting with. One example of my current attempts to work in the musical mode is demonstrated in Figure 1: *Rhythms, Frequencies, Intensities, and Durations*. It is a visual representation, called a spectrogram, which plots the pitch (vertical axis), time (horizontal axis) and amplitude (darkness) of a musical composition that I created using drum loops, synthesisers and recorded interviews with participants from a research project. The aim is not to present something from which meaning can be derived, but rather to produce an event that intersects with the world, which brings something

into being. In this regard, I am able to perform an experimental musical mode in my research-creation.

Rethinking the early career researcher-musician-educator

Misinterpretation
Gives these dogs their rations
Hold on to your seatbelt
The wall is coming

(Drawn from Bees, Kindness)

In this chapter, I have referred specifically to working with music as an early career researcher interested in education and the arts, but the same potential for creative expression and experimentation could be said of any of the arts. Deleuze (2003) claims that the supposed separation of the arts and their autonomies and hierarchies is unimportant. Instead, he says:

> There is a community of the arts, a common problem. In art, and in painting as in music, it is not a matter of reproducing or inventing forms, but of capturing forces. For this reason, no art is figurative…The task of painting is defined as the attempt to render visible forces that are not themselves visible. Likewise, music attempts to render sonorous forces that are not themselves sonorous (Deleuze, 2003, p. 56).

Music and all the arts themselves will not be enough to keep us from the effects of the enterprise university without an attendant shift in our political will to collectively resist enrolment in its practices and modes of thought. We need to complicate and create, surprise and delight, otherwise in the absence of such work, "confirmatory and perfunctory research might serve as the desired or required default thereby pushing aside more generative research models" (Koro-Ljungberg, 2012, p. 808). One small way, perhaps, is to engage in the kind of writing and scholarly work that this book presents; work that pushes at the edges of what we are able to think and to know and to feel.

No doubt, there are many reasons to be concerned with the increasing role of technologies of audit and economic rationalism in universities, which narrows the "possibilities for intellectual work, especially the work of critique, and produce the subjects of academicity as increasingly anxious and compliant" (Bansel et. al, 2008, p. 682). However, I also have hope for finding the lines of fault and fractures in order to "speak new discourses, new subject positions, into existence" (Davies, 2005, p. 1). I further agree with Davies (2005), that we need "a kind of daring, a willingness to envisage the not yet known and to make visible the faults, the effects of the already known" (p. 2) in our thoughts and deeds, and to lay open our own complicity in the apparatus of the enterprise university.

I believe that the apparatus of early career researcher-musician-educator requires what Braidotti (2008) refers to as nomadic subjectivities. She says, "we need cartographies of subjectivity, which adequately reflect the processes of flows, fragmentation, mutual interdependence, and mutations that mark our era." (p. 27). A nomadic subjectivity allows for 'care-full' and collective ways to navigate the multiple flows and contradictory identities that permeate the enterprise university. The formation of the early career researcher-musician-educator can be understood as a musical configuration of harmonies and vibrations, of speeds and intensities, of rhythms and durations. This musical arrangement sits easily within a Deleuzean philosophy

of immanence and intensity (Kielan-Gilbert, 2010), as a force for radical reimagining of the academic subject.

I am hopeful that music will continue to enable me to critique, resist and survive within "the flows of madness" while enabling a "reflexive, analytic and ethical awareness" (Davies, 2009, p. 629). Perhaps this is a kind of truth-seeking that is seeking the non-representational (MacLure, 2013). Yet at the same time, I am aware of how the "complexity, contingency, and fragility of the practices we invent to discover the truth about ourselves can be paralysing" (Lather, 1992, p. 96). Music must not be captured by the refrain, lest it becomes an ever-repeating motif or chorus stanza, a pop hook that is impossible to remove from the mind's ear. Music instead should be punk or Baroque, refusing the striations of the ordering of time and space, in order to break free and to give life to itself.

Writing, both musical and non-musical is central to the process of rethinking the early career researcher-musician-educator. And compositions, full of creative fervour, provide the vitalism necessary to sustain itself while not falling into the trap of being captured by the apparatus. Muecke (2012) asks, "so what will keep the compositional machine going? This writing machine that is neither interpreting the world nor denouncing its false appearances? What will give life to words? The same thing, I argue, that gives life to other things; the capacity to reproduce" (p. 50).

For me, the promise lies in seeking to create different refusal spaces (Lather & St. Pierre, 2013) in order to speak, think, write, experiment, play and create within and against the weight of the context of the contemporary academy. The practices and identities we maintain are not separate from their environments (Stengers, 2005), and this is particularly so in the enterprise university. Perhaps, as Muecke (2012) suggests, my experimental wonderings with musical and academic writing is "not about breaking free of convention, but is actively engaged in creating assemblages or compositions as it goes along" (p. 42). This seems to sit fairly comfortably with Stengers' (2005) call for performing an *ecology of practices*. Mine draws upon musical motifs, academic writing and a politics of persistent experimentation and play. For example, in between writing the words of this chapter, I have been working on a new recording with my band, running workshops on music, theory and research, as well as trying to perform the various acts expected of me as an early career researcher in the enterprise university.

I finish here with the suggested strategies posed by Mountz and colleagues (2015) in their call for a more collective and care-full engagement with slow scholarship, as I am finding it incredibility instructive in my own attempt to negotiate a pathway for myself as a musician-researcher-educator: talking about and supporting slow scholarship strategies; counting the things that 'don't count'; undertaking care-full collaborative work; as well as making time to read and think (differently). I am uncertain if these strategies will successfully enable a fusing of my disparate parts, but I cannot see the harm in trying.

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