Transversality by text-messaging, co-creating skateboards and using a destabilising grammar in writing.

Lena Aronsson

Abstract

Starting from Deleuze and Guattari's remark that concepts are unstable and moving assemblages of components, producing rather than representing, this article asks what the concept of transversal/-ity might be and do. The question originated from a doctoral course on Deleuzian research methodologies and transversal writing, and is basically the way I, as a confused first-year doctoral student, tried to grasp the concept. In this paper, I return to and reuse my notes from the course and a text message conversation with a colleague in which we experimented with the transversality concept in order to compose a meaningful account. By putting to work a grammatical investigation of the concept of transversality, I ask what it is, what it can be, and what it will do. Guided by a destabilising grammar, the possible practices of transversality are unfolded from the co-constitution of my notes and various texts, events, and phenomena. Finally, I reflect upon the usefulness of this exercise, in relation to the aim of composing a meaningful account and the obligation to justify scientific knowledge production. These practices of destabilising by grammar, connecting texts and experiences, and reflecting on meaning-making are both the methodology of the paper and, at the same time, the result. Hence, research processes can sometimes be vague and uncertain, but still worth a try.

Abstrakt (Swedish)

Med utgångspunkt i Deleuze och Guattaris påpekande att begrepp är instabila och rörliga sammansättningar av komponenter, producerande snarare än representerande, frågar den här artikeln vad begreppet transversal/-itet kan vara och göra. Frågan har sitt ursprung i en doktorandkurs om Deleuziska forskningsmetoder och transversalt skrivande, och är i grund och botten det sätt på vilket jag som förvirrad första-års-doktorand försökte förstå begreppet. I denna artikel återvänder jag till, och återanvänder, mina anteckningar från kursen och en sms-konversation med en kollega, där vi experimenterade med transversalitetsbegreppet för att skapa en meningsfull förståelse. Genom att göra en grammatisk undersökning av begreppet transversalitet kan jag fråga vad det är, vad det kan vara och vad det ska göra. Vägledd av en destabiliserande grammatik kommer möjliga transversalitetspraktiker att vecklas ut från sammanflätningen av mina anteckningar och olika texter, händelser och fenomen. Slutligen kommer jag att reflektera över användbarheten av denna övning i förhållande till avsikten att skapa en meningsfull förståelse och skyldigheten att motivera den vetenskapliga kunskapsproduktionen. Dessa praktiker av att destabilisera genom grammatik, koppla samman texter och erfarenheter och reflektera över meningsskapande är både artikelns metodik och samtidigt resultatet. Ibland kan forskningsprocesser således vara vaga och osäkra, men ändå värda ett försök.

Prelude
Often there is a story that precedes the one that is supposed to be told. A prelude, prologue, or introduction might tell something in another time or on another theme, but the very idea is to give the reader or listener clues to the context and background information for the story to come. A scientific paper is not a novel or a play but sometimes - like this time - a prelude is appropriate. And what precedes the main text in this article is my dissertation project and especially the demanding work of the theoretical and methodological framing. Slowly but steadily, I found my way in new materialisms, immanence ontology and actor-network theory, and eventually what Deleuze calls "the pedagogy of the concept" (1994, p. 12) and Lenz Taguchi's "concept-as-method" (2016). Lastly, I made use of the methodology of cartography mapping (Aronsson & Lenz Taguchi 2018) but the process of getting there was as rhizomatic as ever the method itself. Sometimes it felt like I was all over the place and sometimes I was stuck. It is by no means over yet but at least I am more acquainted to the field and know some of the maps to use.

One important step, quite early in the process, was the summer when I seriously tried to understand rhizomatic principles and a non-binary difference concept. I realised that concepts were vital - even the concept of concept - and that the only way to grasp them was to make meaningful accounts of them. That summer I attended a course on Deleuzian methodologies and what was termed transversal writing. The course was aiming for experimentation in writing based on a new materialist approach and empirical fieldwork investigations. It included a camp on an archipelago island, with lectures, work-shops and field studies, with the overarching and explicit aim to investigate the Deleuzian-Guattarian concept of transversality. The empirical "data" that was generated during the field camp consists primarily of notes, photos, text message dialogues, memories and bodily experiences. At that time, I was quite confused and unsure what is proper "data" and how to know if what was created was research data and not just random thoughts and impressions. Scientific and ethical issues were my companions during the camp and I was writing all the time, about everything and in every way. The random thoughts and impressions were not so random after all, in due course I could see how they were contributing to the conceptualisation of transversality. That is, the still ongoing conceptualisation, inasmuch as the camp was just the starting point for the process that now will continue with this paper.

Situating currently
The aim of this paper is thus to explore the transversality concept and what it might produce in terms of here-and-now-knowledge; not necessarily transferable to other situations, people, or times, but knowledge that is situated and individual. In order to compose a meaningful account, I will connect my data from the field camp to other texts and experiences. As mentioned above, the data I will use consists of all those written jottings I made on pieces of paper, but also memories, emotions and excerpts of a text message conversation. The written-and-embodied data are articulated as interludes, trying to create another voice in the writing. Data was not collected as an already completed act of investigation; instead data was - and is - produced in a continuing process that involves the writing. Hence, the investigated site extends beyond the traditional ethnographical field and includes all the realities that emerge by mingling already existing data with the currently produced.

The text message conversation was made as an attempt to try the metalogue method (Bateson 1977 - a way of writing that is combining the dialogical format with a structure of the conversation that is relevant for the topic) which was introduced as a writing exercise at the camp. Text messages are obviously dialogical; there is no external writer that can add backgrounds or reflections, instead

everything becomes utterances from either part in the conversation. In this paper, the dialogical format is illustrated by transcripts of the messages from our mobile phones. As the camp was presented as a field study it implied an underlying assumption of given consent when participating in the activities. This was not unproblematic and, as I will show, produced moments of discomfort. I have therefore restricted the material and phenomena that I use as data to what concerns myself, except for the text message conversation to which I have consent from the other person involved. Due to research ethics, the identity will not be revealed beyond what the research excerpts show. In order to not produce discomfort once again, now for the reader of this paper, I want to add that the uncertainty around consent and research ethics was carefully discussed in the course evaluation.

My way of conceptualising will start in grammar and with the question of whether there is such a thing as a grammatical outline of a concept? As said by the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (1994, pp. 18-19), concepts are a philosophical assemblage of components with a contour that is unstable, immanent and always in motion. Concepts are not representing something pre-existing, rather they are creative and inventive; they are *doing* things. They change, connect, and relate to other concepts and by that, concepts are overlapping, and their components might belong to other concepts as well. Neither meaning that everything flows and is uncertain nor that nothing can be defined or given importance; rather that we should concern ourselves with connections and relations. For example, the term "learning" will have partially different components for a sociologist, a psychologist and a neuroscientist, as well as for a teacher or a student. And different components if "learning" is an activity, an attribute or an outcome. Some components match, and others differ, but there will be enough overlaps to enable mutual use. "Concept" is, of course, a concept in itself, but as you know by now, the conceptual content in this text will be that of *transversality*. So, what are the components of the concept of transversality? And how do they change *if transversality is something you do, have or are*? That is, a verb, an adjective, a noun or maybe other parts of speech.

Drawing on Deleuzian philosophy, I will unfold possible practices of the concept of transversality and put it to work in various grammatical senses. I will experiment with the concept by destabilising the grammar; using a becoming-syntax. Deleuze states that "it is no longer a question of formal and superficial syntax that govern language equilibrium, but a becoming-syntax, a syntactic creation that gets the unaccustomed language to be born out of language, and a grammar to be born out of the imbalance" (Deleuze 2004, p. 129, my translation). According to Deleuze, this is about language as a rhizome; growing and unfolding from within and stuttering in a way that exposes languages within the language. In my becoming-syntax inspired exercise I will hover around my data, taste them, smell them, and engage in dialogue with the data dialogues.

Adverbs: Starting in confusion
An **adverb** is a word that modifies a verb, adjective, another adverb, determiner, noun phrase, clause, or sentence. Adverbs typically express manner, place, time, frequency, degree, level of certainty, etc., answering questions such as *How? In what way? When? Where?* and *To what extent?*

The core practice in generating my data is writing, theoretically framed as in one way or another relational materialist and maybe sometimes even transversal. At the course introduction it was said that *transversal writing is about making connections and defining sources from a variety of contexts*. When paying attention to relations as prior or more enhanced than the related, and the ethics that emerge from the potentials and capacities in those relations, the italicised part of the sentence evokes both familiar and foreign components. *Making connections* could be something else than paying

attention to relations, but in what way? And is *defining*, as a tracing method, the emphasised part of the phrase or should I concentrate on *sources*?

A variety of contexts probably include both academic and everyday texts as well as other modalities, and thus also the sources that need to be put together with others to become credible. Internet texts, fiction, school books, canonical as well as mundane sources. Multiple voices afford to ease my confusion and the loudest one is mathematics. The transversal concept in mathematical definitions demonstrates a distinct and unambiguous geometrical description. *A transversal* is a line that passes through two lines in different points and is thereby creating angles. The line connects points that otherwise would not be in contact with each other. But I ignore the loud-speaking mathematics and instead seek Guattari. Depending on where I start reading, I see that his transversality concept is about a therapeutic tool to go beyond the Freudian transference concept, but also a political idea of group relations within institutions (eg Guattari 1984). Consequently, the term thus includes both the suspension of psychoanalysis's dualistic relationships, and structures that are non-hierarchical, neither horizontal nor vertical, non-classifying, but as Dolphijn and van der Tuin write, "cuts across or intersects dual oppositions in an immanent way" (2012 p. 100). As a psychiatrist, Guattari performed transversal practices at the Clinique de La Borde psychiatric hospital, both as collective psychotherapy and as a way of organising the entire institution, as "a means of searching for the new, not by critiquing the old, but by radically questioning (or smoothening out) all the barriers that supported its logic" (ibid). Genosco (2009) defines Guattari's transversality concept as the common unconscious of a group; the most or the least awareness that a group's members have of structures and social processes.

Can the mathematically defined line that passes sideways and connects areas that otherwise are not connected be another way of talking about the common unconscious and the resistance to dualisms? To avoid the simplification that comes with insisting in bringing together the definitions or see them as cause and effect, I will regard it as a possible variation. Perhaps *transversal* and *transversality* are not grammatically but conceptually different. Or maybe grammar is the most appropriate way to deal with the conceptual implications of transversal/-ity.

Interlude: Adverbial confusion
I read my notes from the course introduction over and over again. What can be useful now? I made two kinds of notes: things that I recognised and was familiar with and things that I couldn´t resist writing down. Phrases that triggered my fantasy, concepts that I liked the sound of and words that came through my pen on their own. Retrospectively, it all looks confusing and I don´t know how to use it or what is important or not. I pull up a new page from the pile of notebook pages and with tiny letters on the margin it says: Writing is a method; text is the result and not the representation of results.

Right, transversal writing is a way of how to write, not necessarily a specific genre. It´s a method of writing in a way that traverses fields and traces connections, which would be in line with the geometrical definition. Even so, neither the specific connections nor the definitions are of interest as soon as they are identified or traced. It´s about the gaps, the in-betweens, and the messy and elusive space that is produced. Once the transversal cut has been made, the original binaries or contexts have done their job. Whether this would deal with a common unconscious and for what group that unconscious is common, remains to be seen.

The first day at the camp started with a lecture on Guattari-inspired work, exemplified with a build-a-skateboard project. The idea of the project was to explore how to build an institution that is not

dependent on hierarchical power, but rather on the friction of a collective desire and the continuous adjustments of the process. Eventually, the lecture results in a course assignment. Divided in two groups, we get skateboard building kits and in the next few days we were supposed to put it together. The task may seem clear, but at that time, and in that context, it felt very unclear. During the afternoon, we started texting in order to make the vague task intelligible. At that point, we had two course assignments - group-building a skateboard of the material provided and pair-writing in the metalogue model. We integrated the tasks by using the metalogue format to understand what the skateboard assignment was about. Even though the starting point of the text message conversation was to explore the definition of a skateboard according to the given assignment, the metalogue almost immediately sets off in various directions and includes additional practical and theoretical subjects. I have cut the conversation in parts in order to traverse with texts, theories, memories, emotions and experiences that will produce new data that goes beyond the linguistic representation. Banerjee and Blaise write about "dismantling of binaries" (2013 p. 4), meaning that polarisations such as the human and the non-human dissolve when focus is on what is produced in the encounters. This is close to what Barad (2007) talks about as intra-action, namely that the constitutive force and agency is in the relation and thereby precedes whatever or whoever are the related. This underpins my blending and entangling of texts and the researcher body and can be understood as a *comingling research practice* (Banerjee & Blaise 2013, p. 3). So, this is the first excerpt:

> C: What is a skateboard without wheels and how are we supposed to use it?
> L: Eehh... escape-board? But ARE we supposed to use it? Are we making it in order to use it or what is the task?

How, *in what way*, *when*, *where* and *to what extent* is a skateboard a skateboard? Adverbial questions, but are we talking about making a skateboard or using a skateboard? Either way, we immediately define this piece of wood in terms of use and appearance. Without reflecting, and despite all the new materialisms theories we have read, we automatically react as superior humans. The not-yet-made skateboard is a non-human material dead piece of wood (with no wheels) and thereby subordinate. Or perhaps we are not discussing the skateboard at all but the assignment we got and whether it was a building task or some kind of social teamwork? In that case it would make sense to put the skateboard out of focus in favour of what was said, written, how we felt, the ambiance, the interaction and so on. Building a skateboard could just have been an excuse to make us do… something. But what? Maybe it is just me being bored of interaction experiments but in the upcoming section I would rather try a different idea of what this first piece of conversation was about.

Noun: The skateboard hybrid
The modern idea that things in themselves have values and qualities, no matter if we measure or not, contrasts with what we see as society, the individual, politics and culture – fluctuating and subjective constructions. The division is not only between human and non-human, but also between the obvious and the hidden, facts and representations, the supposedly real and constructions. Thus, dividing in several dimensions, that not only categorises disciplines in natural sciences and social fields, but also carries hierarchical notions of what is true, real and of superior value (Latour 1993). According to Latour, this division never works (ibid., pp. 130-132). In parallel with the modernist cleaning frenzy to keep everything separated, we have also always surrounded ourselves with what he calls *the hybrids*.

We often presume that nouns divide, represent and categorise, but is this really the case? Are hybrids things, people or something else? Latour describes it as a system that mixes nature and culture and exceeds disciplinary boundaries. The hybrid can be an event or a context, but things and people are also hybridised, as representations or symbols. Nature and culture meet in terms of the issues, stakeholders, actors, explanations and effects found in the hybrid skateboard. The hybrid targets the mixture itself, and the separation that necessarily precedes a mixture. A general definition of "hybrid" imagines it consists of two or several elements that do not share origin or composition, but the concept requires that the binary, or multiple, division still exists, as the distinction is the very condition to hybridise.

Interlude: Putting the hybrid to work
How is this transversal? When transposing the Latourian concept from mixing incompatible fields into the very doing in this emerging field, it becomes a practice. Building a skateboard and skateboarding are intense, unpredictable and relational practices; in one instant controlled by instructions and in the next a flow of sensations and affect. Transversal practices.

C: Well, what is use? Is it to stand on it, to prodUSE it or to rotate it so that something else can happen? Why no wheels?

L: Maybe the wheels are too complicated to put on or maybe this isn´t a genuin building-a-skateboard-task. Why are the wheels so important to you? Isn´t the process of gluing the layers much more interesting? That is something that requires competence and a lot of time and needs planning for.

C: You say a genuin building-a-skateboard-task...hmm...but a genuin skateboard has wheels...don´t they? So maybe I'm just asking: what is a skateboard build of ....right? Or is there really something genuine?

L: Ok, so we´re on to that ontological stuff now. But before we talk about what is genuin or not, or if the skateboard IS or WILL BE, let´s conclude the wheel discussion by saying that we don´t put them on because we weren´t provided with any. And besides, why do we think that we will do the right thing if we just follow the instructions? That is, do the skateboard like skateboards normally look like. What if we had made it into a box?
Then we would have needed to take off the blinkers 😊

C: So Lena, is that your answer of my first question on what a skateboard is without wheels and how we are supposed to use it? is it just to talk about providedness and instructions when I talk about material stuff like a skateboard, wheels and use?
And...what are those blinkers made of ? 😳

L: I guess I´m not really interested in skateboard wheels, at least not enough to miss them if we don´t put them on. Seriously, i could rather have had the wooden layers and the glue and made a pretty little table of it. Or we could have had one piece each and painted something nice on it. Why did we do the skateboard (which, after all, is not a proper skateboard) - was anyone a skateboarder?
So, I am truly interested in the material aspects of it, just not as a skateboard material

A skateboard is a thing and a body-matter-meaning, but as Latour so carefully pointed out these divisions were only important as starting points. The hybridisation is about what occurs in the entanglement; the skateboard/-er-becoming.

Subject and object: Matter matters

In grammar, a **subject** act, and an **object** is acted upon; in English, we have different pronouns to signify the distinction between those grammatical categories. In other words, "I" is a subject while "me" is an object while "my" shows possession.

In the excerpt above, it was apparent that matter matters (Barad 2003, pp. 827-829), but as something humans use or possess. If flattening out the hierarchy of humans and non-humans, people, wooden pieces, glue, conversations, skateboard manuals, thoughts and ideas, even the room and furnishings will all be understood as actors in a network. Then the (simplistic) idea of humans using material and discursive artefacts (as tools) will be much more complex and complicated. Who or what is using who (or what)? What is material (humans are, in fact) and what will non-material actors look like or be?

Interlude: I build or build me?

First day at the camp: we started with a lecture on how Guattari designed a structure to destabilise the power hierarchies and conventions of specialisation: The Grid. But there was also another story, a Guattarian-inspired example about a skateboard building project. It included skateboarding as practices of both using and building them and organising the skateboard building created a Grid inspired institution. Somewhat akin to that, we were instructed to build a skateboard and while we did, we were supposed to document how we did it. We were told to build and use the material, but were we building a skateboard or a group and was the material wood and glue or were WE the material?

To acknowledge the non-human materialities is not just about embracing socio-material relations or regarding artefacts as intra-actively agency-generating actors (Barad 2007). It is also about how the humans and the non-humans adapt and connect and what that produces (Moberg 2017). The paperboard that contained the skateboard material made the muscles in our hands contract in order to open it, the smooth wooden layers called for relaxed palms and the glue made fingers stick together. It is not the other way around, rather it is both ways: the material affects our hands and our hands affect the material. Neither is the mutual relation the issue, nor the question of what is being produced, but subject and object is. When flattening out the human/non-human hierarchy, the taken for granted idea of who is acting and who is not becomes destabilised. Are subjects vanishing and everything becomes objects – or multiple subjects – or do we need another kind of grammar?

C: Great. Now that is a escape-board-answer! because to me it seems that the instructions, the organisations of the construction of the skateboard-building-matter-being is all down to what glows in front of us: what makes ME tick is the wheels, the movement, the balance, the embodiment of MOVING ON wheels. Maybe I'm talking about an tic-becoming animal; jumping from the floor onto the host-skateboard-sucking the life of it?

L: Haha quite different from me, then? 😊 Well, why did´t you just put it together at once, hurry down to Ica and ask if they had any wheels and then jumped right on as that tic-on-skateboard-becoming-animal?

> You hang on to your first question, about how to use it. Why is that so important?
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> C: I can´t build a skateboard- really- but I can fabricate the things you can do with a skateboard...not necessarily doing them (i would be a useless skateboardER). So I guess use is a suggestion for opening up the blinkers ...? The fabrication of use, the production of a skateboard lies not only in the material artifacts that the skateboard is built of but what glows when you think of a skateboard....and did not Deleuze once said that we rarely think? The use of a skateboard, or the use of the assemblages of the skateboard makes us think differently, with variation, on multiplicity? OR is that just me not thinking but repeating something again?
>
> The creating, production is a sort of use...isn´t it?

In this piece of conversation, the ambivalence towards the wheels are turned into a question of how to become committed. We realised that being disinterested in the building-skateboard-assignment would not be helpful and more or less objectify us in relation to the task. What glows and tickles are important inasmuch as that produces relations between us, the material and the things we do. It is still ambivalent - are we interested in skateboards or not, do we want to go on with the construction or not, do we actually know what we are constructing, and do we need to know? Are we obedient when we do as we are told, or are we just pragmatic? Or curious? The friction and tension have no language, we speak through the materialities and the activities, emotions and jokes, fantasies and philosophical quotes. The glowing and tickling is a non-linguistic way of relating.

Adjective: Various degrees of glittering and flame

In linguistics, an **adjective** is a describing word, the main syntactic role of which is to qualify a noun or noun phrase, giving more information about the object signified.

To fabricate and produce, as synonyms to *use,* transfers the meaning from *human uses material* to *material and human are making something new*. Humans and non-humans are co-producing and need each other and thereby also co-constituting. In the text message conversation, it is said, "*what glows when you think of a skateboard"* which implies that producing and fabricating are operations requiring self-awareness and maybe the engagement that we tried to bring about. Drawing on MacLure's notion of *glowing data* (MacLure 2010; 2013), Ringrose and Renold (2014) puts these hot spots in a resonating contact with what they describe as the slow burn of their research interest. If the thought of being a skateboarder, using the skateboard, is the moment of rupture that makes the skateboard assignment glow, what is our underlying slowly burning interest?

> L: I guess so. The challenge is to stay on the threshold, to stay in the flux of that producing and fabrication. Not go too deep into the stratification, with all the planning, bureaucracy and structure that is cutting out and closing off, and not loose ourselves in the totally smooth space where everything is possible because there are no assignments at all and everything is unstable. Are you talking about affect? And how to explore what the genuin (there we are - genuin, again!) and situated might contribute with?

> C: It sounds a bit that we are agreeing, but I hope not! If we agree on things we won't have anything to talk about? And thats kind of uninteresting, uninspiring and actually boring. When not agreeing we are always in rotation, in negotiation and this is not always smooth and fluid but has intensity, density, rhythm and resonate: always RELATIONAL! Spinoza said "We don´t know what a body can do". We don't know what a skateboard can do, or what a skateboard builder can do or how to use it - and if that has got to do with affect is another looooooooong chat! BUT I do know that my body now can sleep...so I think I bid u goodnight... 😳😱😉😴
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> L: Zzzz... already sleeping... must be the archipelago air...
>
> C: Hey...are you sleep? here are some videos on you constructing, making and using the skateboard... 😈

Our slowly burning research interest could be to stay on the threshold. We want to talk but not agree, we strive for the philosophical mess but gets frustrated, and we are not satisfied with stable definitions. On the threshold, I can *comingle* (Banerjee & Blaise 2013) the conversation with theories, memories and experiences in order to produce data beyond linguistic representation.

We made smartphone videos with increased speed. My colleague was filming me while I was gluing the wooden layers.

> C: By the way: have you seen this clip on the Two year Old skateboardER? Amazing!!!!!!!!!!!
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> L: "We do not know what a body can do..."
>
> C: Hey, are you there? Just reading Lisa Mazzei's A Voice without Organs: interviewing in posthumanist Research
> and she writes this: "Deleuze and Guattari conceived an ontology of becoming believing that a different description of being would be change being, doing, living. The challenge for posthumanist researchers using a Deleuzian ontology of entanglement and assemblage is to attend to how being, doing, and living are different so as not to reproduce the same methods with a different

language. Instead of merely talking about how the assumptions of posthumanist research are producing different notions of the subject, of agency, and of voice, these practices must be enacted given this different set of assumptions" (p. 738)

And it continues with: "It does not mean we stop learning or producing knowledge, but it does mean we acknowledge a fundamental break in how those practices produce knowledge and new ontological entanglements." (p. 738)

L: So, what she stresses is the necessity of ontological rethinking. Otherwise it will just be new perspectives and we´re stuck in that same old discourse analysis. The posthumanist stance is quite demanding, isn´t it? Not just a flattened ontology, but ontologIES. We (and she) is talking about entanglements as the way of producing knowledge (or data) and as I understand that it will be impossible to keep on think binary. We just can´t say that there is a "not" to everything.

What I remember of the filming occasion is an annoyance at how pointless it felt, how uninteresting to glue the layers together. I think we speeded up the movies to somehow overcome the actual time it took. At the time, we thought it was fun to see how quickly and easily we *could do it*, but it was also about *getting it done*. It was a forced network, an intra-action that was completely artificial, with no relationship between me and the skateboard material and no agency. Or is annoyance agency? Agency is generated in relations and is located in practices, as an emergent effect of assembling. Annoyance may well be agency, assuming we see it as something that enacts between me, the wooden layers, the glue, the camera, the assignment, the room and all other actors including the absent ones – not as an emotion localised inside me. Agency can thus be traced and situated empirically through practices (Barad 2003).

The *making a skateboard practice* was also a *film making practice* and a *showing off practice* and these practices are simultaneously producing realities with different but acquainted modes of enacting gluing on wooden layers. We were coordinating the realities (Mol 2002) or rather, realities made themselves comprehensible to each other. Annoyance emerged in the friction between being made to act and not to act. We were acting (and not acting), the glue was sometimes acting too fast, the vacuum pump did not act as expected – not *acting* but *made to act* by the connections between human, material and discursive actors. Agency was neither in me nor in the non-human artefacts or the boring task; it was produced in these connections and coordination.

Interlude: Describing uneasiness
To me, these film sequences are data that glows in an inverted way. They´re itchy and uncomfortable and makes me feel I went along with something I didn´t want to do. The whole situation felt unethical. I didn't know why I did what I did, and, above all, I had not agreed to not knowing. But when was the moment when I could have said, 'no, I do not consent'?

Was this a research situation and was I a participant that should have been asked about consent? Not explicitly stated, but the camp was presented as a fieldwork where we were supposed to collect data so in that sense it was about researching. But who was the researcher? By understanding the research as an assemblage constituted by the human, material, and discursive participants, it will not be possible to exclude anyone or anything and say, "this one is responsible and this one is not".

Accordingly, consent is a joint matter. Not that "we are all the researcher" means that everyone, and thereby no-one, asks for and gives consent. Rather, my uneasiness is also part of the network and not something that I can distance from or say is someone else's problem.

I was well prepared, I had attended courses on research ethics and researcher ethics and I had written an extensive account for the ethics in my dissertation project. Yet, when being both a researcher and an object for research, I had difficulties in coordinating the realities. The bodily discomfort, the staging of a task, the implied consent, and knowing that this really does not matter, and *I am in no danger*. I learned a lot. Ethics is certainly tricky to manage.

> L: And that brings in one of Deleuze's most interesting concepts - difference! More interesting and productive than becoming, I think, and actually quite challenging. His anti-oedipal difference that enhances life and transformation, isn´t that close to what Mazzei is saying about a different set of assumptions? (p. 738)
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> C: Stop, stay with the becoming a little bit more! What is to become of the skateboard and the skateboard-builders? What ontological assumptions about them will create newness? The skateboard wheels, the skateboard use, the skateboard table, the skateboard instructions, the skateboard construction, the skateboarder-child: all assume different sets of methods on the skateboard becoming...? Why is not difference and becoming productive together? Why choose?
>
> L: We don´t have to choose (a bit too binary, don´t you think?), even concepts are entangled. Sometimes you can´t see which is which, sometimes they are clearly separated.
>
> Listen to this, in "What is philosophy" Deleuze and Guattari writes about philosophical concepts, scientific functions and sensations in art, and say: "The three thoughts intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification With its concepts, philosophy bring forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations. Science constructs states or affairs with its functions. A rich tissue of correspondences can be established between the planes.
>
> But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept. And none of these elements can appear without the other being still to come, still indeterminate or unknown"
>
> Concepts, functions and sensations are intertwined but also co-constructive and mutually transformative - do I get it right? And then we have to talk of onto-epistemo-ethico-logy?

Deleuze and Guattari (1994) describe "the three thoughts" (p. 198), that is, concepts, functions, and sensations, as closely tied together, without being mixed up. I imagine it a bit like a braid: interwoven but still separated. But within this "rich tissue of correspondence" where concepts, functions, and sensations are so deeply intertwined and co-constructive, can phenomena also be purely philosophical, scientific or artistic, or sorted based on preferences or perspective? Just as if the supposed mess of philosophy, science, and art is so thoroughly mixed that the blend is invisible - yet

could be distinguished. The idea of difference as ongoing transformations instead of "different from", as lacking something or as a negation, means that binary thinking does not work. A concept cannot be distinguished by saying what it is *not*, instead it emerges by relations to other concepts and by affecting and being affected by these relations. A skateboard is not a skateboard by *not* being a bicycle or a box, it enacts as different skateboard versions in relations to glue and wheels, to the YouTube movie, and to the annoyance that I felt.

Verb: To "selfie" oneself as part of a whole

A **verb**, from the Latin *verbum* meaning *word*, is a word (part of speech) that in syntax conveys an action, an occurrence or a state of being. To make a word into a verb is to put it to work, make it act. All immovable nouns, all stagnant adjectives and motionless adverbs. Put them to work, make them move, act, perform, touch us and surprise us.

Already when it was going on, I realised that the skateboard assignment got things to act and perform. Humans and non-humans were destabilised and made to act; we did, the glue did, the skateboard did, the emotions did. And for me, the event evoked a memory. Every summer there is an exciting art exhibition in an old ironworks foundry in a small town in the iron works district in the middle part of Sweden (http://verket.se/en/verket/brief-history/). In Copper Valley, an industrial area of long-time abandoned brick buildings, artists are challenged to create an interface with the industrial heritage own strong expression in materials and monumental architecture. This year a professor of economics made his first work with the visual arts (http://verket.se/en/project/micael-dahlen-se/). One of his artworks was a giant Mona Lisa projected on the blast furnace hall. The image was made up of one million self-portrait photos sent via Instagram with the hashtag #IamMonaLisa. Everybody could become part of creating the artwork and the more selfies, the more detailed the artwork became. The exhibition website states "… *that everything is connected, that chaos is only for those who cannot manage to break down the whole into its smallest components*" (http://verket.se/avesta-art/, my translation) and in this section, I will make two conceptual try-outs of transversal as a verb. In the upcoming interlude, occurrence of chaos and action of order are colliding. Further on, #IamMonaLisa is entangled with a quote from Deleuze & Guattari about philosophical concepts, scientific functions and sensations in art.

Interlude: Doing faces
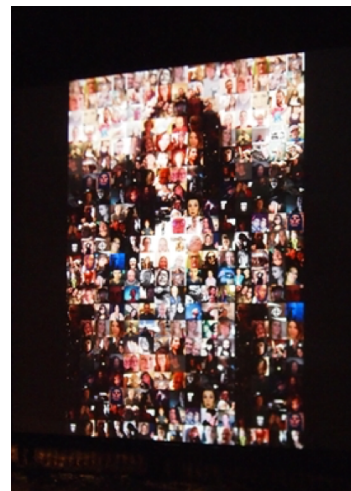
I participated. I took a selfie and posted on Instagram. The next moment it appeared on the big screen and my face covered about a third of Mona Lisa. The next step would be that my image was reduced and withdrawn to the place in the picture where colour and light fitted. But my face stayed covering a large part of the large Mona Lisa picture. Several minutes passed by but nothing happened, my huge selfie was still there. I continued through the exhibition and when I came back, I could see myself from a distance. It was embarrassing; perhaps my face destroyed the entire artwork. Eventually we left and later that night I was told they had to restart the Mona Lisa image.

Chaos arises when the whole will not come down to smaller parts. Mona Lisa disappeared behind me and the idea of the artwork became invisible since my face was not made up of a million small faces but merely the ordinary picture pixels. The chaos I caused was technical and aesthetical, not a matter of focusing the pictures, but nevertheless it was a rupture through the outline of the artwork. Developing that thought, I will return to what Deleuze and Guattari (1994) writes about philosophical concepts, scientific functions and sensations in art:

> *The three thoughts intersect and intertwine but without synthesis or identification. With its concepts, philosophy brings forth events. Art erects monuments with its sensations. Science constructs states of affairs with its functions. A rich tissue of correspondences can be established between the planes. But the network has its culminating points, where sensation itself becomes sensation of concept or function, where the concept becomes concept of function or of sensation, and where the function becomes function of sensation or concept. And none of these elements can appear without the other being still to come, still indeterminate or unknown*
>
> *(ibid., pp. 198-199).*

Philosophically, the distance and closeness in #IamMonaLisa implies that her face and all the selfies take turns being chaotic or well defined. In a scientific sense, each individual image fits into the predefined image based on colour and light and how Instagram can be used to easily merge the images. And when it comes to art, we are all being part of an already existing and at the same time recreated icon with our own bodies and appearances. When my picture interrupted the process, it was a sensation of concepts and functions, a culminating point in the network.

The #IamMonaLisa event is obviously a verb in itself. But could "the rich tissue of correspondences" between philosophical, scientific and artistic planes in the event add something to the verb definition beside action, occurrence and state of being? To be explicit: are verbs not only representing what is or was being done but also the very movement that puts events in a becoming state?

> C: I don´t get it. Why is this important to you in relation to what we above have discussed? Why do you need this quote and what do you want it to do with your questions?
>
> L: You asked what ontological assumptions about the skateboard and the skateboard builders that will create newness. Maybe the quote is saying that skateboarding sensations and functions and building sensations and functions can´t be separated from what a skateboard (and skateboard builder) is. Aaahh… I DON`T KNOW… confuseeeed!!!

C: I might have to read the whole chapter again before I get back to you on that 😳. Sometimes (e.g. often) the confusion of what you find interesting in deleuze makes me doubt that I've understood anything at all…so…to be continued… ⌛✂️⛏️📰📖📓📙📗📘📕📚

L: …not sure I find it interesting…but annoying; do I understand or not? It seems like such a phenomenological mess and at the same time so boringly simplistic.
And what about transversality? Did we get any closer to understand??? 😜

The imperfect subjunctive: Did we get closer to understand transversality?

The **subjunctive** is used to form sentences that do not describe known objective facts. These include statements about one's state of mind, such as opinion, belief, purpose, intention, or desire. The subjunctive mood is also used for statements that are contrary to fact.

Imperfect conjunctive is a grammatical form that allows expectations, and something imagined; a linguistic space for "as if". We can employ subjunctive for the preliminary and tentative, the blurred boundary between what the verb expresses and its actual uncertainty. Subjunctive is used for a more or less impossible wish or an unfulfilled condition. I do not know if we got closer to understanding. But at least we explored possibilities of the transversal/-ity concept and tried the usability of it. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1994), each concept also has components that belong to other concepts and address other problems. Concepts are not defined and stable, but rather outlines of a moving messy content, overlapping each other. When we simplify and concretise, or deepen and complicate, we use other concepts and hence a slightly different content. We might also address other problems, and then we no longer understand each other. Suddenly there are gaps… and "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994).

Grammar is often regarded as a language straitjacket, a static system that classifies words without regarding their taste when pronouncing, their memory scent, or poetic values. In this article I have tried to present grammar as a way of displacing the contours of concepts, in order to blend, merge and move the conceptual components. The concept(s) of transversal/-ity transports and transposes from mathematics to philosophy, from clause to part of speech, from methodology to attribute - not as binaries but rather as varieties that unfold when exploring the possibilities.

Closing interlude: A language beyond facts
Research is serious business. Methods and results should be reliable and valid. Research is also vulnerable, unpredictable and sometimes ambiguous. Some research practices are not even producing results, they might be just for training or the practices are not reliable and valid enough. This paper has told the story of the try-out of a researching method: to produce data by text messaging, co-constructing skateboards and using a destabilising grammar in writing. It is also a story of vulnerability, unpredictability and ambiguity. However, that concerns myself and my research methods, not the course. The doctoral course that was the starting point and from which parts of the data in this paper was collected, was concluded with a comprehensive evaluation. The final papers were thoroughly discussed, including the "moments of discomfort" initially mentioned. I think we all learned that ethics are hard and that whatever you do, you could always have done something differently.

The aim of this article was to compose a meaningful account of the concept of transversality by connecting my data from the course field camp to other texts and experiences. I made an attempt to explore the transversal/-ity concept and what it might produce in terms of situated and individual knowledge. The question that immediately arises is "Why?" A legitimate question if it´s in a utilitarian discourse where research should be useful, but I don't think transversal writing is about justifying or answering questions. Rather it is an exploratory practice, driven by curiosity and desire to be surprised. Or at least not bored. And then there is no answer to the question "Why?" and no need for defence. I have transversally explored a concept; tried out its grammatical possibilities, and bounced it against thoughts, memories, emotions and theories. Meaningful enough.

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Author

Lena Aronsson is a PhD student in Early Childhood Education, Department of Child and Youth Studies at Stockholm University, Sweden. Her dissertation project aims to explore how Educational Neuroscience might be enacted in Swedish preschool practices, in terms of epistemological encounters between neuroscientific research about young children's learning and early childhood theories and practices. Furthermore, she is a seasoned preschool teacher as well as teacher-educator.

Lena Aronsson, Department of Child and Youth Studies, S-106 91 Stockholm University
E-mail: lena.aronsson@buv.su.se
URL: https://www.buv.su.se

Citation