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Being And Becoming In Deleuze's Philosophy

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Abstract

Deleuze introduces existence as a need in the ontology. While respecting the material world, he does not see material existence as explaining being because it is the same ground for all beings. In his dual concepts, he contrasts what is permissible with the material world and believes in a two-way relationship between them. In Deleuze's philosophy, the concept of difference and events is the main example of this relationship. It was not enough to consider an ontological principle to understand events, so this is how Deleuze relates to being. Events, as a process or becoming, move from the past to the future. Deleuze emphasizes the coherence of the universe and considers figuration to be the result of the material world, although it is not the virtual explanation of the material world.

All in all, Deleuze's ontology presents virtual materialism with limited existence so that each individual is unique among human beings, and it is this monopoly in terms of becoming that takes shape. Beings are merely qualitative, emotional and singular. Being is a voluntary life that is difficult to maintain because the will always and, in any case, voluntarily gives way to the involuntary. It is a part of nature that leads to the vitality of life, and perhaps it is the nature of existence, but it is immersed in becoming and happening to find the true meaning of life and being alive.

Keywords: Being, Becoming, Deleuze, Philosophy, Ontology.

INTRODUCTION

In philosophy history, ontology refers to studying the philosophy of "being" and "existence." Moreover, ontology is a kind of research, meaning that in philosophy history, such a unique answer to "What is existence?" or "What is being?" Then a question arises in this regard, "What has existence?" Although Deleuze does not raise such a question, he provides a significant introductory role in ontological discussions with such concepts.

Deleuze writes, "When I ask what is this? I assume there is an essence behind the appearances, or at least something ultimate behind the masks. However, another kind of question, [like the question of how], always discovers other masks behind the veils, displacements behind each place, and other "things" superimposed in one case" (Deleuze, 2004: 114). From this perspective, he claims that philosophy is the theory of what we do, not what we are (Deleuze 1990: 133).

If the question is "What exists?" or "What kinds of things ultimately exist?" or "... do they exist?" or "...exist on themselves?" The answer is that it is generally presented in line with being as being. The representation of the world in the sense that it relies on the opposition of existence and non-existence introduces such questions of ontology as a reaction to what exists. Arguments for the existence/nonexistence of God, universals, collections, and so on belong to this type of ontology and justify Heidegger's discussion on the ignorance of ontology, meaning that these arguments are on the side of epistemological commitment to the ontological question. This means that their thrust is based on the assumption that if we know something, there must be a being that belongs to knowledge. This is the way that many philosophers, from Parmenides to Willard Van Orman Quine, have raised ontological questions. There are different philosophical traditions in this ontological description as the base of its questions. Idealism raises the same questions, arguing that no being is independent of the human mind that perceives it. The ontology of idealist philosophers consists mainly of subjective beings, be they transcendental objects or linguistic representations or social conventions. Furthermore, pragmatism and positivism could be brought into this general question based on ontological classification, although it shows a radical challenge to idealism. Many pragmatist and positivist philosophers reject the existence of theoretical terms and transcendent beings, whereas they consider everyday experience objects unobjectionable.

"Deleuze is a realist philosopher," and his ontology "considers reality as completely independent of the human mind and ignores the distinction between the observable and the unobservable as a betrayal of profound anthropocentrism" (DeLandaç 2007). Furthermore, referring to Deleuze's assumption of difference as a noumenon and not a phenomenon, Delenda states that "Deleuze's ontology reaches the mind-independent processes (noumenon) that give rise to ... in the first place" (Deleuze 1994: 222). However, I think that what Delenda presupposes as "Deleuzean ontology" is what Deleuze is trying to escape from in the classical ontology sense. First, the interpretation that "reality as complete independence of the human mind" is itself anthropocentric. This

expression works by imagining the external world differently from its representation by the human mind. In Deleuze's philosophy, there is an independent work of creating concepts, which is also a description of philosophy. Still, it is not the independence of the human mind that corresponds to reality. The distinction between the human mind and the outside world is not made in Deleuze's philosophy because he does not ask whether the human mind is more actual than the external world or not. In other words, the case adopted by Delanda is those philosophical concepts produced by the human mind are independent of experience, but Deleuze's philosophy is beside empirical concepts.

Furthermore, Delanda assumes noumenon as the cause of this phenomenon. In Deleuze's philosophy, there is a space different from the world of appearances. Nonetheless, although what Deleuze calls noumenon (i.e., difference) seems to be the cause of emergence, the important point in this assumption is, in a word, "imprecision" or "inequality," as DeLanda argues.

If we want to explain in Deleuze's example, it is not the case that God has created the world and is "calculated" because there is always an "imprecision" or "inequality." A world where God's calculation cannot be stated means that it could be assumed as a being or a philosophical expression that is not a part of the material world or experience, but this assumption cannot be an explanation for "inequality" in the world. Then in Deleuze's philosophy, the relationship between noumenon and phenomenon is not the relationship between predecessor and successor. Deleuze talks about the inextricable relationship between phenomenon and noumenon. Although DeLanda recognizes that Deleuze tries to escape the meaning of appearances as reality, he does not realize that Deleuze does not assign primary causes to appearances. This is his phrase "noumenon is the closest phenomenon." Closest or farthest, but there is always a relation in whose terms Deleuze assumes that "every phenomenon refers to the inequality by which it is conditioned" (Deleuze 1994: 222). In other words, "being conditional" does not mean "being effect," and "inequality" does not belong to the phenomenon, but it cannot be assumed without the phenomenon.

Robert Piercey's study on Deleuze's ontology can be read as a different entry, although he addresses the same questions as DeLanda. Piercey deduces that we cannot assume Deleuze's ontology in a single structure, and Piercey presents a triple ontology under various names as the logic of sense, difference, and repetition. He distinguishes three different areas in Deleuze's ontology. According to him, "claims that refer to one domain have a different status than others," although the three worlds o not vary (Piercey, 1996: 270). They are persistent in the world; they are different ways of describing the same world. The tripartite scheme of difference and repetition includes "good or hidden repetition," "bad repetition," and difference. In sense logic, they are events, the material world and events. Overall, these two assumptions are based on the ontological distinction between them.

Being virtual and actual. The schema is as follows:

Difference and repetition of sense logic

Good or hidden repetition.....	event.....	being
Bad repetition.....	material world.....	actual
Difference.....	events.....	virtual

The Peircean schema is useful for understanding Deleuze's ontological concepts and understanding the relationship between the logic of sense and difference and repetition - different concepts explain the same world in them. In other words, it is not that Deleuze introduces the second world as a solution to ontological problems. Still, he considers the world in different situations or gives different names to ontological problems. Deleuze's answer is that everything is there. However, it does not mean that Deleuze says "yes" to all answers to "what it is." He has a different point of view; in other words, his ontology does not give a clear answer, in the sense that Deleuze's concern is to find out what happens when these schema units or motifs are effectively assumed in the same world. From Piercey's schema perspective, the relationship between units takes place concerning "transcendental analysis": "Deleuze's ontology is a kind of transcendental philosophy. His ontological claims derive from something like transcendental analysis, in which he describes "not the sensible, but the sensible being" (Piercey 1996: 270). This point raises the concept of being in Deleuze's philosophy.

Being

It is easy to predict that Deleuze replaces being with becoming. This replacement works in many parts of his philosophy, but existence is also understood in a pronominal sense. According to Deleuze, "being" exists in all beings, which is the point that Deleuze calls "the sameness of being." There has been only one ontological proposition: existence is the same. There was never anything but an ontology of Duns Scotus that gave being a single voice. Duns Scotus knew how to bring the same entity to the highest point of elegance without surrendering to abstraction (Deleuze, 1994: 35).

What does it mean to be the same?

The unity of being does not mean a noumenon, but the opposite - there are many different beings [...]. The unity

of existence means that existence is the voice that is said, and in the same "meaning" of everything that is said about it, it is not the same, but being is the same for everything that is said about it (Deleuze, 1990: 179).
The principle of uniformity and existence displaces Deleuze's principle of connection in favor of the principle of identity determination. It is what you are, not what is attached to it" (Williams, 2003: 63). However, I think this displacement is still the result of the traditional reading of existence. Existence does not exist in its traditional sense. Traditional philosophy argues that existence is opposed to becoming as identity versus change. This contrast is one and many. This is the context in which Alain Badiou criticizes Deleuze too. Badiou examines Deleuze's philosophy in the Clamor of Bei. His central criticisms are based on Deleuze's monism: "Deleuze's fundamental problem is certainly not the liberation of the multiple, but the submission of thinking to a new concept of the one" (Badiou, 2000: 11). Moreover, according to Badiou, "the price to be paid for the inflexible maintenance of the uniformity thesis is clear... Finally, this multiple can only be of the order of simulation" (Badiou, 2000: 26). As Todd May says, "To Badiou, Deleuze's strategy is that existence should be conceptually examined from two different angles, one from the aspect of uniformity and the other from the aspect of plurality. This is the first side that Deleuze privileges." This means that Badiou accepts only one side of Deleuze's assumption of existence. Additionally, he overlooks the characteristics of Deleuze's existence as Deleuze with existence "limits us to a strictly materialist ontological discourse that rejects any deep or hidden foundations of existence. There is nothing hidden or negative about "being" from Deleuze's perspective, and it is fully expressed in the world. In this sense, being is superficial and positive" (Hardt, 2002: xiii).
Then if we turn to Williams's critique, although there is a displacement in Deleuze's assumption of existence, this displacement is not the connection (sameness) with identity (or becoming one) but the displacement of the label with the pronominal. Being in its pronominal meaning is neither many nor one. It is sameness but not identity. Identity belongs to the thing, but sameness belongs to the sense of sound. However, one must note that this is not a contrast between language and the external world because the sound is not language. Existence is the paradox of sound in the sense that "[sound] has the dimensions of a language without having its conditions. It is waiting for an event to turn it into a language. It is no longer a parasite, but still not a language either" (Deleuze 1990: 194). Then if we consider existence independent of events, idealism appears. However, in Deleuze's sense, existence is the paradox of the boundary between language and the world of events. Being is an inevitable paradox, and Deleuze wants to show this inevitability. Being means earth, although there is no earth. As Beckett says: "say the earth. There is no earth, but let us say earth" (Becket, 1983: 34).

Becoming

Becoming are many things and has different types. Here is a list of some of the things that Deleuze equates with becoming, taken from *A Thousand Plateaus* and described below: irreducible dynamism (237), rhizome (239), multiplicity (249), passage (252), and transformation. Among the basic forms (252) are affect (256), anomaly (263), the process of desire (272), movement (281), deterritorialization (291) and flow (303). Similarly, transformations are always molecular (272) and minority (291) and about the different types of becoming, we might say that becomings exist on a spectrum. There are extreme, animal and subtle transformations, but there are also transformations: woman, child, vegetable, mineral, and so on. On the "close side" is becoming a woman and child, and on the "far side" is becoming primitive, cellular, molecular, and imperceptible (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). Hence, for Deleuze, names become a broad and multidimensional concept so that becoming can be all those things listed, take any of those listed forms, and become more.
Becomings are also real. This point must be stated for one simple reason: transformations must not be seen as some weird, pretentious ivory tower with no actual or "real world" significance. However, it might be hard for unfamiliar people to resist such a description, as it is not immediately clear how a concept like "becoming an animal" could relate to anything of philosophical significance. Nonetheless, becomings are precisely associated with actual phenomena, actual movements or processes in nature. Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly emphasize this point about the reality of becomings. For instance, we are told that "they are quite real" (238) and that "there is a reality of becoming an animal here, even if one does not become an animal" (273). and that there is a "lived experience of double purification" (305). They provide many examples of transformations from movies, literature, biology textbooks, and the world of artistic activity. For instance, Freud's patient Little Hans might become a horse (perhaps neutralized), and William Faulkner becomes black to avoid becoming a fascist. The bee and the orchid are involved in the transformation of each other, and the C virus created by a special relationship between a cat and a baboon is stated to be a transformation and singing, writing, painting, and composing aim to release beings. Thus, one cannot deny that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of transformation is always associated with actual phenomena of a certain kind.
However, these two points do not tell us much about the trend or transformation value. The first point that implies that the concept of transformation is broad and multidimensional is abstract. The second point that mentions becoming actual gives us examples but does not provide principles that explain their relationship. Thus, what else can we say? What is the essence of becoming actual? Or what are the different principles of transformation, and how should they work?

Transformation can be examined in terms of two principles: (1) non-representation, movement and liberation and (2) principles of connection, power and machine.

1. Non-representation, movement, liberation

Being is not existence, but it is a means of representation with its linguistic symbols, and non-linguistic images alone can give us existence to talk about what is. It cannot give us what is going on, moving, or transforming. It is this insight that guides our discussion in this section. Now, recall the previously mentioned list of some transformation equivalents. There is no doubt that an emphasis on movement on that list so that these closely related words are invoked: passage, transformation, process, and flow. Thus, transformation involves some kind of movement opposite to stillness. Recall that Deleuze and Guattari insist that becomings are actual. However, they try to ensure that we are not confused about "which reality is discussed here" (238). In the process of becoming a woman, no man "actually" becomes a woman, nor does any human "actually" become an animal in the process of becoming an animal, and so on. In other words, transformation does not involve an actual change of gender or species. Furthermore, it does not include acts of likeness or mimicry whereby one tries to imitate something else (by going on all fours or walking on all fours). Indeed, becoming "represents nothing" (259).

Hence, Deleuze and Guattari write: "Becoming does not produce anything but itself. If we say that you imitate, we are in a false alternative. What is actual is the becoming itself, not the fixed hypothetical conditions through which the becoming passes" (238). Points of stability are the conditions of a demonstrable binary, but as Deleuze and Guattari tell us, the reality of transformation has nothing to do with these points. On the other hand, becomings relate to techniques, true creations - phenomena with no exact representation and reproducibility. Indeed, becomings are always pre-established movements. When someone becomes, they do not return to where they started (with a full copy or mirror). Instead, something changes; something new starts, something not yet caught in the fabric of the all-too-familiar (293). As movement beginning or end are always inherently discrete and inert between points. Indeed, becoming exists only as a (virtual) line, with no memory or history that can root it in a point in the past (making it a likeness) and no overarching principles or transcendence that previously structures its path. Thus, it is through the medium of movement, flow, and unrepresentability that freedom is expressed.

2. Connection, power and machine

We only claimed that becomings are related to freedom and liberation. It is quite clear when considering the two examples of Deleuze and Guattari. They talk about Freud's "Little Hans," where Freud deals with a young boy named Hans who is afraid of horses (among other things)[1]. They ask if it is possible for Hans to somehow change his relationship with the horses. In other words, is it possible to create a new horse or not?

Then they add: "How does it improve Hans's problem; how much does it open up a path that was previously blocked?" (258). Deleuze and Guattari state similar points about someone (anyone) "deciding" to start practicing the piano again. They ask: Is it transformation? Does "change induce all previous sets that x was a prisoner of? Is this a way out?" (251). Hence, transformations free us insofar as they allow something to pass or flow, but they also involve something else: connection. In both examples, the connection is evident. Hans must build a new set of Hans's horses to free himself from his previous horse (which he felt as fear), and one's connection to the piano may be what sets them free. Indeed, it could be possible precisely through connection, flow, or movement.

Connection is very important in conceptualization. This means becoming a collection, heterogeneous "unity," "unnatural partnership," symbiosis, or "creative transformation." Becoming: the art of putting together and taking apart. In Deleuze and Political Affair, Paul Patton states a professor named Jane Gallup and a story of an interaction with one of her graduate students. A student calls Gallup to review an essay he wrote and received a poor grade. Gallup reluctantly agrees to meet with the student. Their session is "long and intensive" and involves carefully reading the student's paper and the text he writes on it. By the end, Gallup and his student are "worn out," but the student, in particular, is fundamentally defeated - he seems almost stooped and vulnerable. Gallup showed him all the mistakes he had made, live and first-hand, and the look on his face and body showed that he had indeed made those mistakes.

The interesting point that Gallup states is that the feelings he experienced during and as a result of the exchange with the student were indistinguishable from sexual feelings. Through this example, Patton wants to show that our experiences of sexuality are usually indistinguishable from our power experiences. Therefore, the power that the teacher showed over the student, which the student recognized as (legitimate) power (as evidenced in his body and facial reactions), led to feelings indistinguishable from sexual feelings. However, one should consider at least three other things: 1) the power exerted by the teacher is not proof of mastery. Still, Gallup's exercise of power is consistent with the standard and expected relationship between teacher and student. 2) There is a sense that the outcome of the meeting between Gallup and his student at the start of the correspondence could not be predicted. Hence, the student eventually decided to reschedule one of his appointments. Gallup made the student consider

[1] See Sigmund Freud, The "Wolfman" and Other Cases, trans. Louise Adey Huish (New York: Penguin, 2003), 3-122.

his work in a new light, and 3) both sides became stronger through the encounter, precisely to the point where the student walked away recognizing where he had gone wrong and thus what to do next time to improve. Gallup became aware of his power as a mentor - to directly affect others through his training and expertise. Patton makes the last point: “In sum, what produced his erotic state was the experience of successfully exercising his power as a teacher in a way and to the degree that he had never done before. In other words, his sense of his power is to enhance another power (Patton 2000: 77).

As is seen, Patton claims that the experience described by Gallup was a transformation. Now, Patton defines becoming as an engagement (simply) with the powers of other bodies. Therefore, Patton claims that becomings are those encounters where the power of each of the parties involved increases as a result of their connection: “Becoming may be considered as the process of increasing the power of one body concerning the authority of another, but it is done without allocating those powers.” The special relationship between teacher and student - testifies to this notion of transformation insofar as a process is created that allows the previous elements to move, flow or circulate. New and unforeseen ways and the novelty of any process is effectively the place of growth and the cause of growth - the movement, liberation, and enhancement of the bodies in question. Hence, a special kind of unique relationship is created between beings in a transformation.

However, the other important factor in the process of becoming is always a matter of “machine” performance, not “organic” performance, as Deleuze and Guattari state (Deleuze & Guattari 1987: 256). In other words, do these two connected entities create a stronger and more complex machine - a common process that binds them together and separates them from their organic or “programmed” function. Hence, it is always a question of a process created by the relationship between “elements” entering into some communication. This is nothing complicated. For instance, we might ask: What processes does the relationship between my body and the caffeine that enters my body affect? Or, what process does the relationship between a grown man, a wild coyote, and a museum affect? Furthermore, the particular operation of the machine determines whether the process initiated through its connections is a transformation or not. In so far as the “organs” of the bodies that make up the machine are “cancelled” (260), which means in so far as the elements of each body are freed from their “natural purposes” and the machine thus constructed expresses an original and productive relation expressed relation constitutes a transformation.

Conclusion

DeLanda places Deleuze's ontology in the realist tradition, and for this placement, he assumes a hierarchical relationship between noumenon and phenomenon in Deleuze's ontology. However, their relationship is not causality or hierarchy but rather inequality. Moreover, Piercey reveals that Deleuze's ontology suggests three parts. These are generally actual and virtual existences. Being corresponds to an event in sense logic and good or hidden repetition in difference and repetition. Virtuality associated with events in logic has a different sense of proportion in difference and repetition. The actual corresponds to the material world in the logic of sense and to the bad repetition in difference and repetition. Although Deleuze's philosophy emphasizes becoming, he does not reject the function of existence. For Deleuze, existence is a requirement in the ontology. It is not a deep or hidden foundation but a paradox that emerges between language and sound. It is the boundary and context of ontology and advises internal and materialistic ontology. In other words, existence does not explain existence but the sameness of the background for all beings.

Unlike existence, virtuality is an explanatory part, but not for the material world. Deleuze respects the material world, but not beyond that. That is, the virtual and the material worlds have a two-way relationship. In Deleuze's philosophy, the concept of difference and events are the main examples of this relationship. The difference is the condition of the diversity of the material world. In other words, saying that there is multiplicity in the material world means that the difference is actualized in the material world. However, events are the results of the material world. We need an alternative way of understanding events. The sense that events move into the past and the future as a process of becoming. Indeed, it moves in both directions simultaneously. Then virtuality includes both the results of the material world and the conditions of the material world. Furthermore, although virtuality is not an explanation of the material world, it cannot be considered independent of it. In sum, Deleuze's ontology shows virtual materialism with a limited existence.

The concept of difference essentially involves making connections empirically. In other words, theoretical motifs of difference are useful for distinguishing things but not separating them. It is better to differentiate them to establish a connection with each other. This is an ambiguous point in Deleuze's philosophy, but it is also a necessary connection between Deleuze's independent writings and his collaborations with Guattari. According to Deleuze, the ontology of difference considers the uniqueness of things as a process. The difference between things is not their stable property but their process. Every person is unique among humans. It is his uniqueness or change. He is unique in the process of becoming. Everything is unique at any time with a different return. Then the difference is a way of connecting things with things yet to come, which is reason enough to connect. This means that the future is about actualizing the difference. Differential relations or connections determine events. Nonetheless, this does not mean that anything might occur; it merely means that the right connections need to

exist for something to happen.
Becomings defy representation (language and images). They show that they are merely qualitative, emotional and singular. They include the unexpected cases as no script dictates their emergence in advance, so extremes unfold and materialize. They are disruptive, disturbing and transformative. One finds oneself not in an orderly unity with one's life, perfectly organized and calculated (with everything exactly where it belongs), but in flux and tension, where the future remains undecided and unknown.
Thus, in transforming, we give over a degree (less or greater) of control. In other words, there is always an element of involuntary by necessity. This is because it is through the transformation that one effectively depersonalizes and finds oneself separated from self they assume unconsciously or spontaneously. This experience of being lived is an experience suddenly taken from beyond oneself, seemingly out of nowhere. Once more, this experience appears involuntary, although it can be (and I am hopeful) productive. One can voluntarily look for becoming one - to deterritorialize in search of freedom, "away from the suffocating eloquence of institutions." Yet, this stage is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for becoming. Indeed, one can experiment by placing one's conscious body in strange relationships for which the conscious body has no book and no immediate resource for domestication, discipline, or control. This attempt might fail to be the same person they were before the experiment. Indeed, nothing new may happen due to some events, and that desire stops moving. In both cases, voluntary always gives way to involuntary. What is needed is the event of self-loss. A choice to experiment might produce this effect, but there are other pathways and results.
After all that said, one obvious question remains: why bother with becomings? Surely, they might offer us freedom from ourselves, but at what cost? We have consistently described transformations as experiences of ambivalence, anxiety, dissociation, tension, and so on, and we have a good reason. In a transformation, we suddenly feel their "foundation" eroded, and we can no longer live automatically and without reflection. Don, we not justifiably want (at least stages) comfortable immersion? Then how can Deleuze encourage transformations? What makes his position preferable, or rather, why should we consider Deleuze's view of life, experience, and ethics? Is his philosophy not merely a "personal confession" (as Nietzsche puts it)? And as far as it is, does that not undermine his philosophy? His ideas might be invigorating, but they lack universal value if they are just ways of expressing personal preferences. However, one could probably say that Deleuze hardly cares about such a concept as "universal value" and admits that his projects with Guattari are always precisely places of desire. They stated: "Take what you want, leave what you do not."
Nonetheless, can we abandon the concept of becoming? I deal with transformations for a reason, which may not resonate well with everyone. To engage in the project of becoming is to "[apply] nature to perfection" (Deleuze & Guattari 1993: 260), and to perfect nature is to do justice to life and nature. In other words, it is to always search for the vitality of life and to feel and experience this vitality closely. It is to be full of life and actively seek to reveal the vitality of life simultaneously so that things are not always "as they are." As Deleuze and Guattari state, limiting oneself to a subject is dangerous exactly because it is a method that stops vital flows (Guattari 1993: 276) and analyzes much of the vitality of life previously.
On the contrary, taking full advantage of nature always needs us to inquire with fascination and intensity, "What might happen to my body in this possible set?" And this one? And this one? And so on.
We must always consider two other points when becoming a problem. As Deleuze and Guattari state, the first case is the criteria for becoming, but they should not be used as past (Guattari 1993: 251). Memory is the boring repetition of territorialization. Usually, when one is reminiscing (perhaps nostalgic), nothing new happens. In other words, reliving an experience in mind is not exactly transforming it, as the experience is already domesticated. Thus, transforming as the lived experience process means becoming anti-memory instead of memory.
The second point to remember about becoming: we do not know what we can make a rhizome with or how our becoming might happen. Thus, experimenting is up to us (Guattari 1993: 251). Our freedom is at risk, and this is a never-ending task. Freedom for Deleuze and Guattari is what one does, not what one has. Hence, it is never to transform to this or that. However, it is always about growing spontaneously outward, from the middle, in various directions. If an experiment fails, it is probably not the end of the world, as "even failures are a part of becoming process" (Guattari 1993: 255).

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