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How to cite this publication

Please cite the final published version:

Staunæs, D., & Raffnsøe, S. (2018). Affective pedagogies, Equine-assisted experiments and Posthuman leadership. *Body & Society*, 25(1), 57-89. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X18817352>

Publication metadata

Title: Affective pedagogies, Equine-assisted experiments and Posthuman leadership
Author(s): Dorthe Staunæs & Sverre Raffnsøe
Journal: Body & Society
DOI/Link: [10.1177/1357034X18817352](https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X18817352)
Document version: Accepted manuscript (post-print)

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Dorthe Staunæs & Sverre Raffnsøe

Affective pedagogies, equine-assisted experiments and post-human leadership.

Abstract

Responding for Guattari's call for a 'mutation of mentality', the article explores unconventional horse-assisted leadership learning as promising ways of embodied learning to be affected and response-able. By drawing on and continuing the work of Guattari and posthuman feminist scholars, we aim to show that studying the affective pedagogics of opening up the senses and learning to be affected is of vital importance. We analyse a posthuman auto-ethnography of developing capabilities to live and breathe together that allow us to relate in alternative ways. Experiments with affective pedagogy are conducted as they affect bodies through indeterminate and liminal contact zones and use aesthetics to evoke transformation in senses and thoughts, care and response. Since they are both domesticated and non-human, horses are promising companions in this endeavor of entrainment. However, these sensorial experiments also call for an ethics of cutting connections and, not least, of permitting refusals of refusals.

Intro

Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damages but by a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity and in the modes of psychological life, which must

literally be re-invented. The refoundation of politics will have to pass through aesthetic and analytical dimensions implied in the three ecologies – the environment, the socius and the psyche. We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and to global warming due to the greenhouse effect, [...] without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society. (Guattari, 1995: 15).

In tiny corners of the world, strange and esoteric things seem to be happening. Leaders from large and small companies, universities and other institutions are lying flat on their backs in a field, listening to grazing horses, imagining cell-flow and swaying like corn in the wind while being pushed and ‘hugged’ by horses in a fold.

At first, these activities may seem peculiar ‘occurrences,’ exceptional self-centered exercises for the few in isolation from the rest of the world. Reframed in a broader context, however, these local, arcane exercises turn out to be quite the opposite. They are comprehensible personal, organizational and managerial responses to an experienced urgent need to learn to be(come) affected and a related desire for more perceptive, caring and ethically sound ways of performing leadership. Students are enrolled in private but certified equine assisted courses around the world. In Denmark, you may even take a module as part of supplementary training for public management at a university college.

Taking a broad and inclusive definition of the exercise of power and leadership as a productive force as a starting point, one could claim that these exercises represent a serious effort to develop a capacity to affect others and thereby make them behave in ways they would not usually behave in. Preferably, to do more than they would usually do – or more than can even be predicted (Raffnsøe, 2013).

At closer inspection, thus, these seemingly exceptional esoteric exercises pursued by the few cease to be a mere enjoyable pastime. Instead, they can be viewed as experiments of vital importance, carried out in ways that allow us to gain the experience necessary to address and respond to present

challenges. They are timely and promising creations of new forms of human perceptiveness, subjectivity, self-management and leadership at a time when existing forms have become problematic and more appropriate forms are highly sought after.

One can easily fail to notice the critical potential in these activities if one perceives them in isolation from the rest of the world or if one perceives criticism primarily as a “negative effort to identify mistakes and limitations” in others or other things (Raffnsøe, 2017: 30). Considered in their relationship to the surrounding world, however, these seemingly arcane exercises prove to be critical in a very radical and fundamental affirmative sense, which we in this article, try approach with an transdisciplinary, affirmative and caring critique. The experiments prove to be honest and worthwhile endeavors to develop and examine other approaches in manners that fundamentally challenge established practice and spurs a drive to improve it. They are critical in the sense that they experiment with, affirm and articulate other options that one can aspire to live up to and realize (Raffnsøe, 2017: 47, 51-52). Even though neither the participants nor the surrounding world may ever be able to realize the full potential the exercises are experiments that test what one can hope for (Bloch, 1985). As a consequence, further discussion of their character, implications, new vulnerabilities and ethical issues is also called for, as we will try to critically clarify towards the end of this article.

As Guattari eloquently states in the above quotation, the survival of human beings is seriously threatened by environmental damage as well as the degeneration of the fabric of social solidarity and the modes of psychical life. Since this damage and the dangers affecting the environment, social relations, and the human psyche and mentality prove to be closely interrelated, it becomes evident that the appropriate remedies are also interrelated.

In an Anthropocene age in which the human race has gained an overarching and destabilizing influence on the earth’s system, it is impossible to conceive of solutions to global warming, the

poisoning of the hydrosphere, atmosphere and biosphere, the flows of migration from terror, war and hunger, and the racialized diversification of policies and organizations without developing more appropriate modes of living together, more caring ways of leading, managing and governing. It seems as if new mentalities and forms of subjective existence that are able to address such dire predicaments are needed.

Closer examination, however, makes it plain that the reverse is equally true. In this article, by drawing on and adding to the points made by Guattari, we aim to interrogate an affective pedagogy of learning leadership. The thesis of this pedagogy is that one is only able to develop appropriate modes of social interaction and subjectivity to the extent that one is able to establish alternative relationships and modes of relationship: alternative ways of perceiving, experiencing, inhabiting, addressing and relating to the world and to other creatures of the world.

The claim is that it is difficult to relate to and lead others if you are unable to develop an acute sense of your environment and other creatures. For this reason, studying the opening of the senses and how to 'learn to be affected' (Despret, 2004) is of vital importance. Conversely, you will be incapable of sensing others if you cannot sense yourself and are unable to manage yourself and others in a way that makes you 'worthy of the event' or perceptible to what happens (Deleuze, 2015: 148). It is essential that you are able to take care of yourself and of other fellow beings in such a manner that you can make yourself available to being affected by and learning from the manner in which these fellow beings are being affected by and learning from you (Despret, 2004: 124-25).

As a consequence, embodied affectivity and sensitivity, relationships and interactions with the world and other fellow beings, social and political interaction, and subjectivity prove to be inextricably entangled, and body and society, nature and culture prove to be closely intra-related (Barad, 2007).

The ways in which they are entangled and intra-related becomes even more perceptible when new and more appropriate forms are sought, experienced and learned.

As an example, Latour (2004) takes the education of ‘noses’ for the perfume industry through the use of ‘malettes à odeurs’ or odor kits, which illustrates the interlacement and ongoing intra-action experienced as a body is acquired and learns to feel when it, through practice and training, moves from dull and dumb sensation towards more aesthetically differentiated forms of experience and existence:

The odour kit is made of series of sharply distinct pure fragrances arranged in such a way that one can go from sharpest to the smallest contrasts. To register those contrasts one needs to be trained through a week-long session. Starting with a dumb nose unable to differentiate much more than ‘sweet’ and ‘fetid’ odours, one ends up rather quickly becoming a ‘nose’ (*un nez*), that is, someone able to discriminate more and more subtle differences and able to tell them apart from one another [...]. It is not by accident that the person is called ‘a nose’ as if, through practice, she had *acquired* an organ that defined her ability to detect chemical and other differences. Through the training session, she learned to have a nose that allowed her to inhabit a (richly differentiated odoriferous) world. Thus body parts are progressively acquired at the same time as ‘world counter-parts’ are being registered in a new way. Acquiring a body is thus a progressive enterprise that produces at once a sensory medium and a sensitive world. (Latour, 2004: 206-207).

A similar interlaced and intra-acting education of the senses and sentimental education could be said to be taking place in the aforementioned experiments and experiences designed to help cultivate and teach more caring forms of leadership. Practicing alternative forms of leadership characterized by practices of trust, attentiveness, attunement and listening to seemingly invisible, immaterial,

unspoken, and fleeting forms of life requires recalibrating one's relations and interactions with the world as well as one's relationship to oneself. One must learn to be(come) affected, to tune in to one another, and to take care of, address, influence and affect one another (Despret, 1999, 2002) in order to make oneself available for 'practices that create and transform through the miracle of attunement' (Despret, 2004: 125).

It is on this premise and with the intention of developing a capability to live and breathe together in new ways that experiments with affective pedagogy are being carried out. It is a pedagogy that affects bodies through indeterminate and liminal contact zones (Hvenegård-Lassen and Staunæs 2015, Raffnsøe and Staunæs 2014) while, as hinted by Guattari, using aesthetics to evoke pathways to transformation in senses and thoughts (Hickey-Moody, 2013), care and response.

As Eve K. Sedgwick (2003) and others identify, human-animal encounters may assist us in non-dualistic pedagogical approaches if we allow a shift in ordinary distributions of power and knowing positions. Similarly, new sorts of intra-actions with animals may help us deconstruct the god trick of not-situated knowledge (Haraway, 1989; 2008). It does not necessarily happen in the form of a total transfer to an unknown desolate wilderness but rather as a queering of the ordinary ways of dealing with the world. A queering that allows us to question anthropo-, ego- and ethno-centric aspects of the ordinary world. An affective pedagogy may make this happen; and horses, simultaneously domesticated and non-human, may be promising companions in this endeavour of entrainment (Game, 2001; Patton, 2003).

In this article, we aim to explore these points as it appears in the leadership learning experiments with horses above. Taking our point of departure in an auto-ethnographic example of equine-assisted leadership learning and the etymology of management, we showcase how an affective pedagogy based on a more-than-human-more-than-language-more-than-visual approach nourishes capabilities

of interest and presence, attunement and auto-affection. These are important aspects of leading others with response-ability (the ability to give a responsible response rather than an insensitive reaction (Barad, 2010) and enables leadership that dare to care (Bellacasa, 2017; Despret, 2004).

The article falls into four sections: In the first section ‘The promises of horses,’ we briefly outline etymological, cultural and historical links between horses, leadership/management and affective pedagogy in a Western tradition. In the second section, we delineate the post-human auto-ethnographic approach employed in our research. In the third section, we describe three experiments that evoke bodily sensations and open affective registers – processes experienced by one of the authors attending an equine-assisted leadership learning course. Finally, we further develop the implications of these experienced processes. This final section puts forward a new sense of response-ability and care and an understanding of leadership in terms of ‘power to’ rather than ‘power over’.

The article builds mainly on auto-ethnography (see below). Furthermore, an archive of documents (magazine articles, a radio programme and a number of both popular and more scientific books and articles about equine-assisted leadership courses) helps us to read the auto-ethnographic pieces as an example of affective pedagogy of leadership learning through broader cultural stories of horses and leadership.

The promises of horses

Etymologically and culturally, there is a close connection between management, leadership and horses. In all likelihood derived from the Italian word ‘maneggiare’, ‘to handle and train horses’ (Hammond, 2016: 133), and influenced by the French ‘manège’, meaning ‘horsemanship’. The primary signification of the English term ‘manage’ in the 16th century was to ‘put (a horse) through the paces of the manège’ (Concise Oxford English dictionary, 2009: 866). In turn, the French and Italian terms ultimately go further back to the Latin word ‘manus’, signifying ‘hand’ (Lewis, 1999).

Etymologically, the term ‘management’ thus indicates the art of training or directing a horse by holding its reins in the hand. Immediately, this points to the activity of supervising, controlling and disciplining the animal while one holds the reins in the manège; but similar activity may occur while one travels on horseback or by carriage.

Statues and paintings show us that horses, for centuries, have been among the chosen accessories of the prince or king. The ability to ride on horseback and hold the reins firmly to control it signals power and authority; and, for centuries, princes and kings have practised horse riding to acquire the skills required for the art of ruling.

Working with animals as part of leadership training is not entirely new. A truly spectacular form existed in the 1990s when a Danish former Special Forces soldier, Carsten Mørch, educated at the *United States Army Ranger School*, offered The Rabbit-killer courses. Here the participants were encouraged to engage with rabbits, and to take care of and feed them at the beginning of a survival trip, and at the end of the trip they were asked to kill and eat them. The learning objective was to develop and exercise the ability of disengagement and thereby learn to exercise executive leadership in accordance with the four Cs of anthropocentric management and leadership: command, coercion, control and calculation (Raffnsøe, 2013). This would facilitate the birth of a Commander-in-Chief, who executes passionless implementation of plans and is able to stay detached from the people you are supposed to lead (Raffnsøe and Staunæs, 2014; Hvenegård-Lassen and Staunæs, 2015).

In many respects, the rabbit killer courses continued elements of control and taming affects in a long-standing Western tradition for leadership-training. This is the tradition of the prince retreating from the larger household of the city-state or the empire into the controlled setting of a closed *camera* (chamber) where his subjectivity can be trained and educated by close counsellors (Plato 2012; Xenophon, 1953, 1960; Seneca and Basore, 1979; d’Aquino, and D’Entreves, 1948). The character of

this tradition of counselling princes is represented in the *mirror of princes* literary genre, which can be traced back to antiquity (Raffnsøe and Staunæs, 2014: 188). Within this tradition, leadership is closely associated with control, rule and dominance (Raffnsøe 2013). By entering into and attaining subjectivity formation through such basic and preparatory counsel, which gave the prince knowledge of the right measure and control of his affective engagement, the prince was supposed to be able to disengage from his fellow human beings and exercise dominance and power over them (Raffnsøe and Staunæs, 2014). By building a human subjectivity in a way that allowed him to be the knower, to point out the correct path forward and to tame and stay in control of his feelings, the ruler was supposed to be able to rise above his fellow beings and lead them.

Over the past 10-15 years, the appearance of equine-assisted leadership training marks a significant shift in the ideal of leaders as well as the education of leaders. Rather than character formation or the acquisition of specific competences or skills such as execution, the purpose of courses with horses is to invoke a certain subjectivity (Blackmore, 2011; Goleman, 1996, Howe 2008; Sinclair and Wilson, 2002), as a capacity or a readiness to relate and respond adequately not only to ever changing engagement with and relations between humans but also to changes in the environment as such (Raffnsøe and Staunæs 2014).

With new ideals of leadership comes new signposts for the affective pedagogy upon which the training is based. The horse, the horse pen and the round manège function as sensorial amplifiers of more receptive forms of leadership. Rather than recurring to talks and reflexivity, which have previously been among the most utilized educational tools, equine-assisted experiments are supposed to adjust and recalibrate the leader's existing ways of sensing and perceiving the world through embodied, outdoor encounters. There are different equine-assisted leadership programmes, some of which remain more attached to anthropocentric, white and (hegemonic) masculine paradigms of steering, grooming and dressage while others, as the one, we investigate, build on philosophies of

Indigenous-American horsemanship and aim to cultivate the ability to listen to and ‘whisper with’ horses. Listening, engaging with, and being passionately involved in, belong to affective registers that differ radically from the predatory instinct triggered by the rabbit killer exercises

Encountering a horse pen as a pedagogical setting is to enter a space with other rules, other habits and other repertoires of how to relate to other living creatures than those one normally meets at the office or institution, where the daily work activities takes place. The horses are staged as four-legged colleagues or animal coaches with their own pedagogical *raison d’être*. In contrast to the aforementioned rabbits, the horses are respected beings and perceived as particularly sensitive and observant prey animals, able to sense differences appearing within other beings’ muscle tone and tension. Accelerating the work of mutual mirroring and attunement will assist the leader in raising an entangled self and environmental awareness, the story goes. Put another way, the horses are staged as what Haraway (2008) terms ‘new creatures of imagined possibilities;’ and interactions with horses promise an alternative place for learning the art of leadership. In an interview conducted by one of us, the authors, a human coach draws upon old Indigenous-American philosophy and states:

Everyone can learn to become a natural leader [...] horses have a special capability of being in the moment and in our society as such, where everything takes place in our heads, we do need to get into our bodies. The horse clearly monitors if you are preoccupied or insincere when the two of you are together. Through the horse, we help course participants develop their body language. If you are a shrinking violet, you cannot get the horse to follow you, and if you are too bossy, the horse also reacts and will not follow you either.

The horses invite fantasies of otherness into the learning arena. They come to figure as not only animal coaches but also as non-human radars of the state of human mind and body. In turn, they can thus indicate where the human mind and sensory apparatus can be improved. The horses are

supposed to fuel the learning process. When connecting with the horse, leaders are supposed to move beyond pure human language and cognition, and settle into their bodies and the gamut of sensations and affects.

These horses are not wild animals, but domesticated creatures that have been working for and in partnerships with humans for thousands of years. The horses involved in this particular kind of leadership learning have been handled with non-violent techniques, as opposed to more established cruder and crueler forms of horse-care. They have not had to endure the use of restraints such as whips, leg ropes, side reins, being hit, or any other means to break their willpower. Consequently, these animals have already been repeatedly culturally modified and attuned to particular realms of affects like mutual trust and respect. They are trained not only to cooperate but also to enter into interspecies communication through sounds and whinny as well as through subtle corporeal movement and gestures.

With a nod to Derrida's *The Animal That therefore I Am (more to Follow)* (2008), the Foucault-Deleuze expert and horse trainer Paul Patton notes that horses inhabit a capacity for language.

Training horses

establishes a linguistic form of life within which humans and animals are able to communicate with one another [...] They are also examples of the capacity of these animals to respond rather than merely react to the speech acts of their trainers (2002: 88).

Quoting Roberts from *The Man Who Listens*, Patton continues to specify that 'body language is not confined to humans, nor to horses; it constitutes the most often used form of communication between animate objects on dry land' (ibid. 89).

In her article 'The body we care for: Figures of anthropo-zoo-genesis (2004a), and her book *Hans, le cheval qui savait compter* (2004b) Vinciane Despret painstakingly discusses crucial aspects of

the exchange between humans and horses as they came to the fore in experiments involving *Clever Hans* around 1900. Hans the Horse seemed to be able to count and calculate. Being asked ‘What is $2 + 2$?’, Hans responded with his hoof: 1, 2, 3 4. Upon closer examination, however, it appears that his performance may have relied on his perceptive abilities. By reading and attuning to tensions in human muscles and breathing, Hans could guess how the human expected him to behave. According to Despret,

Hans could play the role of a device that induced new articulations between consciousness, affects, muscles, will, events ‘at the fringe’ of Consciousness [...] a device that enabled humans to learn more about their bodies and their affects. Hans *embodied* the chance to explore other ways by which human and non-human bodies become more sensitive to each other (2014a:114).

As Despret shows, however, an animal that can respond is not enough to live up to Hans’ promise. In order to notice how the animal responds, it is important to have a setup that allows this response to occur and be perceived. In order to make an ‘energetic relation’ or a ‘contact’ it is of course necessary that humans behave attentively. To this effect, it is necessary to train human ears and their bodily capacities of sensing and listening (Despret 2004a). To use Karen Barad’s term (2012), the successful use of horses demands a ‘response-able’ human student, a student who allows herself to be affected and not simply react.

In the three experiments described below, we investigate how a participant in an equin-assisted session can (slowly) become response-able through the processes of an affective pedagogy. Before doing so, however, we will outline the methodology we use to follow these processes.

Post-human auto-ethnography

In continuation of approaches known as affective turns (Clough and Halley, 2007; Massumi, 2002; Blackman, 2012; Blackman and Venn, 2010), new and long-established methodologies are currently

being taken up in order to grasp affects, senses and moods. Traditional feminist methods such as memory work, auto-ethnography and poetry are being rediscovered. Apps and drawing programs are invented, technologies like brain scanners, sphygmographs measuring blood pressure and methods that connote different and perhaps more ‘scientific’ paradigms are being re-theorized, and, occasionally, the laboratory and its experiments are being re-worked as a post-human sensorium transgressing positivist notions of knowledge (Juelskjær and Staunæs, 2016). Nevertheless, despite this development, non-representational methodologies of the lived empirical remain understudied in the research field (Knudsen and Stage, 2015).

The methodological aim of the current study, therefore, is to develop affective and sensorial attentiveness to seemingly invisible, immaterial, fleeting, ephemeral, yet noticeable processes and fluxes in empirical encounters (Knudsen and Stage, 2015). This continues the aim of Lisa Blackman and Couze Venn in a previous issue of *Body & Society* (Blackman and Venn, 2010). In order to do this, we work with an adjusted auto-ethnography: a post-human auto-ethnography examining how sensing, relating, and feeling emerge as effects of heterogeneous assemblages of more-than-human components (Delanda, 2016). Such an auto-ethnography involves the-more-than-human but remains interested in how human subjectivity could be formed through horse-human encounters and approaches the affects that emerge in spaces of these more-than-human encounters (Nosworthy, 2013).

In the late postmodern literature, auto-ethnography is defined as a post-positivist approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*) (Ellis, Adams and Bochner, 2011; 1). Auto-ethnography seeks ‘to produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience’ (ibid: 4) based on field notes, interviews, and/or artifacts and then to describe cultural and relational patterns and experiences by using facets of storytelling (e.g. character and plot development). Auto-ethnography is based on ‘reflexive’ or ‘confessional’ tales (Maanen,

1988) from the first-person perspective; it is not presented by an authoritative voice but sculptured within a situated and impressionistic aesthetic.

Modifying this post-positivistly, however, a social constructionist point of departure for a more-than-human glossary and methodology implies crafting attention and vocabulary for the affective oscillations and intra-actions of the more-than-human assemblages. Our auto-ethnography insists on “the complexity of human/animal interrelating as a kind of choreography, a co-creation of behavior” (Birke, Bryld, and Lykke 2004) that goes beyond meaning making processes (important for most auto-ethnography). Rather than beginning with the issues of sense making or grasping meaning, we circle around ‘the moment before’ namely around affective indeterminacy (see also Massumi 2002; Nosworthy 2013).

Some studies (Birke and Hockenhull 2015, Birke, Hockenhull, and Creightonb 2010) decenter the human by observing and video-filming how horses participate in horse-human-partnerships. As a more-than-human alternative to the postmodern version of auto-ethnography as well as the representational and visual approach in some animal studies, we aim to focus on the becoming of human capabilities. We try to go beyond the visual and to reconfigure the researcher as a kind of seismographic device for capturing and feeling the rhythms and affects (Lefebvre 2004) that emerge in the intra-action of different species and different material arrangements.

We could have used electronic sensors and wearable cameras (and we might try to do this in a subsequent study) and observed the effect of minor bodily gestures and movements through non-human hardware and software. However, our interest in this study was to remain methodologically non-representational, to *feel and sense* the ephemeral, unseen, unhearable effects of this affective pedagogy involving something more-than-human, more-than-language and more-than-visual, and thereby to trace the specificities in learning to assume sensuous leadership.

This sensing occurs from a particular temporalized and spatialized site in the entanglement, but precisely as a product *of* this heterogeneous assemblage of paddocks, horses, leaders, coaches, robes, voices, horsetails, skins, senses, learning objectives, pedagogics, grass, wind, sun, snowsuits, philosophies, mirror-neurons, and so on. We are all in this together but not as One or as separate beings.

Adjusting the auto-ethnography into a more-than-human realm does not transcend or externalize the collective condition. Rather, the adjustment aims to fine-tune empirical and analytical attention towards the mutual emergence and entanglement and to grasp how this may be

expressed, felt and voiced as embodied moments of mutuality, engagements of two agentic individuals and as a kind of anthro-zoo-genetic practice, where species domesticate each other through being together [...] how horse and human meet and change as a result of their meeting. (Maurstad, Davies, and Cowles, 2013: 322).

Empirical material and the three experiments

The auto-ethnography is grounded in three types of empirical material: firstly, experience notes from one of the researchers/author's pilot visits to a horse ranch along with an ethnographic interview with a (human) coach working with equine-assisted leadership learning.

Secondly, but more importantly, the researcher's/author's field notes and audio records of monologues based on her own participation in 10 sessions of equine-assisted leadership learning. Each of these sessions lasted between two and three hours and consisted of different experiments of human-horse encounters. Besides involving the researcher, the sessions implied two two-legged (human) coaches and between one and five (equine) four-legged coaches.

Thirdly, an archive of historical and cultural documents and radio and television documentaries has been collected as background material for constructing the auto-ethnography.

Writing an embodied auto-ethnography with thick descriptions of concrete situations, the researcher/first author (of this article) attempted to function as her own ethnographic device. In the situation, the researcher tried to stay tuned as a kind of seismograph capturing the rhythms and intensities of the atmosphere, sensations and affects prompted by the human-horse encounters (Lefebvre, 2002). Shortly after, the researcher/author, perhaps a little clumsily and short of breath, worded the experience in monologues recorded on a smartphone. Later, she listened carefully to the recorded monologues, recalled the sessions through her own voice and the responses made simultaneously from her body while writing up small auto-ethnographic pieces of text.

Finally, both authors have tried to broaden and overstep the auto-ethnographic pieces by reading and writing them diffractively through different cultural products on horse-human-relations and post-human literature. Using this concurrently introspective and analytical method enabled us to write up three experiments as three small tales recounting sensorial and affective aspects. These text pieces are presented below in italics.

The order of the sensation experiments traces a perceived learning process: From experiments about *amplifying sensations*, through experiments about feeling connectedness or what may be termed *feeling mutual entanglements* (Barad 2007), towards experiments about *synchronous breathing while becoming touch-able and response-able*. As will be shown, the affective pedagogy involves uncomfortable frustration as well as joyful moments. It dismantles well-known patterns of perceiving and gaining control. Finally, and perhaps most important, it scaffolds the process of learning to be affected in uncanny ways.

After each experiment, we provide a brief analysis of what the experiment can teach us about affective pedagogy as leadership learning. After presenting all three experiments, we undertake a conceptual analysis of the phenomenon of attunement and auto-affection as two main features of learning leadership that dare to care and not least a change in mentalities, as Guattari calls for.

Sensation experiment I: Amplifying sensations and the ability to sense

Leaders often believe that they need to be good communicators and they interpret this as giving good speeches and, through words and language, tell fellow employees about the direction of the organization and how to get there. However, the first experiment makes us ponder on how managerial communicating may also be a matter of listening. Listening is not only recognizing voice and words. It involves tuning into input and sounds beyond linguistic categorization and human frameworks. To listen may prove more complicated than first realized. To do this, we probably need to strengthen not only our cognitive capacities but also our bodily awareness. Which environmental set-up may allow this experience to take place?

While interviewing one of the coaches at the ranch, we walked across the green grazing grounds and entered a horse circus ring, a round enclosure. Being the standard size for a horse circus ring with a diameter of 13 meters and a high wooden fence, the ring gave the horse and rider the best conditions for using the centrifugal force in exercises. Besides conditioning the psychical presence of the horse and rider, the system was also a sort of echo chamber, amplifying and multiplying the sounds of human voices, horse neighs, moving bodies, sand, wind and air: I was hit by the difference between the soundscapes of the field and the manège. In the field, my voice seemed to melt into the air. In the manège, by contrast, my voice was thrown back and forth with such intensity that I felt the echoing, doubling, tripling of sounds as a stab in my chest.

It was mind-blowing. The sound waves started in one direction, but multiplied and felt as if they were coming in their hundreds, from all directions and in increasingly new patterns of interference. I was overwhelmed and sensed the auditory intensity as a tonal penetration of space and being. I could close my eyes and shut out the visual sensations, but I did not have a mechanism for closing my ears. Only hands or perhaps earmuffs could help me cut the connection and protect me from being touched by the sound waves. This soundscape hit me deeply and altered my perception of my size and being. Fascinated, I lowered my voice. I raised it. I experienced how the spoken language and linguistic meanings were suspended while sounds and rhythms were exaggerated. When I left the ring and walked out into the grazing ground, I felt changed. I was beginning to experience and know the world differently.

The organizational soundboard is seldom the focus at leadership courses at business schools, neither is this kind of listening and sensing necessarily facilitated by the rush of daily leadership decision-making. Still, the capability of listening is of the utmost importance. The example with the amplification of sound makes us feel how sensations are deeply intertwined with the matter and milieu that organizations are made of. The entanglement of ring/manage voices and bodies allowed an experience of multimodalities. The fold acted as an amplifier for old wisdom already known: Listening and sensing is a different kind of knowing. An intensity as a vibe. A purl. A shock. Through the chest. Through the gut or the disturbance of bodily balance. Not necessarily as a tone, but as a rhythm and vibrations made, the sounds of the ring arrangement allowed the researcher body to enter into new openings and to be capable of being affected. It became possible to listen not only through the ears but through the entire bodily and sensorial apparatus.

This capability to be affected by sound emerged in this experiment through a specific entanglement normally used to train a horse's ability to join the herd and move in circles at a fast pace, yet, here, it entered into an experiential choreography of voice hearing and voice use. The material environment

of the circus ring mattered and invoked a refined sensational awareness; but as the next experiment demonstrates, awareness in itself does not ensure a new way of listening, or a new way of living or leading.

Sensation experiment II: Feeling mutual entanglements

I attended a session with two human coaches and five horses, i.e. three black Irish cobs (two mares, and a stallion), and a brown and a white Arabian gelding. We went out to the grazing ground where one of the human coaches asked me to choose and make contact with a horse. Preferably, she suggested, another one than the big, beautiful, white gelding we had worked with in the previous session. She did not define 'contact,' but repeated from the last session that I was not allowed to enter the pen or to touch the chosen horse with my hands. I chose a black mare grazing peacefully close to the fence. Contact? I am good at getting in contact with people, I thought, but I have had only few experiences with horses.

Standing outside the fence, I talked. I called out to the mare. I clapped. I jumped. I tried in any manner to draw attention to myself. The horse's ears stayed alert. They kept turning like small aerials following the sounds of my actions; however, I felt that nothing happened. No contact? Remembering the amplification of sensations in the horse ring, I changed track. Instead of voicing my existence and acting out, I tried to become smaller. I began looking at the horse. I glanced. I stared. I felt nothing happened. I did it for minutes. I did more of the same. For an hour. Still no reply. I could not motivate the horse to care for me. I was ready to jump over the fence and place myself on the horse's back! At the end of the session, the mare lifted her tail and deposited horse droppings on the grazing ground. At a slow pace, she turned to her fellow horses and left me at the side. Contact? What a companion!

Next week, the patient human coach asked me to try again to establish what she termed 'an energetic relation' with the same mare. I tried through empathically hailing, staring and just standing. No

contact. The human coach asked me to be in the moment and think less. As she said: 'Nobody is interested in someone who is not interested in them'. What did she mean? I was furious. I was very interested in getting in contact with this horse! I tried again, and nothing happened. Eventually, the coach asked me to close my eyes and lie down flat in the grass. Twenty minutes passed before I sensed the earth tremble. Not as an earthquake, but as small stabs of the sound of grazing through my entire body. I was in contact with a horse doing its favorite thing: Grazing.

As Eve K. Sedgwick has pointed out in her story of the failing pedagogics of a cat, human-animal encounters may help us prompt new questions if we allow a shift in ordinary distributions of power and knowing positions. However, commuting positions is not enough. Paraphrasing Eve K. Sedgwick (2003), what did the animal try to teach the researcher, and why did the pedagogic fail in the first instance?

In *When Species Meet*, Haraway (Haraway 2008) articulates bass rhythms of mutual communication while she concomitantly challenges Derrida's description of it. In the previously mentioned *The Animal Therefore I Am*, Derrida (2008) wonders about his cat watching him naked in the bathroom. Though Derrida knew that the cat, a little female cat, was looking back at him in his nudity in the bathroom, the cat was never asked, never heard, but only perceived to look back, Haraway writes. Even while being a curious philosopher able to ask the most complex questions, Derrida never made himself available to listen to the cat. He missed the invitation to become a companion species with the cat and thereby the possibility of knowing otherwise and doing other-worlding, Haraway continues. Why did he miss the possibility of a mutual response? Haraway surmises:

Derrida the man in the bathroom grasped all this, but Derrida philosopher didn't ask if and how the cat cared for his nakedness. Charged with emotion, Derrida the philosopher had no idea how to practice this sort of curiosity that morning within his highly visual cat (ibid: 22).

Haraway's point is that shame trumped curiosity. The naked philosopher was unable to facilitate a way of making him and the cat available to each other in a risky worlding (ibid: 27). To respond is to respect, Haraway suggests, and to respect is to ask. Contact, which is fundamental for leading, demands sincere interest. 'Inter-esse' signifies to 'exist in the in between.' Interest implies a sincere relatedness, which is not to be forced and is not a one-way relation done in 'my way' (Despret 2004).

The researcher did not ask the horse; and why should the horse then answer? While the researcher, who was worried about not getting in contact (and thereby not performing well), stuck to already proven human notions of contact such as glancing and friendly chatting, the woman who was desperately seeking calmness in the grass grasped a vibe and followed a rhythm. Perhaps this triggered an energetic connection.

In the experiment, a shift took place from sighting to sensing. Perhaps the (forced) primacy of vision made it difficult to be (or stay) in contact. In contrast to human eyes, the eyes of a horse are placed on each side of the head and have horizontally elongated pupils. Horses are prey animals that watch the world panoramically with a minimum of blind spots. Without even moving its head, a horse has a sight radius of 360 degrees. Looking into its eye may cause it to fear or flee; or, in some cases, it may just freeze. Staring may not support a contact zone but rather a division zone. Letting go (even shortly) of the ocular-centric ways of making contact may open for other ways of relating. Behaving attentively and training a capacity to let go of already established practices permitted a trans-corporeal energetic relation across species.

In this manner, the researcher experienced through her own body how living beings can become available to one another through sincere interest and through contact zones (Haraway, 2008: 27) in which it is possible to hear or feel the response of the other. The lesson for leaders from this experiment might be to co-design a setting that makes one able to give a sensorial response rather than just produce a sensorial reaction (Despret, 2004). As Games explains

Any sort of training can be thought of as an entrainment: learning to be carried along in the flow, learning to become in tune with or in the train of. For this to happen, one needs to get into these waves, to be receptive, letting go of will and self-consciousness. Training, in this account, works through a magically mimetic relation (Taussig, 1993) with the rhythms or images or performances of others. So, in living the image of the centaur, we entrain with it. And people and horses entrain together with horse-human rhythms. (2001:3).

Let us dig more into this.

Sensation experiment III: Breathing together while becoming touch-able and response-able

In the following weeks, I was expected to 'get in contact' with and 'create an energetic relation' with the brown mare again. And it actually happened but in a different sense than the grazing experiment. These moments of contact took place in a square pen of sand surrounded by a low fence. Before entering, we had practiced a guided meditation to get 'out of the head and into the body' as the human coach explained to me. While seeing purple and yellow colours behind my eyelids, I sensed cells and bubbles in frozen yet moving forms in my stomach. Something called upon me in my solar plexus. I was asked to bring this sensation with me into the horse pen and to the waiting mare, Romany.

Walking into the pen, approaching Romany, with my eyes still closed, I sensed some tiny movements in my body. Touching the horse with my hands was now allowed, but it was suggested that eyes remained closed: I went into the pen followed by the two human coaches. I had closed my eyes, but the human coaches prevented me from standing or getting behind the horse and thereby at risk of being kicked. I had an experience of what the coach might term energetic relations. It was almost a cellular experience. It was the sensation of being relaxed, of loosening every tiny joint, every little bone, from my feet, knees, elbows, shoulders, back, neck, and hips. It felt like click, click and click, piece by piece.

I was standing in the same spot and in the same posture for what felt like an eternity. I was swaying, bending like a cornstalk with the wind. Almost falling. But I didn't, due to the supportive connection between us. As if there was a kind of air pressure preventing my collapse. I sensed the air stemming from the breath of the horse and I joined the rhythm: Sucking in the air, expelling the air, sucking in the air, expelling it. We were breathing together.

Behind my eyelids, I saw images of cells, hair, bubbles; and in my entire body, I felt the images of horse skin, the thickness of hair from a mane, droplet-shaped cell membranes, fluids, lights, atoms. It was a weird sensation of gliding slowly in and between all those elements, of connectedness and infinity; and it made me invoke the atmosphere of everything's connectedness and infinity in the ending 'Jupiter and beyond infinity' of the science fiction film 2001: A Space Odyssey (Kubrick 1968/2008). The horse danced around me, nudged my back and my neck and I - still with eyes closed - just surrendered to the situation. Trusting the animal and the two human coaches. The vibrations of the big animal massaged new sensations into my body, new thoughts into my mind. With its muzzle, the horse touched and pushed me in my lower back as if massaging my infiltrated psoas. I allowed myself to open up to what seemed really unfamiliar, uncanny and weird – being touched by, rather than touching, the creature.

In this third experiment, the human seismograph witnesses something about developing a capability of relating differently. What seems most striking is the experience of learning to not only touch but become touchable, to be able to be touched and feel the touch. To not only respond but to become able to respond and feel the response, to become repons(e)-able, as Barad put it (2012).

The assemblage of the interdependent yet self-dependent and irreducible entities (horse, coaches, fold and researcher) (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988; DeLanda, 2013) allows the researcher to experience hitherto unknown affective zones, as she is gradually moved from prioritizing the faculty of seeing to being primarily affected by the auditory senses as well as the sense of balance, of being grounded. It was a situation of being attuned by the horse but also of becoming more aware of oneself, yet in a different manner. Through this attunement, the researcher moved in unpredictable directions, and it initiated a kind of embodied presence and experience of being radically intertwined.

In the grazing experiment, the relation between researcher and horse morphed from a researcher-encounters-a-docile-corpus to entanglement-of-vibrant-creatures. The reconfiguration of the leader's bodily posture and the escape from the privilege of the eye and the observation from a distance allowed a different kind of contact and to take an interest in a practice of care for the other (Despret, 2004). Entering the fold with her eyes closed, the researcher managed to develop a new approach of embodied listening, as a practice of establishing and articulating trust (Despret, 2004). She touched and was able to be touched without using hands. This asked her to actually feel the situation and not just and immediately handle and manipulate the situation in ways that would permit her to distance herself and phase out, a traditional approach in management.

Listening here is to become smaller, more sensational, to fall into the rhythms of other bodies and of the landscape of the fold. Going with the sensation allowed the researcher to leave behind the horse and the human as separate beings. To leave a distribution of the world in categories of either-or.

Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari, we might say that listening through the body meant Becoming-Animal, and Becoming-Intense, but also thereby Becoming-Imperceptible as an isolated unit (1987), as one is traversed by waves, becoming rhythms and intensities, together with another living creature. Although our experiment did not include riding, let us turn to a long quote by Ann Game to finalize this lesson on entraining one another through breathing:

Horse-lovers will tell you of dreaming along the beach, galloping, as close to the waves as possible, with hooves splashing sea and sand. Whether or not they have actually done it, they know it already, in an eternal real. Sea and wave dreams and horse dreams attract each other (is this so powerfully effective because of the rhythmic movement that connects not only horse and human, but also earth, air, and sea, a maternal sea of our origins?). And these dreams reverberate in and through riding: “The waves bound beneath me as a steed that knows his rider” (Byron quoted in Bachelard, 1983: 170): And in me too the wave rises. It swells, it arches its back. I am aware once more of a new desire, something rising beneath me like the proud horse whose rider first spurs then pulls him back (Woolf, 1977: 200). (Game 2001:2).

Becoming capable of being affected while (still) caring

What can the affective pedagogy developed in this series of horse-human-encounters teach us about viable post-anthropocentric modes of making one available to, of becoming affected by and affecting the world, which might also permit alternative, more perceptive, caring and ethically sound ways to perform leadership?

What does horse tutoring impart us with regard to appropriate ways to expand a certain capacity ‘to affect and be affected’ (Clough and Halley 2007: 2)? How can it assist us in developing a *perceptive* ability to affect others in such a way that one makes them behave in ways that they would not

otherwise behave, and preferably do more than what they would otherwise have done (Raffnsøe, 2013)?

As emphasized in connection with our discussion of Guattari, it is increasingly urgent to address these questions at a time when it is of utmost importance to develop new approaches to leadership and power that move beyond dominant anthropocentric ideas of leadership and management.

Our *first* particular point of interest in the sensations presented above is the issue of *differential attunement*. As indicated by Lisa Blackman, attunement should not be conceived as the mere process of automatic imitation but rather as a process of moving with and through affectivity that involves ‘the sending of rapid and automatic or involuntary forms of non-verbal communication’ to others (2012: 82). Attunement is a kind of energetic exchange; circulation and transmission among human as well as non-human bodies (recall the scene where the horse pushed the leader around). Minds and bodies are moved at a deep and basic level attuning and constructing affects, feelings and senses at thresholds or what we may term liminal spaces. In this way, attunement should not be perceived as one-way communication. The researcher is not just attuning to the horse. The horse is not just attuning to the researcher. They are attuning to one another and becoming a me-and-horse in this process. Brian Massumi further elaborates the concept of ‘differential attunement,’ which concerns

coincident differences in manner of activity between which things happen. [...] Between them, they co-compose a singular effect of unity resulting from how it is that they come differently together. An integral of action and experience [...] emerges from the energetic playing out of their impulsive difference (2011: 5).

In addition, attunement involves a shift of modality. The perception of the grazing horse made clear that differential attunement involves a selective imitation, making it possible to switch from one modality to a different modality (for instance, from observing action to not only hearing but feeling

sound). As indicated by Stern, attunement implies a ‘matching of the vitality form’ (2010: 41) that is based on actively tuning in to match and share dynamic forms of vitality.

Secondly, the sensation from the horse-leader surprises the leader, insofar as the differential or differing attunement results in a renewed self-awareness and possibility of touching oneself. This experience may be characterized as *auto-affection*.

According to Derrida and Clough, auto-affection implies turning oneself towards oneself, but in an awareness of oneself as one is affected by others and affected by being affected (Derrida, 1967: 235; Clough, 2000). Insofar as auto-affection presumes being affected, it implies ‘hetero-affection’ (O’Connor, 2010: 49-50). However, auto-affection also takes the form of a circular movement where one turns toward oneself in order ‘to hear oneself speak’ (Derrida, 1976: 88) in order to examine and experience how one is affected, be present for oneself and to discover who and what one is within this context and what one contributes. In this sense, auto-affection also implies potentiality and open-mindedness. It involves sensing how one is being moved and how one succeeds in transforming oneself. In Barad’s terminology, listening to, sensing and being touched by the other is also to ‘intra-act’ (2012). It is to be response-able, by designing a setting that makes one able to respond and to let responses received from others be felt (see also Despret, 2004, 2005). The leader in the experiment was not aware in advance that sensing the horse grazing could be an energetic relation or the contact required. She realized this as she opted to enter a larger setting. This setting permitted her to be in the present moment rather than just minding the future next. The experiment cultivated a capability to dare to care for the horse and her own presence in ways not expected. This is quite different from leadership courses that nourish anticipatory affects and the capability to be ahead of the future (Raffnsøe and Staunæs, 2014).

Thirdly, the kind of intra-action and leadership that emerge in the horse-human encounter indicate that other and *more subtle ways to exercise power* may be practiced and learnt: ways to conceive of and exercise power in which one is able to effect a restructuring of other beings' fields of actions while one manages to make oneself available to seriously and positively take into account what may emerge when one asserts oneself in indocile and unforeseen ways (Raffnsøe, 2013).

In the experiment, neither the researcher nor the horse remain in charge and able to assert 'power over' the companionship. The received notions of the traditional four C' (command, coercion, control and calculation) do not apply to leadership and power as they are exercised in the experiment. And yet both the researcher and the horse prove to be(come) able to assert leadership in the sense that they succeed in (re)directing efforts and behavior and in making others and themselves behave in ways they would not otherwise behave to the extent that something new emerges enabling them both to gain power in a wider mediated sense. They both manage to exercise power in a form enveloped in mutuality. Instead of seeking domination and power *over*, the final experiments demonstrate learning leadership in the sense of an interdependent 'power *to*' (Allen, 1999; Morriss, 1987) and a care for (Raffnsøe and Staunæs, 2014). This is power as a certain capability to do and to affect. Yet, this kind of power is more than simply the ability to affect someone or something just in any way.

Power in this sense is 'the capacity to *affect* someone or something', but in ways that 'effect or bring about certain' not previously existing 'outcomes or at least make them more likely' (Raffnsøe, 2013a: 248). Thus, this capability involves not only Matters of Concern (Latour, 2004) but Matters of Care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Caring is more than just being concerned or having something in mind because 'thinking and knowing are often not caring, not even mindful, nor is caring an unproblematic endeavor' (ibid: 13). Nor is caring having the 'power to do or affect' a specific moral obligation. Rather it is an ethics of 'thick, impure involvement in a world where the questions of caring

appropriately need to be posed (ibid: 6), but with hesitancy (Kofoed and Staunæs, 2015) and without determining how the care should be given as ‘well as possible’ (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017: 7).

The experimental horse-human encounters articulate how determinate affects such as anxiety and dread may arise as a troubling effect as one lets go of control and superiority, as one postpones ‘knowing about’ in favour of ‘interest for’ (Despret, 2004). It is often the case one cannot even predict the negative feelings of anticipation or terror or the ‘anticipation of hurt or injury’ (Ahmed, 2015: 65) one feels when entering into ‘unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meaning’ (Haraway, 2016: 1). Consequently, such negative anticipatory attitudes may certainly explain why leaders tend to stick to the well-rehearsed anthropocentric repertoire of leadership as ‘power over’ (and training programs like the aforementioned rabbit killer course). Nevertheless, the horse-human encounter persuasively indicates how commitment to staying with unsolved tensions in an “‘unexpected country’ (Haraway, 2011) may permit us to experience a mediated and enhanced sense of force or power. By taking refuge in what was at first foreign to her, the researcher gains power in a wider indirect sense that transgresses the immediate scope of her will and actions. She manages to achieve something that she would not have been able to do on her own; and she even manages to express and regain herself in manners that she could not herself have foreseen. In other words, through this more-than-human endeavor, she becomes capable of making herself perceptible and available to what happens. In other ways, the knotted assemblage of the paddock, horses and human coaches allows her to listen through felt anxieties towards something unexpected and indeterminate. Surmounting initial moods of reluctance, watchfulness and anxiety, the researcher actively enters into a differential attunement with a human companion species that allows her to experience and sense differently.

When entering this kind of ‘unexpected country’, one continuously runs the danger of romanticizing the alternative places and conceiving them as protected privileged areas or reservations in stark contrast to the places already known (Hvenegård-Lassen and Staunæs, 2015). If not carefully

conducted and conceived, sensing with horses and working with Indigenous-American Indian philosophy on natural horsemanship could become yet another instrumental device whereby the 'promising creature' is turned into a prosthesis for (White-Western) human managers with the purpose/effect of simply enlarging of the scope of an assemblage centered around the human manager. The danger is that training affective capabilities may become a kind of inverse paternalism in which the pater/manager, while pretending to minimize himself, mutates and absorbs the other while still exercising 'power over' what is managed (Hvenegård-Lassen and Staunæs, 2015). More than-humans is (and must be) involved in avoiding this scenario. The laboratory set-up with paddock, grass, wind, weather, horses, and philosophies is of prime importance here, as it establishes an experimental, living affective device that is able to touch its more than human participants and allow Matters of Care to evolve. This affective pedagogy breaks open the still traditional pedagogical relationship that though inviting in animal others in processes of becoming seems to privilege the human as the knower/educator and consequently focuses on guidance of the horse, attention and application (Hagstrøm 2016). In our case given to other pressing issues the pedagogical issue is to experience a learning processes where the animal is the educator and that illuminate how and what humans may become.

As a consequence, new openings must be repeated and experimented with time and again. They are not possessions that can be acquired once and for all. They presuppose an environmental set up and an assemblage with living and responding creatures that make these creatures available to processes of becoming and enables them to care about how it happens. However, this indispensable reiterated experimentation equally presents challenges, as aptly voiced by Carolyn Pedwell:

When affective responses are sustained or repeated over time, they may lose their radical edge, as we find ourselves compulsively engaging in potentially stultifying practices of 'affective citation' (Wetherell, 2012). What is it, then, that enables meaningful cognitive, psychic and

embodied change catalysed (or signalled) by affect to take shape and endure rather than simply peak and collapse or become quickly re-assimilated into ‘business as usual’? In other words, how might we better understand the materialisation of affect in this context? (Pedwell, 2017: 149).

If we, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) write, are continually in connection, and, as Barad (Barad, 2007) argues, always entangled, care, critique and ethics becomes distributed and must be attributed to the more than human. And when agency, consciousness and affects are not for the monopoly of human subjects, another kind of ethic and critique than the one offered by the period of Enlightenment where critical assessment was still considered the prerogative of human beings must be developed (MacLure, 2015). Affective pedagogies involving more-than-human encounters as a road to ‘learning to be affected’ call for an ethics of care that *also* involves possibilities of *not* listening and *not* attuning. An ethics that also allows foreclosure for the human, non-human as well as the more-than-human. As one of the above experiments showed, the horse was capable of refusing to be available to un-interested and unworthy relations; and the pedagogical setting assisted precisely this refusal and the ‘disruptive power of choosing not to care about what we are enjoined to’ (Woolf, 1996, cited by Bellacasa, 2017: 5) or invited into. Sensorial experiments involving animals as well as humans need an ethics of cutting connections: an ethics of not just becoming and transforming, but also of not connecting (like that), not becoming (like that), not transforming (like that). In other words, this ethics must include an admittance of staying in sites of equivocity and hesitancy and not least of permitting what Moten and Harney names refusals of refusals, meaning the possibility of refusing an interpellation based on not knowing and not respecting one another (Moten and Harney, 2013). Enacting this kind of ethics in affective pedagogy will advance animals to actually become ‘companion species’ (Haraway 2008) in the ‘promoting of a new art of living’ (Guattari 1995).

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