# Anticipating the more-than: Working with prehension in artful interventions with young people in a post-industrial community

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## ABSTRACT

Inspired by speculative, post-qualitative research practices, this paper is framed within new feminist materialist ontologies of immanence to explore anticipation as the potentialities of the virtual, a *prehension* (Manning 2013) that can be glimpsed in bodies, movements and artful processes of creation. These 'prehensive' potentialities are explored with an arts-based praxis, developed over many years, with young people living in an ex-mining community experiencing post-industrial trauma to interrupt the sedimented practices that can lock some young people into feeling stuck and trapped.

The paper follows a series of carefully composed events during a residential adventure weekend with a group of young people who wanted to explore their troubles by pushing their bodies to the limit with a range of physical activities and arts-based interventions. With 'art as the way' (Manning 2016), we map how our speculative praxis enabled us to attune to the embodied and embedded affects of young people's everyday practices, fears and concerns. We describe how prehensions as feelings, movements and images emerged and were transformed into creative artefacts; how these artefacts materialised affective prehensions as new and past potentials signalling the 'more than' of young people's beingness, as a kind of buried, unknown-known anticipation; and how the artefacts continue to vibrate as micro-political affective matter in the after life of a project that could not have been predicted in advance.

## 1. Anticipating trouble

It started with a tweet. For a number of years we[1] worked in a youth centre in an ex-mining community in south Wales funded by a research grant as part of a project called 'Productive Margins, Regulating for Engagement'[2] To stay in touch with the young people who attended the centre we followed and regularly responded to their twitter posts. One day we noticed a new tweet which sounded urgent. It was from a group of teen girls who had written the message with the support of their youth worker. Emma saw the tweet and responded with, 'I'll see what we can do'.

The youth worker[3] confided that the group had become notorious in the housing estate for 'anti-social' behaviour, fighting and violence. It had taken them a year to coax the girls into attending the centre. As the youth worker started working with them they encouraged the girls to think about their situation by creating a diagram to map their concerns. We saw that the mind map and the

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girls' notes pointed to relationship break-ups, a range of physical abuses, feelings of being stigmatised and worries about the future. The mind-map showed that their troubles were multiple. It seemed as if the girls felt stuck and their semi criminal behaviour could be interpreted as a desperate attempt to get life moving in a different way. One phrase on the diagram jolted us, it read "nearly all of us cry at night".

Later we came to learn that the girls were afraid that fighting among themselves might irrevocably tear apart their friendships. Writing this paper two years after we worked with the group we are able to speculate that the girls' fear of destroying their friendships was infused with an unconscious anticipation of violating the bonds of attachment integral to community survival. Bonds of solidarity had been wrought over many years and enabled communities to survive in the precarious and dangerous working conditions of coal mining. For example, men looked out for each other underground and above ground women had to care for husbands undertaking exhausting physical labour by providing hot bath water, clean clothes and meals. Steel and coal production had powered the genesis and *raison d'être* of south Wales valleys' communities. Yet the way the mines finally closed involved a brutal encounter between the Thatcher government and the mining unions. This battle and the way local communities' resistance was suppressed left a deep legacy of pain and loss (Walkerdine & Jimenez, 2011).

With the closure of all the remaining mines in 2009, the social order changed and everyone sensed 'a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity' (Guatarri, 2006, p. 20). South Wales valleys communities are suffering a deeper and prolonged depression, in part, because economic regeneration is hampered by the geology of the place. The trauma a of loss cannot always be brought to the level of spoken articulation, yet lingers as affects that remain tied to practices. For example, communities continue to value the male labouring body even although the industry that required physical labour no longer exists (Walkerdine & Jimenez, 2011). Community practices continue to carry expectations that girls reciprocally support boys and subordinate their desires to them. We have written elsewhere of how many girls experienced this intergenerational burden as suffocating (2015, Renold & Ivinson, 2014; Ivinson & Renold, 2013a, 2013b, 2016).

The ex-industrial place where the girls were living can be viewed as a micro cosmos of wider environmental, social and psychic shifts. In *Chaosmosis*, Felix Guatarri (2006, p. 20) writes, 'we can not conceive of solutions' to 'problems of global warming' to 'hunger' and 'population control' without 'a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society'. We speculate that the girls were alive to deeper troubles as a form of *prehension* that went further than a fear of falling out with each other. We use the term prehension to signal knowledge that comes from the past that is 'known-felt' by young people, yet not available to conscious awareness or articulation. Prehension is carried through embodied, 'affective practices' (Walkerdine, 2010), such as the specific practices that mining communities developed for the industry. This paper is our account of a range of interventions created with the group as we listened, improvised and facilitated new artful modalities of expression. Occasionally, we felt, glimpsed and imagined the 'more-than' (Manning, 2013) of a future yet to come. We speculate that these events might anticipate what matters for their survival, 'the mutant rhythmic impetus of a temporalisation able to hold together the heterogeneous components of a new existential edifice' (Guatarri, 2006, p. 20).

Anticipation is often analysed in terms of promising, expecting, and envisaging – generally thought of as cognitive accomplishments achieved through foresight, reasoning and calculation (Adam, 1995; Adam & Groves, 2007). Yet anticipation is also an orientation made real in bodies, as prehension (Manning, 2013) and as a kind of sixth sense learned automatically (Guatarri, 2006) through being in a specific ecology of practice (Stengers, 2010). In this paper we are interested in immanence, in what emerges in-between. For us, anticipation belongs to the potentialities of the virtual (Deleuze, 1988 cited in Colebrook, 2002, p. 96-96) before they are fully actualised in talk, representation and practices.

This paper follows events and a series of carefully composed speculative arts-based interventions after the young people reached out for help and we were able to respond productively. We describe how prehensions as feelings, movements and images emerged and were transformed into creative artefacts. The artefacts materialised affective prehensions as new and past potentials signalling the 'more than' of the young people's existence, as a kind of buried, unknown-known anticipation.

In the next section we introduce concepts that have been useful to us in developing our experimental praxis. We present this account to suggest how theory, method and practice are always embodied, embedded and entangled to explore anticipation as the space/time between the actual and the virtual, a prehension that we glimpsed in bodies, movements and artful processes of creation.

## 2. Prehension, immanence and art as 'the way'

We have been inspired to utilise concepts created by the philosopher and dancer, Erin Manning. There is a complex passage from thoughts, to feelings, to concepts in pre-articulated forms that carry resonances of past practices (Manning, 2009, p.5). In our work, prehension is a knowing carried through practices specific to ex-mining communities that are affectively charged with trauma and unavailable to conscious articulation. Prehension is a collective knowing which requires a non-individualistic philosophy.

We draw on Manning's work (Manning, 2009, 2013, 2016) because she has developed concepts to expand the ways of thinking between pure experience as pre-conscious and what becomes thought with an emphasis on movement. Manning builds on process philosophers such as Henri Bergson, Gilbert Simondon and Alfred North Whitehead and contributes to the burgeoning field of posthuman (Braidotti, 2013), post-qualitative (Lather & Pierre, 2013) and new material feminist scholarship in childhood and youth studies for whom the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1983; 1987) are important touch stones (see, Coleman and Ringrose 2013; Taylor & Hughes, 2016; Ringrose, Warfield, & Zarabadi, 2018; Osgood & Robinson, 2019 for examples).

Deleuze (1990) continues Michel Foucault's quest to break free of the Western tradition that grounds experience in transcendence that lies outside human thinking and institutions as if residing in a god like figure. Accordingly, to know is an attempt to know some outside world that is beyond or other than the human subject or cogito. Deleuze aimed to get beyond dualisms of inside/outside,

subject/world and mind/body by grounding experience in the incessant flow of life itself which he refers to as a plane of immanence.

For Deleuze, we do not begin as distinct subjects who come to know the world, instead there is experience and from this experience we form an image of ourselves as distinct subjects (Colebrook, 2002, p.74). Before a mind is formed there is a multiplicity of perceptions and contemplations that come from a plane of immanence. Guatarri (2006)'s chaosmosis captures a sense of the intensity of unceasing movement and variation of matter. Nietzsche's eternal return hints at the past as a tendency or potential surging of matter or affect that might or might not become actualised in a movement. Manning draws on Bergson's concept of pure experience to overcome the body-culture division and to reconnect subjectivity to the intensity of unceasing movement and variation of matter.

In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari (1987) consider the many other planes upon which life is grounded such as language, species, social systems and economic relations (Colebrook, 2002, p. 75). We became interested in the plateau that grounded life for the mining communities in south Wales, and the lingering dominant (molar) and minor (molecular) practices that dis/organise community life today.

Manning's work enables us to pay attention to the movement and variation of experience as it unfolds:

> Prehensions are events of perception. They pull what become actual occasions from the extensive continuum of experience. The extensive continuum is made up of the undifferentiated folds of the universe. The outfolding through prehensions of the infolding of experience propels the taking-form of an event. With its unfolding into an event comes the expression of life in the making. (Manning, 2009 p.77)

Prehension points to a knowing that is buried in the virtual realm of a community's past (see also Huuki & Lanas, 2019). Movement enables us to stay close to processes, before thought becomes fixed in words and habits. By attuning to how the deep practices of the past surface in the more-than of the spoken, we glimpse proto possibilities through bodies, movements and artful processes of creation.

## 3. Making 'way' for artful futures with speculative participatory research

"The art of participation is the capacity, in the event, to activate its artfulness, to tap into its yield" (Manning, 2016, p. 58)

We constantly asked ourselves how we could support young people to think and feel in new ways and loosen or get beyond the ties of prehension linked to past practices. We have developed a speculative praxis to interrupt the sedimented practices that are familiar to young people. Our method has been to co-compose art-ful ethico-political encounters (described below) that could attune to how prehension, as embodied and embedded in everyday practices, were experienced and open this up its more-than.

Art-ful praxis enables us to create speculative events that are radically unpredictable and enable new things to be felt, made and enacted. We took our inspiration from Manning who drew our attention to the medieval definition of art as "the way" (2016, p. 47) in order to dwell on art as a transversal process not just something to behold or transmit. To conceive of art as "always on its way" informs our own art-ful future oriented processual praxis and helps us glimpse 'a feeling forth of new potential' (Manning, 2016, p.47). This is not about deploying pre-conceived arts-based methods for 'data' that is waiting to be captured (Grosz, 2011; Manning, 2015). In dialogue with what has been characterised as the post-qualitative humanities and social sciences (van der Tuin, 2011; Coleman and Ringrose, 2013; Taylor & Hughes, 2016; Koro-Ljungberg, 2015; MacLure, 2013, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2018; Pierre, 2019), like many post-qualitative arts-based youth research (see Gallagher, 2018; Hickey-Moody, 2013, 2017, 2018; Springgay, 2008; Springgay & Truman, 2017; Renold & Ringrose, 2017, for examples), the art in our *par*ticipatory approach is about making art-ful encounters that are carefully co-composed with young people, youth workers and artists to experiment with what else art might enable for the not-yet of experience. The entire process requires a continuous becoming response-able (Braidotti 2006; Haraway, 2008; Barad, 2007, Strom, Ringrose, Osgood and Renold forthcoming) for all that we do, make and share in each encounter. It is a process that foregrounds an embodied and embedded onto-ethical practice which, as we outline below, has taken years to forge as we fold-with the relational play between the known and unknown.

In our long engagement with young people from the ex-mining valleys of south Wales as well as many years of experimenting with different art materials and artists on methodologically-funded projects designed specifically to problematize co-produced youth participatory projects and resources (see Renold, Inpress; Renold, Ivinson, Thomas, & Elliott, 2019; Renold, Angharad, Ivinson, & Oliver, 2018; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Renold, Holland, Ross, & Hillman, 2008), we have noticed how events can sometimes unfold in generative ways with and for young people. Over time, we have learned to become more 'inventive' (Lury & Wakeford, 2012) and trust in the practices that have supported the crafting of ethico-political spaces, techniques and materials that might resonate with young people's collective prehensions. Much of this practice is about 'being there', and being responsive and response-able. It is about in-acting a *par*ticipatory methodology that requires noticing the ineffable proto possibilities of feelings and ideas as they roll, flow and are transformed though words, artefacts and new events, where 'each actual occasion (becomes) a world fluid with the potential for relational deviation' (Manning, 2013, p. 78).

Anticipation is the yet to come, that travels through artefacts and films that carry affective residues of processes of making, moving and creating as proto political possibilities of not yet realised futures. In the events that follow, and in the after-life of the artefacts since the intensive fieldwork has ended, we aim to slow down and open up what it means to start in the speculative middle, or as Manning states, 'in the midst of things' (Manning, 2016, p. 48), yet always with an acute awareness of how 'the now' of each event is criss-crossed with the affective forces and practices of the past that we have attuned to over time.

The project unfolded as we listened to the young people's desires. They asked to go a residential adventure centre for the weekend together and chose the activities Zip-wire, Giant Swing, Big Bounce and Rock-climbing. With artist, Heloise Godfrey-Talbot, we

designed arts-based activities to intersperse the physical activities by drawing on our long-term collaboration with Heloise and from what we had already learned in the encounters with young people leading up to the trip. For each intervention, we prepared a room in the adventure centre with art materials that we had taken care to choose before we arrived. The making and mattering of the 'run-a-way', 'the anti-body-chair' and 'the body-forming silks' which we describe below enabled us to enter into a participatory process that:

> ….remain(s) on the edge … that does not yet recognise itself, inventing as it does its own way, a way of moving, of flowing, of stilling, of lighting, of colouring, of participating. (Manning, 2016, p. 59–60)

The next section describes our early encounters with the young people before the residential adventure trip.

## 4. Staying with the gender trouble

On meeting the group (a diverse group of teen girls, some of whom were in kinship care and living in a traveller community) troubling tales of everyday violence emerged. They described problems of survival and micro violence(s) faced at home, on the streets, in apprenticeship training, at school and online. In particular, they experienced physical and digital, sexual harassment and violence from boys and men they did and didn't know. Incidents crept into our conversations, sometimes loudly, at other times in whispers, through side-way glances and uncomfortable silences. We were able to attune to the surfaces and depths of what they were communicating due to research practices honed over many years that enabled us to recognise how sexual violence grips minds, bodies and souls (Renold, 2013; Ivinson & Renold, 2013a, 2013b; Renold & Ivinson, 2015; Renold & Ringrose, 2017, 2018; Renold, 2018).

Precarious, fragile friendship networks formed and re-formed in front of us and across the next three months as we got to hear how they had gradually become aware that they were 'becoming the problem' (Ahmed, 2017) in the struggle to survive. The girls were angry. At one of the first meetings at the youth centre they expressed a strong desire to make boys feel the pain they feel. In unequivocal terms they said that they wanted to 'tie boys to a chair, shine a light onto their eyes and interrogate them'.

We approached this tableau as an existential motif (or leitmotiv) (Guatarri, 2006, 17), as an assemble of criss-crossing vectors and immanent potentialities actualised into a dramatic visualisation. We tried to affectively attune to their desire for vengeance without closing it down. Below we parse out some of what might have come into this anger assemblage. We also interpreted the term 'boy' as a condensation symbol for a wider range of feelings of patriarchal regulation (Messerschmidt, Martin, Messner, & Connell, 2018). This became increasingly significant when Taylor, a long-term friend of the group, joined the girls on the residential. He shared and talked about the patriarchal suffocation of heteronormative 'toxic masculinities' regarding his own gender and sexual well-being as non-(hetero)normative in the ways he expressed his gender and sexuality. The girls' aggressive feelings and fantasies (Austin, 2005) channelled a strong desire for revenge. We recognised echoes of scenes from the many Scandinavian film *noir* crime dramas that were being screened on TV channels at the time and their fascination with Jack the Ripper. Yet most of all, we felt the incipient presence of the strongly demarcated sex/sexuality/gender roles that had created community bonds at the height of industrialisation. Women worked above ground to care for children, clean coal dust and provide hot water and food for returning miners. They also perpetuated and nurtured the mentality that was needed to ensure that boys and men could face the danger, physical labour and endurance required to work in the industry. This strong division of labour, amplified through Victorian patriarchal values, however, masked a more complex history.

While representations of men's labour dominate the history books, there is a less visible complex gendered and sexual undertow to mining. In the early nineteenth century children and women worked alongside men, 12–14 hours a day, underground in cramped and dangerous conditions, undertaking hard, back-breaking work. Typically, 'women would work for less pay than men required and would accept conditions that no man would tolerate' (Bates, 2012, p. 1099). 'Basket girls' as young as six regularly descended ladders into the pits to draw up tubs of coal and pit lasses were routinely harnessed to wagons to haul heavy loads some distance, sometimes several hundred yards. These harnessed pit-girls were a significant, yet invisible element of the heritage of British mines – a heritage that portrays both subjugation and strength. To some, the image of female masculinity, or trans*embodiment (Halberstam, 2018, 2018) was decried as unnatural and immoral by the male middle-class commissioners of the time:

> One of the most disgusting sites I have ever seen, was that young females, dressed like boys in trowsers (sic), crawling on all fours, with belts and chains. (Testimony of Thomas Pearce 1854, cited in Renold & Ivinson, 2014)

So, while the image of the strong, muscular male body is nostalgically invoked, the fit, active and strong body of women miners and their queering of labour is obscured from view (see also Osborne, 2016). Legacies of a binary, rigid gender demarcation is folded into community codes of solidarity, a prehension that makes it difficult for some girls to talk affirmatively about their bodies as fit, strong and agentive (Ivinson & Renold, 2013b), and for many boys, and queer youth more widely, expressions of non-(hetero) normative genders and sexualities continue to be fraught in valleys' schools and communities (Renold & Ringrose, 2017).

We had been struck by the physicality of the girls' imagery and their desire to re-create a real-life torture scenario. They wanted to bring the boys they knew were assaulting them online or in the street into the youth centre, line them up, bind them to a chair, and demand answers from each one of them as to why they were inflicting hurt and harm. We speculate that the girls' anger and what they chose to do with us next, vibrated with a historical prehension that obscured something from view that needed to be expressed.

## 5. Feeling the limit: making art-ful adventures

Attuning to the visceral rage, we stayed with the gender trouble (Butler, 1990; Haraway, 2016) and listened with a deep, studied, yet open attentiveness. We registered the girls' anger and feelings of marginalisation and pathologisation in our bodies. When we recalled their tearful sleepless nights, together these feelings worked as 'sticky affects' (Ahmed, 2014) that reverberated and interfered with us throughout the next nine months as the project unfolded. We thought and discussed together what creative conditions might be crafted to engage response-ably (Barad, 2007) to the girls' initial request for help. The group told us they wanted a collective experience that would, in their words, 'push our bodies to the limits'. Their decision to go on a residential adventure weekend would enable them to experience going away together and potentially offer a way to reconnect with each other and rebuild solidarity.

As we prepared for the physical activities we put on harnesses, helmets, and ropes. We were instructed, for example, on how to collectively hoist a person into the air for the Giant Swing event. The actions and equipment mimetically referenced preparing to go underground and collectively work as one body. There was much talk and banter as we prepared and tried to support, encourage and persuade each other to 'dare to do it'. Although our medium was the air rather than the underground, our actions seemed to realise affects that resonated with the sense the danger of going underground activating prehension from the virtual repertoire of past practices. We had to climb ladders, towers and walls before being launched into the unknown. Adrenaline pumped, tears were shed and each of us was indeed taken to a limit, physically, psychically and collectively. We felt real fear, real exhilaration and we were proud of ourselves.

### 5.1. Run(a)way

With art as 'the way' we set about asking how we could extend the physical activities to work the prehension, the feelings-felt just before the leap into the unknown. Manning inspired us to recognise that we needed to find ways to enable the intense experience of being at the limit within the physical event to be worked so 'that it remains on the edge … as a field of flows, of differential speeds and slowness, in discomfort, in awe, distraction and attention.' (Manning, 2016, p. 59-60).

Following each 'adventure-based' activity we rolled out a large piece of paper on the floor and invited the group to leave a mark, any kind of mark (pencil, felt tip, paint, post-it note etc.) to express any aspect of the physical event (Fig. 1).

Words, phrases and drawings captured, coded and diagrammed the residues and intensities of the prior event – for example, how our bodies had been entangled in physical supports, pulleys and contraptions, launched into force fields of gravity and centrifugal pressure that buffeted and coursed through our stomachs, guts, thighs, bottoms, legs, arms, breasts, necks and heads. Each mark seemed to carry the affective traces of physical precipices, produced by adrenaline, perspiration, and sleep deprivation that had taken
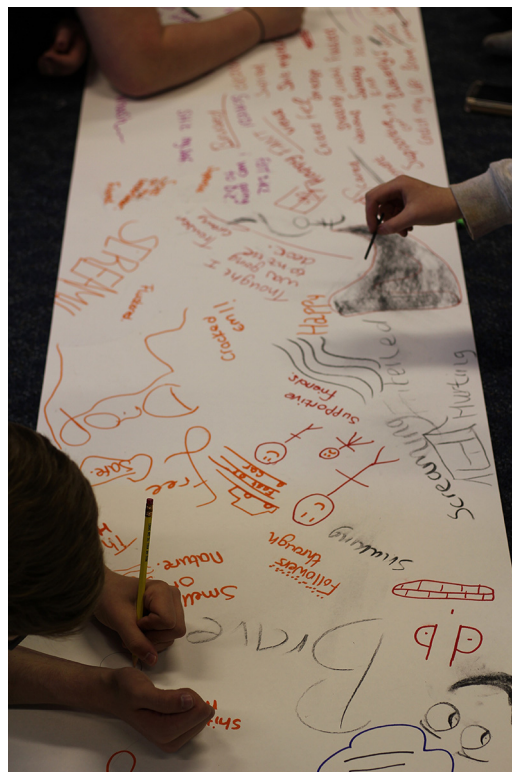


**Fig. 1.** Run(a)way.

**Fig. 2.** Chairing the assemblage.

us to the edge; an edge where the present vibrated with ineffable sensations of the near-past physical activities, and perhaps echoes of prehensions from the virtual past of mining life. The long piece of paper that we used to capture these traces came to be known as the 'run(a)way' because it landed affects as pictorial, collective marks in ways the kept things moving, 'inventing its own way' (see Renold, 2018)

### 5.2. The anti-body-chair

In the workshop after the Giant Swing event, which had involved being hoisted high into the air by the rest of the group on a harness before being launched downwards in a giant swinging motion, we laid out a range of objects and art materials that had been inspired by the "we want to tie them to a chair" revenge motif (Fig. 2). Items such as a chair, rope, hammer, nails, screws and labels were positioned on the floor and round the outside of the room tables were laid resources such as plasticine, glittery thread, feathers, coloured paper, pencils, paint, ink and pieces of gossamer thin silk. We introduced the workshop by signalling to the chair with the simple instruction, "This is a body".

At first the group struggled to work together. Arguments splintered them into factions and some sat out and tried to get on with something with little enthusiasm. Massumi (2013)'s description, drawing on Whitehead, of creating 'semblence' comes to mind where 'semblence weaves together the immediate past (and) the immediate future in the dynamic unity of the event' to create the more-than of an event's aesthetic dimension (Massumi, 2017, p.87). He suggests that for an activity to take-off it must be intuitively felt and that its potentialising directionality can spin off in any direction, including falling flat. Things were falling flat until the argumentation swung to Taylor. Instructions from one group began to dominate the others, and the factions gradually came to work in unison around a collective intention to make the chair "for someone". They decided to make the chair (with and) for Taylor. The girls' squabbling banter mingled with the objects and gradually they found a purpose. One group began to seal the seat of the chair with black masking tape. Another picked up the hammer and started to hammer nails into the hard wood around the edges of the seat. The room filled with rhythmic banging; a cacophony of physical noise and effort vibrating with the prehension of labour at the coalface or steelworks. The thudding and banging reverberated into the space, changing it. Another group (including Taylor) retreated to a table and busied themselves inscribing cardboard labels with words depicting 'shame', 'hurt' and 'abuse'. These labels were strung from the nails in the seat creating a swinging skirt of abuse. By orienting around the only boy in the group who shared their experiences of gender-based and sexual violence, they effectively re-routed the circuit of bad affects that had previously over-whelmed them.

For a moment we caught a glimpse of how 'things in the making can cut their transformational teeth' (Massumi, 2015, p. ix). The making and mattering of the chair took on an extra charge, re-assembling care, enabling the group to take care, and maybe to begin to touch the affective prehensive traces of a communal loss in care-ful ways. One of the youngest in the group, Katie, crafted a small

**Fig. 3.** Anti-body-chair.

sobbing figure out of plasticine. The group placed the figure on the centre of the blackened seat. Objects seemed to carry affective residues for the group which worked to bond rather than break the group apart (Bennett 2010). Simultaneously, as the tiny sobbing figure was positioned, the tall uprights of the chair became embellished with pink and blue sparkly, sequenced thread. More labels appeared, coloured in pure gold, with no words and were hung from the upright. Negative labels remained attached to the seat, as if taking a back seat. Taylor designed a piece with the Beyonce slogan "Slay-queen" (see Chatzipapatheodoridis, 2017), created from drawing pins tacked into a sheet of clear acrylic and which stretched across the lower back. He also designed a cut-out of a colourful NIKE shoe, a corporate 'just do it' global symbol of movement, was slung beneath the seat as if lending the chair legs – a swinging swooshing undertow. Butterflies were clipped to the vertical uprights, hovering and fluttering lending it wings. Feathers barely attached, shimmered as they caught the sunlight streaming in from the window. One of the uprights became wrapped with luminous orange and green tape suggesting a warning or maybe a protecting, or safe-guarding of some kind?

In just less than thirty minutes, we stood back together, stunned and proud at what had been created (Fig. 3). The chair did not beckon us to sit, as the seat was covered in nails. Yet our gaze was drawn to the fragility of form, intricacies of pattern and twitching movements that invite the observer to touch, read and puzzle over it. This chair had morphed into an anti-chair-body that connected to the group's original pain and anger, via curiosity, to a complex, multiple representation of what mattered and was mattering to them. The chair had become 'more-than' (Manning, 2013).

We speculate that Taylor's queer gender beingness entangled in ways that seemed to help the group overcome fraught and conflict ridden peer group factions. Moving through and transgressing the straight jacket of rigid gender and sexual binaries, Taylor became a focus for the group and enabled the girls to get beyond a blocked revenge fantasy of killing toxic and abusive masculinity. As they hammered, glued, moulded and painted, their desires seemed to become channelled into a creative multiplicity with a common direction; to create a gift with and for Taylor. The intensity of their work made us feel that what they were doing really mattered.

The chair held a multiplicity of conflicting messages. The group's singular and collective creative processes queered anger, propelling desires into becoming a new and transformative artefact. It was a creation that had emerged from in-between, from the

**Fig. 4.** Butterfly Silk.

prehensive space between the virtual and the actual and borne of an art-ful process that included crafting an intervention from attuning to the rage, desire, pain and loss we had encountered with the group in prior meetings. The chair went on to do huge amounts of work, chairing a micro politics of e/affect that we describe later.

### 5.3. Body-forming in silk

Following the Zip Wire event, we orchestrated two further artful interventions which we refer to as body forming workshops. During the Zip Wire activity screams of delight and fear had ricocheting around creating a cacophony interspersed with shouts of "STOP! ENOUGH!". In the artful intervention after this event we laid out large pieces of paper on the floor and invited everyone to recall a pose that captured a feeling from the Zip Wire experience. One by one each young person took up a posture lying on the large sheet of paper. The postures depicted exuberance, jumping, stretching, standing, as well as bodies cut in half and lying prone. We traced the outlines of the bodily postures and as each person stood up they were confronted with a dopple-ganger image of themselves in two-dimensional form. The body forms refracted experiences of the prior physical activity.

We retraced the body outlines onto gossamer light, white silk fabric. Once they had their outline we invited the young people to colour them using ink. The way ink was applied to the silk cloth created patterns that were intense, light, delicate, heavy, cosmic, and surreal. Carys, for example, used pastel coloured ink to create a butterfly design on her silk just where a stomach would be positioned (Fig. 4). She worked her pattern outward from the gut, a place she said, where she had most intensely held the fear that developed as she was hoisted off the ground on the Giant Swing ropes the day before. As the delicate rings of colour spiralled out in undulating circular strokes of pastel shades, the fear seemed to meld into swirling patterns of beauty, engulfing the heart and chest area. Her artwork seemed to be pumping life back into her airy being. She had been the one who had been most afraid and most determined to go on the Giant Swing.

These creative events seemed to enable us and the group to experience again the force-felt affects of marginalisation; fear, anger, jealousy, being left out, pain, repeated again in the eternal return through environments that, this time had been carefully designed to hold us securely. Our re-jigged bodies found new corporeal intensities and together we and they started to feel again the traces of the past, the micro prehensions, cut through and apart with the macro histories of mining. Molar movement patterns of the past, diffracted through the bodily ticks and rhythms that have stilled bodies into submissive postures, trapped them in pathological

**Fig. 5.** Bodies in Flight.

categories, or explosions of rage, now seemed filled with more affirmative feelings; feelings set in motion by swinging, flying, plunging through the air in ways that 'intensified the power of existence' (Massumi, 2015: 44).

And with each motion, affects, 'too curious to stay within the already defined now' (Manning, 2016, p.201) journeyed with us as we returned to the youth centre. Next we speculate how the more-than of their/our bodies cued us into 'a relational ecology in the making' (Manning, 2016, p. 121) in the first meeting after getting back from the adventure weekend.

## 6. Reaching the limit

On our first meeting after the residential, when we all met up in the youth centre the sun shone for the first time in weeks. The heat and beauty of the day called us outside and instilled a desire to go to the wilderness. The young people took us to their secret place; a people's parliament made of walls of rock, limestone pavement and dramatic cliff edges. They took us up Morlais Mountain to Morlais castle. The warm wind in the air called us to create our body form silks as banners. We brought three metre long bamboo poles to tie the silks to. Instantly, the poles became arrows, impelling us to strike up mock-combats creating criss-crossing lines with their shadows on the concrete floor and against the blue skies above. As we walked, ran, skipped and danced up Morlais Mountain, the poles became spears and we became warriors. And with each stride we learnt more about their relationship to this place, such as the cave and the cwtch (Welsh term for private or safe place, and/or a hug), in the tree where they huddle, extracting themselves from the suffocating social media-sphere that their anti-chair-body expressed the more-than of, and where they came to share their troubles, and conflicts.

At the top on the highest plateau, on the highest rock pavement circle that formed the remains of Morlais Castle we eyed the panoramic views around their valley territories. Buffeted by gusts of wind on all sides, our wind-filled sails billowed, rippled and flapped loudly; bodies cavorting, gyrating and cascading. Their shadows danced across the sun lit landscape of the Brecon Beacons and Glamorgan valleys below. Surging with pride, the body forms were filled out and we were filled up (Fig. 5). Our gaze stretched far and wide around the lush green landscape that now conceal the entrances to hundreds of miles of underground tunnels hidden beneath grass, trees and greenery that grow on top of what had once been a brutal industrial landscape of rock and mud heavy with black coal dust, scarred by the machines and pit wheels, railway lines and factory walls. But up there, on high, hope became a joyous line that took flight as the silk banners filled with gust of air, filling them with life, as the landscape below opened out to new rhythms, movements and sounds. Doppler ganger bodies re-emerged jumping, stretching, dancing in flesh and in silk. On our guided tour of Morlais, however, the joys and the pain came in quick succession.

On the way back down, at the foot of the mountain we interrupted a Sunday ritual enacted by the family whose son had thrown himself off the cliff a couple of years ago. The girls told us that three young men had tried to take their life in the same spot where we were flying our body-silks. But more than this, during one of their walks up Morlais, they told us how they had seen one of their friends, a boy, getting ready to jump. The effort to restrain the boy who was determined to jump, involved a monumental physical tussle, as the girls described having had to draw on all their physical strength and body weight to fight against the force of his will to end his life. In this physical struggle of body on bodies, we find prehensive echoes of earlier struggles; the struggles of men dragging bodies from the collapsed tunnels during one of the many mining accidents that fill the history of this place. We felt the ineffable force

**Fig. 6.** Processions.

of the desire to save life that goes hand in hand with the dangers of mining. And we were instantly ricocheted back to the initial meeting when the girls spoke of wanting to tie a boy down and make him "feel what we feel" and their subsequent re-grouping to create an anti-chair-body for Taylor, for them all.

## 7. Life Support: making run-a-way methodologies matter

In this section we share elements from what we are theorising as a 'run-a-way methodology' and when physical movement, body-forming and artefacts ran-a-way into a film called "Life-Support".

The possibility for the group to make a short film was always on the horizon in our participatory plans for the project. Throughout the workshops and the three weekends following the residential, Heloise helped us to generate still and moving images so that we could all view, feel, listen to, discuss and share our experiences in new ways. One weekend, we created a cwtch in a room in the youth centre from a prepared wooden frame that we draped with fabric and filled with cushions, blankets and fairy lights. The cwtch-making activity was inspired by a moment on the Morlais Mountain tour when four of the girls climbed inside a hollow tree trunk after a man had exposed himself to them. They told us that they hid in the tree to share, reflect and talk about things that were troubling them. Inside the home-made cwtch the song lyrics and sounds that became the music for the film emerged.

About this time, we received news that the Welsh Government's flag ship strategy to alleviate poverty called 'Communities First' was to be abandoned. The youth centre workers were financed by 'Communities First' money and suddenly the emerging film, *Life Support* (https://vimeo.com/222938822) became a protest film as the austerity cuts were pushing the very life force of the youth centre to its limits.

The short film is divided into three parts. Each section offers a different assemblage of place, community and body that together gesture towards the relational ecologies of the youth centre. Scenes taken from the adventure weekend capture the multi-dimensionality of bodies in motion and a discordant range of affects, from fear to exhilaration. Footage sweeps across the landscape in panoramic shots of the land below while the billowing body silks and music celebrate a feeling of triumph, of being 'on top of the

**Fig. 7.** Railing Silks.

world'. The final section of the film contains quotes selected by the group from the centre's youth-led petition where over 500 messages sent as part of the fight to keep the youth centre. The group became increasingly politicised as they campaigned to save their youth centre from closure. As one young person told us, "this place has literally saved my life". The film was premiered on International Women's Day, at the Welsh Millennium Centre with support from Seth Oliver, a core member of the Future Matters Collective[4] who co-organised the event. The film was also shared on twitter and became part of the debate at the Senedd, in Cardiff Bay about the future of the youth centre.

Months later, as hundreds lost their jobs in the 'Communities First' cuts, the youth centre's survival hung by a thread with a skeleton staff. The majority of the youth workers were not reemployed. The ties of belonging were severed over and over again. What happened to this youth centre is typical of the way youth services across the UK have been slashed due to the politics of austerity (see Welsh Government, 2018). This is a politics where levels of poverty, and specifically the poverty of children and young people is rising year on year (Ivinson et al., 2018) and has made some of the most vulnerable groups in society suffer most.

Yet the film *Life Support* remains a hopeful, micro-political affirmation that anticipates the more-than, the prehension and the creative impulse of desires transformed if only momentarily. In this way it demonstrates that something else is possible.

## 8. Life beyond the project: materialising prehension in the potential micro-politics of art-ful matter

The original group of young people fragment and disperse. Yet life goes on and new supports take root with as yet unknown effects. The artefacts (or what we theorise elsewhere as da(r)taphacts, see Renold, 2018, Renold and Ringrose 2019) such as the film, the chair and the silks have continued to work a political affect carrying the affective residues of events, stories and connections. Shared across local, national and international festivals, conferences and campaigns, they have become lively lasting legacies of the bonds of solidarity, manifestations of prehensions that continue to vibrate in the artefacts as affects that strengthen the fabric of a peer group and a community.

Fig. 6 shows three young carers carrying the body-silks (with permission by members of the original group) proudly on the women's suffrage Processions March (10 June 2018). The warrior sticks are wrapped with suffragette coloured ribbons. Fig. 7[5] features the body silks in image, clipped to the Merthyr town square railings as part of the 2017 Merthyr Rising Festival. Each of these events enable post-industrial ex mining and steel communities to gather together and be publically visible.

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[4] The 'Future Matters Collective' is based in Cardiff, and brings together the disciplines of Architecture, Fine Arts, Childhood Studies, Dance, Human Geography, Law, Music, Philosophy, Physiotherapy, Psychology and Sociology to explore new ways of enabling creative future-making (see @future_matters). Over the last few years, some of the collective have worked together to share through arts-performances and events different elements from our pARTicipatory projects with young people in the valleys, through sound, photography, poetry, fiction, movement and film (see for example, the Future Matters Collective 2015 film, *Promise Through the Lens of Time,* https://vimeo.com/241539390l, Adam et al., 2014; Groves, Angharad, Oliver, Renold, & the Future Matters Collective, 2017; Angharad, Ivinson, & Renold, 2017; Renold et al., 2018).

[5] This image has been reproduced with permission from the photographer, Daniel Harris

**Fig. 8.** Chairing the panel.

The anti-chair-body has accompanied us into places and spaces that young people do not always want to participate in.

It has worked its way into youth political and activist forums and has taken centre stage, counter-poised in rooms amidst other chairs and bodies (Fig. 8) – the most notable, at the launch of the national Welsh Government healthy relationships resource, *AGENDA: A young people's guide to making positive relationships matter* (Renold, 2016). Here it featured along with the 'ruler-skirt swing' (Renold, 2019) and other artefacts created by young people (Renold, 2018). At this event it was intentionally (by us and its makers) placed alongside the other seats participating in a panel discussing the role of creative arts in supporting young people addressing gender and sexual violence. The keynote address was given by the very minister responsible for cutting the budget for Wales' pioneering community based poverty strategy, Communities First.

In the collective making of the silks, the chair and the film, we could not have anticipated just how life would carry on or where these artefacts would travel.

Yet, we felt and speculated that by tuning into the young people's capacity for prehension we might glimpse the proto possibilities or 'more-than' of their beingness. By holding on to a radically open form of anticipation, we accepted that we did not know what would happen. We placed our trust in the possibility of working in-between, in the ruptures where the trouble erupts urgently in anger, pain and difficulty. We feel we tapped into what Guatarri (2006 p. 21) calls the 'auto-foundational of existence'.

The artefacts have become more than their matter-form, as their 'elastic nodes of becoming … detach and deterritorialise a segment of the real in such a way as to make them play the role of a political enunciator' (Guatarri, 2006, 131 see also Meissner, 2014). They continue to participate in moments and events that we create or are invited into. The affective politics of their aesthetic yield continues chip and hammer away at the everyday violence found in young people's micro-social worlds, making raw pain and

beauty visible, re-animating the more-than of aggressive fantasies and anticipating something more. These artefacts have taken in a life of their own.

Anticipation is entangled with the known and unknown, in time-folds of the not-yet and the promise of the more-than. We hope this paper contributes to the challenges of futures-oriented research practices by sharing our praxis of how we have come to sense and work with the ways in which anticipation resides in the ineffable, in the in-between, materialising prehension that comes from the deep practices of the past and which are passed on intergenerationally.

## Acknowledgements

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