



Embodied Motherly Research: Re-birthing Sustenance Through the Common (Im)material

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Preface

This chapter is a creative piece made from words, letters and images exchanged. We¹ two mother-researchers craft our correspondence into a pondering on sustenance and academia with feminist philosophy, while living in different global hemispheres with our young children, partners and the joys of every day. We intentionally do not engage in critique, and rather take a positive, experimental path. We evoke stories of sustenance to make a story of sustenance. Sustenance is an experience of nourishment or fulfillment sensed. Common materials and the immaterial enter paragraphs (*italics*) and form poetic threads (*indented prose*) that entangle our ongoing academic collaboration. 'I' here is flowing

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into ‘we’, back and forth from, and to further inform the multiplicity of our academic mothering lives. The chapter is a porous entity, at times misty, that hopes to offer joy with its disruptions to recognizable meanings and the privileging of play.

Intro: Our Dreaming, Mothering Body

‘To dream is never an individual affair. My dream may be your dream experienced through the vessel of my becoming-form’ (Manning, 2009, p. 159).

Our co-writing relationship began as a shared poststructuralist symposium *dream* for children’s embodying relations with a place.² There we discovered our common matter and immatter: mothering with place. Collegially, we started to write to, and receive each other, musing on our own motherly, embodying experience of living with children’s worldly relations. Listening for the environmental conversations between our own children and the world that emerge daily, we responded to the call for chapters in this book, *(Re)birthing the Feminine in Academe*:

‘Everything that flows is water; all water is a kind of milk’ (Bachelard, 1999, p. 117).

Along the data rush and the ongoing call for research productivity in the age of the Anthropocene, a dance of sustainabilities is erupting *slow nutrient* data from our two academic motherly³ lives lived with place, as we write back and forth. A sense of sustenance⁴ is flowing, rhythmically rocking us, with humans and more-than-humans. As we collaborate in these motherly letters that pour between us, they collaborate with us like *river-delta dancing overflows*.

We partake with our children in the academy, living and writing with body and place awareness. We emerge from previous writings of body and place (e.g. see also Crinall, 2019; Crinall & Somerville, 2019; Gruenewald, 2003a, 2003b; Somerville, 1999). ‘Place’, necessarily embodied (Somerville, 1999, p. 13), unfolds between us as a *sacred space* (see Tuan, 2002) from and to where we move in sustenance.

Our communication plays with us, just like Hultman and Lenz-Taguchi (2010) noticed children and sand played with each other. As our words, letters, punctuation and images are exchanged and laid here, we ‘dance’ where dancing is a ‘pure plastic rhythm’ of a ‘sensing body

in movement' (Manning, 2009, p. 66). Manning and Massumi (2014) write: '*Movement embodies nothing but itself*. Movement [dances] bodies-forth, at any-point. Movement goes a-bodying' (p. 39).

Movement asks: How might academia be a nurturing, co-mothering *event*? How can we know 'sustenance' as mother-academics differently?

Wishing to alternatively navigate a thinking-in-*slow-nutrient*-movement feminine academe, we begin to slowly experiment with writing post-qualitatively beyond representationalism to activate uncertainty, unrecognizability and play (see also Charteris, Crinall, Etheredge, Honan, & Koro-Ljungberg, 2019; Crinall, 2019; Davies, 2017; Millei & Rautio, 2017; Ulmer, 2017; Ulmer & Koro-Ljungberg, 2015). We particularly desire for play. Play comes with a desire that unfolds 'while waiting for objects and organs to fall into place' (Massumi, 2002, p. 125). With Massumi, while waiting, we write to move with the distinct objects—in their porosity and movement—to birth writing events that are creative, jovial openings.

A Deleuzian/Guattarian world is made up of events that might unfold across an immanent plane of time and space, body and place (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9; See also Grosz, 2005, p. 94). These events are dreamt, where dreaming 'is never an individual affair' (Manning, 2009, p. 159). Dreaming here is two-fold, in its navigation for feminism: With Manning's dream we understand and utilise the affect of (im)matter shared altering one another's world experience; and with Massumi's waiting, we understand our writing-to-move as a kind of falling (perhaps a falling asleep). Physically located in different hemispheres, one dreams while the other is writing and mothering, and vice versa.

Events enter play...

Co-responding

I am sitting at the outdoor setting that is our dining room table for now
 computer before me, I am writing
 my children⁵ *under the age of seven*
 are running past and I note
 'I am researching informal environmental learning and young children's
 embodying relations with nature.'
 Vivi lifts her hand and points to the moon

*Bananamoon*⁶

I send this across to you while she is fossicking for milk remarking
You are mist
 You are photographing the mist a hemisphere away while your two
 children also *under seven* eat breakfast
 Daniel is crafting his toast into a moon shape
bananamoon toast, the message reads.
 A photo arrives of the *mist* while I am writing.

Flowing on from our initial symposium meeting, you asked me as a co-mothering academic:

I ask a favor of you. Could you give me a task that I may perform? Something related to you or to your everyday activities?

I propose that you find the coldest place in the house and leave your data there.

and I responded:

Yes, I wonder what you think to put your data in a jar and preserve it. What do you se(ns)e? What does it create?

Dotted Co-mothering

When I return to a shared google document I see a pink cursor –

An attentive silhouette

I know your wishes from your flickering corporeal

A kind of academic polka: . a dot

Shall we dot?

I begin with a full stop

.

You add another

The day after ‘dotting’, you receive a message from me

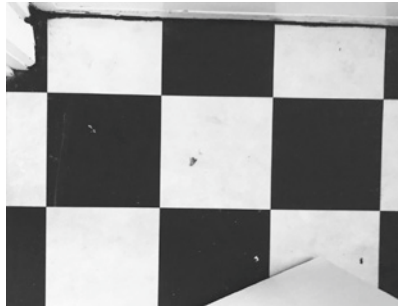
An image of a lynx

Timur has drawn a big cat covered in dots in dark pen. Across its body, I wrote, *He has dotted*. He didn’t know we have been dotting.

Later that day you returned home to write to me while I slept. *Vivi chose these boots. They are covered in dark grey. . . dots.*

Hmm...how about dotting more?

Unintentionally, one dot cosies us into a space where logic of *glossary* words and over-representation grow dim. New dotted patterns, *energised with 'nodding vigorously'*, are immaterial stories; fragmented post-qualitative aerial events *swanning* toward sustenance. They conceive our desire for more such openings to know, be, and feel differently.



A moth has passed away on the black-and-white-checked floor by the shower (above). Someone stepped on her wing, and now, a dot, she is encircled in a deathdance, sleeping amidst eucalyptus leaves gathered outside the zoo .. while more life is created elsewhere. ..

.....:.....:.....?

Encircling more pleasure, joy and sustenance around an ecological web of a feminine academe, *moth's death* may come as sustenance (lifeliness, breath) as each letter in the sealake, creates more life elsewhere. As we dot in her dust, a continual re-birth of eventful motherhoods *ĀĀĀ* is . playing out.

*children's eyes
dreaming for mothering academia
Asleep*

We both shearwaters write
*head south
toward you*

A moth-photo arrives
playfully
from our
sealakeletters of life

I kneel down to visit moth and find the squares, black and white, covered in the dust of the moth. They are blurred to grey. As I lean even closer I see each square is full of texture and colour: a blanket of images. *Colours in movement make grey*. Are these tiles in contact with my body the colourful humans and more-than-humans of daily life at work? Multiple possible stories lay out on this floor now, *a shower of eucalyptus leaves* and a plane. Are they, infinity-gestating grounds?

Infinity's Gestating Ground

.....:;: ... ● ● ● ● ● ● ● :;:.....

I take these strings of photos and others from threads of communication
grandmothers and mothers
grey-woollen heritage
sandball
sticks
 and send them out
 a collage of our photographs
 in the Messenger stream.

Is this patchwork blanket a snugly shawl? If so, the warmth of exchange from body to body, place to place, is a mother's soft arms with two blank squares (below). Imperfectly it is wrapping a newborn body. I came here with *eyes closed, a sandune breathing*. On a warm, grey couch, I found some sustenance. You left a comment: *eyes closed*. For you—*slow, patience, tranquility of waiting, waitability*—you write from body outward to place and back about you with theory laced in at the pace my feminine desires. At this child-filled body-place pace our husbands assure us, *see how far you get*. We wonder on partaking in what seems a generally cognitive, childless, fast-paced academia.



The two blank(et) squares in the collage above, are they infinity's gestating ground? Here we women mothering *with commas* nestle on this dreaming body We are fledging and fleshing out an imperceptible, moving mother-researcher-hood. Our correspondence is *expanding* into many possible iterations. It gestates events with grey; shearwater doubles; moths; the moon; and a swan's call.

With more events flying, calling and ...

... pooling post-qualitatively

I note: *It was my colleague who said of dots: 'dots dotting dottages'.* Dots and images (dottages) foresaw a kind of writing-with that called forth our letters to speak anew. We often sat in this way to write the current chapter. There was a sustenance we received writing to and with each other as motheracademics. To dive through the sea of letters was to dive through the skins of our children who reach out their arms daily to gift us matter that matters in that moment. When Vivi was born her birth was documented under the title, *Day Dot*. Now I see we are not writing with dots. We are writing with children, as in potential. Dotting *dottages* further threaded words into *wordstrings* and phrases with us:

*Swalesforest
Lakewesternportwater*

*write in slow
'greylead on white paper
in dark after milk-feed, chocolate melting
greywrite, slip away, words wash out. back to dishes, table-wipe.
What is, how do we live
this sustaining daily rhythm of mothering-with?*

Whether spoken of mothering-writing rituals, *in dark after milk-feed, chocolate melting*; by the children, *swalesforest*; or played together by us, *lakewesternportwater*; familiar words formed new yet unknown words and phrases, collocations. The correspondent (im)material that moves back and forth forms a shower of mother, child and place via words, dots, images and letters in 'wordstrings'. These 'overspills' of dotting data (Millei & Rautio, 2017) pixilate to tune into and emerge out of our everyday motherly academic co-meditation with the world around us. Accepted by and as a body belonging to (no particular) places, these *datapuddles* are pooling amongst the paragraphs in this chapter as word bodies. They obscure meanings as an opportunity to wonder more. While

Vivi and Daniel pause at the dotty feather
Ting! I receive a *tickle* of it from the message in my pocket
 I am, their mother, eager to follow the trails of a common travel-
 ling matter
 they sense and point at, draw –
moths and moons
shearwaters, dots and more –
 (*There's an elephantcloud!*)
 with the camera or pencils
 these submerge my body
 At times I desire to silently mess with (the raining) words
 dots and characters
 to playfully think with hands
*How do you (want to) do, know, feel and become as an
 academymother?*

As we messily collaborate with our correspondence, *submerging*, questions ferment (with) questions. One appears in a wordstring above condensing during a playful hour: *What is this sustaining daily rhythm of mothering-with?* In the context of academia, we, two women, *desire to silently mess with* these queries, *playfully thinking with our hands* on the (in)tangibles of the specific, ordinary day across virtual borderless trails, mothers-at-work always-already-in-sustenance across time and space.

Another event forms as a cumulus *elephantcloud* out of the last: *How do you (want to) do, know, feel and become as an academymother? ..*

Othering Grey

Our *nest-gathering-treasures* correspondence, where moss-grown sticks meet rainbow shells, is an exchange we cherish and so it cherishes our dreams as mothers and researchers, as mothering-researchers. Weaving with what we see of *young children's embodying relations with nature* we share our wishes by sending and receiving the *featherstring* language Edith, Vivi, Timur and Daniel have gifted us with their hands from the (un)roofed places.



Timur made this kind of roofed character out of sticks gathered in the forest. Are they a pile of hieroglyphs or a Japanese kanji character? I resist naming it, while many simultaneously possible meanings arise: 'house', 'eat', or 'place'. Without the need for a name, these (un)roofed places nourishingly welcome us back 'home'. They *blink* at us this way sending our *blown-of-a-dandelion* wishes outward:

I wish... I wish I could be there to meet up and lie with you listening to the trees. I wish we could go with this chapter to a mutual ground. I wish there was a grant on the Sheoak-tree's breath importance. I dreamed I (still) had

these images. No, mamma, says Edie. They disappeared. We still have [them] in our heads and hearts and bodies.

Deliberately virtual, our communication is, however, a silent reciprocity of desires that *fly* together. As both *at home where we feel comfortable and belong*, and both in a *feminine academe*, this togetherness is nurtured by the earthlings of our embodying mothering worlds. They are our academic work toward a future feminism Elizabeth Grosz (2011) dreams about. Here..

...we no longer look inward to affirm our own positions, experiences, beliefs but outward, to the world and to what we don't control or understand in order to expand, not confirm, what we know, what we are, what we feel. Feminist theory can become the provocation to think otherwise, to become otherwise. It can be a process of humbling the pretensions of consciousness to knowledge and mastery and a spur to stimulate a process of opening oneself up to the otherness that is the world itself. (Grosz, 2011, p. 87)

Where the world others, and sustenance is produced in and as a difference born of *children's hands, orange beaks, flowers pointing to the moon and three singing ravens*, we dance and correspond. At some point, the difference finds us holding onto the moving thread between black and white—grey—both in research projects and parenting...*ting*. In life at *home*.

Ting tang ting ting tang

Nervously making preparations to leave to Russia

With two kids on three flights

It is not the first time experience for me, but I'm nervous nevertheless

You say: *I photograph the landscape toward the north*

toward you? It is the water as the lightest rain that has blurred the relationwater/landscape into grey. Songs in my head and a feeling of calm today

I send a photo in return: *And this is my grey today. Just from writing this I feel better.*

Grey calmed my stomach down
 Sarah thinking with grey, my body hearing:
 Grosz was singing: *'not confirm, what we know,
 what we are,
 what we feel'*.
 Expand!
 You corrected yourself: *No, it's not that I'm calm today, it's that I'm
 lake*
 Grey soothed my anxiety.
 I went to the airport not worried about an upcoming trip home.
 I was grey, I was water, a rhythmic surf of a capable, confident
 womanhood, extending a thread of dotted grey
 From you
 4:.....4
 To me
 Washing the motherhood land.
 Later I share: *grey-ordinary-beautiful-rich-deep-sublime in its
 calmness-ability to wait. People always shame my grey hair:
 'It is awful, you are woman, you are young, you have to be brighter'*.
 Grey is *blurring black and white, sea and sky*. Moving 'grey' blurs
 the clichés, extremes, societal 'wants' and norms, ideals, and the
 expectations we feel; The specific type of writing; the one kind of
 a mother expected; and an academic or nature that is pristine and
 green.

*and there is the silver I love of the sea
 Grey rivers
 Grey sky
 I'm lake*

It has no name strangely. or google doesn't know it

Two mothers exchanging 'grey' as a mantra is not so much about
 the word as it is about the conceptual co-meditation it might bear
 for two becoming more. More than they are 'allowed' to be or
 feel. Where sustainability is so often a pondering over reduction
 and lack—grey lacking color—the sustenance of nature—us—not
 only green but also grey, might generously be found in little won-
 ders-movements of daily life (Crinall, 2019). Our achromatic rela-
 tions become a provocation Grosz (2011) talks about. We confide in

our changing-greying-growing-aging-mothering body and live, as many mothers do, with the expanding multicolored (im)matter of every day. It returns to us—*I'm on my way*—in the open plane of *home-made* pages and spaces. Here events unfurl in play and grey moves a stilled body—a changing-greysky-growing-noname-mothering body—into flight. For us it is one new way to dream an academia with motherhood.

This event flies over.

Shearwater Drawing

Look, mum, a feather for your collection. A grey feather puffs onto the café floor, from the coldest corner where your treasures gather. We are meeting in Sydney, three-years later. *Look Anna!* I pass it over.

I have found this nutritious waterhole of letter-rivers:

-10,000 km

Waterbodytime in full moon

we caress with feet in grey sand process

politics of affect resonates with undulations

BE

On water and breath

BE

On water and breath

Shearwater vulnerable flies

You have messaged this photo of a shearwater drawing by

Timurpencilpapergrid:



The shearwaters return this week, he has reminded me. I slow down to the motion and listen to the babbling of snowflakes melting.

I note, we slow our typing and we find a kind of lifefecan grow with in. The 'I' here is leaning and entangling a nest, and leaning into and out of (im)matter 'from which the body and its objects and organs unfold' (Massumi, 2002, p. 107).

then my period came and i thought i needed rest

I am crying

Keep going

Heavy..yes

draws us back to the moon. and rest.

slowness. a woman's rhythm is not 9-5

Shearwaters are entangling and befriending ontological companions (see Rautio & Vladimirova, 2017)

with their *eyelidthin eggshells* and

swanmoonwhite honeycomb bones

bedding their *icy nest*

their ghostly imprints that leave rookeries and forests alike melt into Vivi's and Timur's hands

into mine

into yours

wrapped with chocolate

flat in books

Shearwaters are potentially *sustaining our nature's reserve* with their daily movements that leave material *imprints* of carbon and nutrient. Downy feathers, nitrous excrement, and discarded calciferous *eyelidthin eggshells* and *swanmoonwhite honeycomb bones* are left to disintegrate for the sandune rookeries yearly. Vivi gathers them avidly (for Anna?) and I bed them in their cold-corner nests, once forgotten. In a 'nature reserve' we are asked to leave 'nature's objects' on site, but *Edienest*, *Danielmonster*, *Viviskull* and *TimurLake* are *childrenforests* themselves (Vladimirova & Rautio, 2018). They know a different border inflected by porosity and chance (Massumi, 2002).

While these bodies, in cahoots with children, are attempting to live every day in this nourishing space of place and body, are they also time?

*paras resize like shearwater heart because of the seasons
temperatures (of the air and of the bodies)
of moon..;*

On tempo a shearwater bird's stomach reduces and heart enlarges yearly. They journey 10,000 km from an East-Australian rookery to the productive seas of Siberia and back (Serventy, 1996). I look to a map to see where you are heading. *Amazed. Minusinsk* is in Siberia. Around the time the shearwaters are *waiting for objects and organs to fall into place* in Southeastern Australia *you are leaving* to Siberia, where they will soon be too. *you arrive*, with *Timur, your mum*, and *a red sunset* where *the nature near Minusinsk looks so much like Australia!*

As 'desire (begins to work out) waiting for objects and organs to fall into place' (Massumi, 2002, p. 125), Timur's shearwater drawing reveals a way to travel by the desires that befall us all, waiting too, for the next edit. Next message. Next reply. *Worddrivers* that *brkbr* are a gestating, *nursing child* with birth-stories that spark *chocolatespoonbowl*. On route, back and forth, we are impressed in a *feathercycle* tempo that is cyclical and travelling.



Many birds fly in this emergent pattern pasted here, made by dots-in-play, as the safest way to travel across time and space. How might we know our own correspondent *bodyflight* paths with shearwaters?

I am with the shearwater down I collected for you in my pockets.

Rhythmic writitude flaps a moving, slowing time, *ravenfluffed* by Koro-Ljungberg and Wells (2018) and their academic etching: 'What might slowness in scholarship produce?' This pace that leaves and returns anew is *a* shearwater pace, or *s/pace*.

The shearwaters didn't return on the 27th of Sept two years ago, provoking queries among many, are they okay? If you don't message for a while, I wonder: how is Sarah?

and I you.

It occurs to me to ask *academywomen* I notice rushing, *ruok?*

If these moving dots are making 'V' shapes to fly across the screen, they evoke an answer. In the sweet silence of playful, wordless co-meditating correspondence:

-VVVVVVVVVV VVV VVV /VV

Motherhood travels as do birds (shearwaters) and, well, are all mothers partial, as in part of a co-mingling whole that may sustain? Only capable of so much in this capitalist, nuclear family way of being in the world, a shearwater migrates, shifts her body to suit the journey, lives in rhythms. Our completion of a journey to siberia is as shearwater doubles.

As shearwater doubles we...

...Pause

I pause.

Events are? Example please?

Pleasure replies,

the way that when I take a walk I am with the world differently, entirely,

in a writing event with you.

That I am 'turned on' in a switch kind of way to a new way of seeing.

This is of course at the embodied and emplaced level knowable as

Following edie through the scrub

noticing the children noticing the purple moths dancing under the swamppaperbark forest

porridge moth and timur's sleeping moth is on the floor

– the common matter.

And this:

I shiver with your ability to do this messy tangential writing which gives me a nervous tick to interrupt our neat paragraphs and then, boom, we have a shared epiphany
 – the common immatter :)))) :))))))

Mothering

S.o later in the *undulating grey*, we are exchanging emails on mothering and nothingness when a moth appears and another event is here.

*I keep seeing the ring you and girls found on the beach.
 Is this ring a nest, egg in nest.
 Our mutual infinite selves gestating?
 Ring of circle of life in 3D?
 Now I keep playing with you mother, and see moth.
 The moth in song that goes to the moon.*

Mothers at home, we have:

Moth. her wingedness with desire, is here living with us, our family member, flying in the rooms, over our sleeping time, in between the air currents raising up from a new humidifier. *Funny. I noticed ours is still near porridge pot.* Can't stop wondering at this moth. *Ours is still and yours sounds to be moving moving moving.* Our moth is slow time for me. *Reminding me to breathe, wipe benches, choose sweeping instead of check for messages.* For me, moth, i like how invisible, slow, everywhere and nowhere this moth is here. *An omnipresent being.* Most of the time hiding somewhere, here, in traces of her night flight, slow, but moving. *A moment's thought. Explains nothing perhaps.* Today Timur came back from school pointing at a small moth. *OOOOOO to your moth sleeping. Sleeping porridge moth.*

With our letters, *gestating moth-ability*, we are born in a particular way: With our desire for *night flight* with the moon, *slow, but moving.* We travel everywhere and nowhere *as* our eventful letterscapes and dottages in a V-formation of multiple matterings. While flying, *her wingedness*, we *desire sleeping and slow sweeping.* *An omnipresent being moving moving moving.*

In flight, we wonder, where is she, motheracademia, seeking to go? Via moth at home, we know that it will be slow. In what other conditions can 'I' live joyfully sustaining (in) the academy?

*A moth has come to stay
 Moths never come here
 And purple moths cloud the floor of the swamppaperbark forest
 Edie points them out
 Look, Anna's moths.
 At home, Vivi has made a purple moth mask. don't know why?
 She doesn't know of your letters as she paints a purple dot slowly on a
 white page. Is this the moth you are occupied with right now?
 Her brush moves up and down the page, until she throws the page
 in agitation like a moth at a back door.
 I copy all moth messages
 All pages are laid out while Daniel is home making songs with the
 world –
 Is there a song titled: daniel-vivi-paper-dot-moths?
 I send a photograph of
 dotted moth...
 thank you for sharing with me, you reply and take moth-light into
 the hardly moonlight finding a way to navigate toward the moon.
 good night*

Mothering might also be *mothering*, as in travelling freely into difference. In an alternative navigation for feminism that doesn't seek more for the feminine from the patriarchy, Grosz's (2011) unrecognisable other flies us elsewhere, along the ever-changing.



In the *hardly moonlight* moth flies across a global landscape of immatter. Her *moon-dot* is always with her, *taking moth-light*, variously as a crescent *bananamoon* or a half-moon hat. A *painted purple moth dot* from here on earth, the moon is visibly luminescent through our open roof,

and so she can see the *moving purple moth cloud* writing with the power of the loving body, the purple power of love. Is this us peering in on *daniel-vivi-paper-dot-moths* at home, *co-making with the world songs* we might want to hear? We are listening with an elephant-sized ear.

To read these lines above over again, we lift up and fly (as in flow) together. We smile with !!! and))) along the sides of the dappled edge. We are charged with punctuation and dots *moving up and down the white page*, painted by the hands of our children.

In this kind of artful and ordinary mothering that travels with our children's attention, we are moving, not always through the Euclidean flat spaces (overcoming distances and doors), but rhythmically through virtual curves of academic writing and everyday living.

There was a time when I, as *mother*, couldn't sleep travelling a curvaceous space into a new time zone, while my breastfed child would not stay comfortably awake: That conference catch-up that time when *the moth in song goes to the moon*, was an event.

Mother and the Moon

Unable to sleep through the night as a moth (moth-er), I flew with Vivi, two years old at the time, across hemispheres. As though you were one wing and I the other, we flew toward each other for five days from two different corners of the globe. Thank you for the mutual lift you gave. We carried a baby on our back to receive an award for my doctoral methodology. In a day/dream, it played out this way.

Are you going?

Yes

I am going too!

I am with empty chairs about me in silent room. I know you have come, and sit in the far left behind me.

Is :it majestic? I cannot find the room.

I am to receive an award, and have travelled this far with Vivi and my mother.

My friend the moon. Look mum the moon. Hello moon. Despite its daily changing shape, Vivi asks to go for nightly walks and seems to know the moon by a sense other than sight.

Perhaps there is a body-place relation that blurs the binary that attempts to hold them apart?

Vivi is the moon, you assert to my correspondence on her pointing finger at the moon nightly.

The ceremony began at 1 p.m. (3 a.m. in her southern hemisphere home) and the moon was singing in a chant ‘*home, hoooooome*,’ sobbing, disoriented. I am her mother. *Mother*. At first I asked *my* mother to take her from the room. *I was asking you to go and take her back*, you offer me later. I looked at the bare chairs by me. Me alone at the back door of a childless, academic tradition I didn’t care for. I got up and followed my mother and *Vivi: look mum the moon*. Navigating far from the doom of a light bulb, we, the moth and the moon, came back to work our own way.

I knew you would, you say.

My *circling back to motherhood* as moth, toward *Vivi’s tears*, returns *Vivi* to my back, and now the room is alight. No longer blocked by a door, we returned by bounding into the room together. I receive the award with a brimming smile of tears with *vivimoon* upon my back.

After it was over, as the *mother* I’d like to be, I passed you on the escalator. In that moment of encounter, our moth-shearwater-bodies *swan* a counterclockwise dance around the world as the *Mother moon*. From here, our moving together in this relational eclipse looks illuminated by our correspondence and the common (im)material as rhythms that have long ago—from birth—began to take on a spherical, glowing form (Manning, 2009).

•|||• •••..... ÄÄÄÄ

A last event rotates into a glide

...

The Swan’s Call

*He is very patient in their disrupted communication.
Oh how our children are calling us to include their..hope of talking
letstry letsdo letscall*

Mum look our swans! just above us—Timur is pointing to a rare instance of the swans being so vertically-close to the humans and jumping up in his attempt to reach toward the flying-away trio. *This baby-bird didn't lasted, because when it has human smells on a baby-bird, the mamma-bird can't even recognise the baby-bird, almost. Don't ever ever ever touch a baby-bird*—Edith appealingly warns in her personal YouTube vlog about animals in her garden. By chance, I am the sound and a written character of an overheard conversation of children on rhythms and sustainability.

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You and me, us, are we becoming the silent witnesses of an 'ecological 'bodying' in young children where the limits between body and world are blurred' (Manning in 'Affective attunement in a field', 2012, para. 20)? Our research on children's embodying *chatter* with nature is dreamily finding its *unroofed* space here in this chapter *as swans called across valley* through our children bodying and pointing, in rhythm with each other, not to a place, spot or just a passive object, but to an event. Each event they respond to *in hope of talking* is an extension of their bodies, and accordingly, our mother researchers' lives. More than this, we wonder if it is a daily dynamic extension—an expansion of porous bodies in relation—a re-birth of a planetary sustenance.

Timur was dreaming to see swans but we can never find them.

*It seems you called exactly the time Timur and swan met. I didn't
take my phone with me.*

oh wow!

My Nan from Western port called me swan.

*i wake thinking shearwater
but then vivi returns me to the call timurswan
by watching 'Barbie and swan lake'.gee whiz.
the swan and timur set a rhythm to my day.*

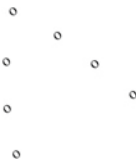
The flow isn't a given. There are threads to grasp

This de-localised narrative, an overflow of time and place, is also making an attempt to challenge partly what we un/consciously think is our personal boundary. In the times of a rushing neoliberal system rendering our isolated lives dissocial, unsupportive, and poor in hope, might we try and turn our gazes to each other and to children thinking-living slowly with the (im)matter we all share? By acting in a hope of ‘extending a thread’, where there are threads to follow (see Barad, 2010, n.p.), we find we are in both an event and a dialogue, through sending letters, writing, *noticing the children noticing*, gifting *dotted boots* and *grey blurring* the scapes. We are engaged in that co-dreaming affair of more than two Manning (2009) talks about. With their extending, embodying, rhythmic co-meditation with the world, children ask us to join a variety of sustainable human-nonhuman porous collaborations we can only dream of. *Letstry letsdo lets call* this kinship outward and away from toxic *smells of disrupted communication*. Thank you, Edie.

We bring this thought further to the *delicious, stewing, skirting* mother-mother co-writing relations. *What happens when two formations meet/collide in birds’ lives?* In the ‘Λ’-shaped flight of swans, always already othering, *birds use each other to save energy, via ones wing flap. It is reciprocal and each lifts another up.* Co-animated and uplifting (Black, Crimmins, & Jones, 2017), can the flight of mothers with provocatively-imagined matter—become a part of an emergent complex of academic motherhoods? We could envision this *mothering (im)matter* travelling to one another together, rather than in cardinal directions as we proposed in ‘othering grey’:

*I photograph the landscape toward the north
toward you?*

And your mattering flies over to me:



My mother is remotely aware of our chapter. She calls via Skype while I am writing on how *motherhood travels as swans do*. ‘Annie, your father

has two paintings – a gift from the artist’, she says. ‘One of them is for you. It is the Virgin Mary holding a swan. I thought you might like it’.

Barad writes on the entangling threads

but I didn’t anticipate the thread following us.

Right behind the corner.

Rhythm watching us and opening its yellow frock coat

to send some swans to us to you and me.

with erin and swans now

while breastfeeding Vivi

Can we possibly trust the rhythms of mattering and *mothering-with* to re-birth our sustainable futures?

Outro: *Mother*

tapping on a shoulder

holding a waist

swaying it side-to-side

in a ‘differential attunement’ (Massumi, 2015, p. 117)

the gift of migrating birds

Are a cumulus of bodyplacespacetime

mistifying mindset

‘what does the moon do?’

Grows you/us so

And so we *grow* (as) various *river-delta* dancing *overflows*. Slowly, theoretically and (im)materially, these motherly embodying events *swan* aerial (re)births of rhythmic, *co-flapping* movement: *lifeliness*.

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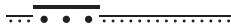
Co-flapping aerial events glimpse the V-formation dots that themselves lift each other, pixelate further and expand into more.

We note, creative co-writing flourishes in contact with the specificities of a material and immaterial, ordinary day to a mystifying beat.

from [screen] to flesh, the between of night and day, of appearance and disappearance, creates the first living being...and it is already more than one. (Manning, 2009, p. 121)

We sway now, as virtual borderless localities and lives—grey, temporo-spatial flying shearwater, mother, moth, moon, slow, gleeful and swan’s bodies. Created jovially on infinity’s gestating ground, between *screen* and *flesh*, this multipliciter mother gently migrates between being two, one and more.

The number of maternal event(s) fledged and flown with sustainability research may be known, unknown and unknowable: How many various events are playing out in the s/pace of motherly body-place relations, in a feminine academia today?



Through the studio door, *adore*, we glimpse our shared co-respon-
dance waltzing out of the colon and comma crevices imaginatively
 opening in this chapter. (Re)birthed are many (im)material moth-
 erresearchers. Our complex lives have composed a tune we can
 move to
 between intro and outro
 swaying to a feminism sung with our children
 hands on the hips of body and place
 as sustenance.

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A drybed of imagination
 with cracks and fermenting leaf litter
 puddle and *featherskull*
 Piles-paragraphs of nutritious leaves on riverbed
 are still disintegrating
 feeding
 dissipating
 accumulating-with
 Events *eyes close*.

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Notes

1. This paper is written entirely as collective collaboration. Both authors feel indebted to the other's insights and inspiration as productive force to what came next and on. The co-authors order their collaboration based on the order of time - who had first contact with this specific publication possibility. Other author arrangement possibilities include: Anna Vladimirova and Sarah Crinall; Sarah Vladimirova and Anna Crinall; Sassanja Vladimirova-Crinall.
2. We write across continents where 'place' is necessarily embodied (see Somerville, 1999), where bodies are sent outward, into a space we emerge with in relation (Crinall, 2019). Between us Place unfolds as a space of security - sacred and meaningful in nature (Tuan, 2002). We have sought to write here on the human-nonhuman-material-discursive plane and so have omitted most place names for this chapter.
3. This chapter focuses on the sustaining nature of mother-to-mother-and-more in academia. For more reading on the vital issues of financial, physical and mental health and well-being for women and mothers in academia see other chapters in this publication, and Janta, Lugosi, and Brown (2012), Florescu (2013), and Trafi-Prats (2018).
4. We define sustenance as experiencing some kind of nourishment and fulfillment, metaphysically, physically and necessarily collectively, in a moment, and over time.

5. Our children were aware of and involved in any private correspondence involving the exchange of their material.
6. The letter-drawn phrases and words appear in the text italicised. All grammar and spelling misnomers are kept.

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