

Down on the ground: the material memoir of the posthuman childhood researcher

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Abstract

Where (else) might the residues of observation take our enquires? This chapter proposes taking a confederate and speculative approach to ‘observation’ that traces the bodily immersion of the researcher within broader power structures that underline the material affects of ‘what counts’ when research is reconfigured. Observation in childhood research is typically associated with what can be seen and registered and so privileges a visual optics – of what can be immediately witnessed with the eyes (or camera lens). Researchers have become accustomed to making sense of what is seen; what observations can tell us about the child, in the moment, against some narrow imaginary. This chapter wonders what might happen when, and if, observation in early childhood contexts is mobilised in ways that elevate other optics – that allow observation to become sensed, haptic, bodily encounters whereby memories and hauntings (Tsing et al, 2017) of life in the Anthropocene are agitated and invite us to follow the tendrils. By working with Alaimo’s (2010, 2016) concept of transcorporeality this chapter deliberately asserts that human bodies (both the young child and adult researcher) are porous and materially-discursively altered by the landscapes in which they are shaped, and in turn shape. The ‘material memoir’ provides a means for the early childhood researcher to trace transcorporeality and so rupture ordinary knowledge practices by observing the material, entangled reality of ‘self’. Such memoirs involve negotiating ‘hazardous landscapes’ of risk and toxicity (Alaimo, 2010, p.17) in order to disrupt and enlarge ideas about what (else) ‘observation’ might become and make possible.

Tracing affective forces in childhood research

As I set about writing a contribution to a book about post-developmental approaches to research observation in childhood studies I observe, or rather I sense, that this is a practice that has profoundly shifted over many years of undertaking research and yet also remained comfortably familiar. I began by gathering memories and artefacts from the numerous times I have been in early childhood contexts: nurseries, children’s centres, family homes, libraries, playgrounds, parks; and to ponder upon the various ways that observation has been framed, permitted and at times denied or subverted. I am struck by research as a series of embodied affective forces; and by how theories and philosophies shape worldviews and ways of being

so that moments ‘captured’ through observation in early childhood contexts become endlessly fascinating, troubling and lively when encountered from different onto-epistemological starting points. Observations agitate and provoke; they have capacities to activate a deep contemplation of how it might be possible to find ways to live on a damaged planet (Tsing, 2015). Furthermore, observations transport the researcher through embodied, affective forces to times forgotten; research encounters become etched upon the researcher body and agitate a series of atmospheric attunements that take the research beyond the specific early childhood context and allow childhood to be thought of as processes that are worldly and confederate. The research ceases to be about observing what children can do, or what their actions might mean instead it can become an opening or what Stewart (2007) terms a contact zone where connections, routes and disjunctures can be mapped.

The children and babies featured in my research over the years are curiously fixed in time and space in fieldwork observations either as notes, scribbles, photographs or video footage, but their liveliness lingers and resurfaces in unexpected ways. Revisiting these observations, I am provoked by the messy, emergent, untameable, discomforts and joys of researching in early childhood that resurface to agitate memories: I am reminded of where I lived, the clothes I wore, of pregnancies, bereavements, of 9/11, Grenfell Tower, medical diagnoses, and Covid-19. I am taken back to glimpses of my own childhood and those of my own children. As I catch sight of my hand, or foot, hear my voice, sense my presence in those observations I am reminded of Code (2006:4) and her insistence for ecological thinking in research practices, which:

‘relocates inquiry down on the ground where knowledge is made, negotiated, circulated, and which proposes a way of engaging with the implications of patterns, places, and the interconnections of lives and events in and across the human and non-human world in scientific and secular projects of inquiry.’

Most of my research has indeed been ‘down on the ground’, characterised by a messy tapestry of bodies, matter, affective forces, policy documents, curriculum frameworks, snot, tears, sand, all within a swirling landscape full of both familiarity and strangeness. As the years have passed, I have become ever more attuned to an ecological way of thinking about and undertaking research, and with a deep commitment to feminist new materialism I now embrace irruptions, haltings and disorientations (Koro Lungberg, 2015) as generative of fresh optics with which to grapple with the world, and as offering capacities for ethical world-

making through research. As a result, increasingly the research I undertake to contribute to debates in early childhood looks unrecognisable when mapped against research methods handbooks. But it is my contention that attuning to atmospheric affects (Stewart, 2011) is generative of a deeper, more nuanced account of childhood in the Anthropocene.

In this chapter I revisit and weave selected research observations with young children from over the past 20 years. In doing this I seek to disrupt established ideas about the practice of observation as a research methodology. Following Alaimo (2010, 2016) I want to argue that all bodies (human and non-human) are shaped by environments; that transformation is constantly occurring in response to surroundings and that history is being registered on, in and through bodies. She contends that there is never a time when humans can be anything but transcorporeal. Making use of the material memoir involves tracing bodily immersion within power structures that have real material effects – I therefore take research observations as opportunities for such tracings. With the help of Alaimo’s concept of transcorporeality and Stewart’s (2007, 2011) ordinary affects and atmospheric attunements, this chapter tunes in to forces, absent-presences, memories and hauntings to argue that observations have capacities to re-turn us to times forgotten, transport us to other entirely unanticipated places, and to pose deeply political questions long after ‘data’ is ‘collected’. Understanding research observation as more than a method for gathering data and making meaning of what has been witnessed involves a recognition inspired by feminist new materialism that research is always a deeply embodied, material-affective, political practice.

Queering observation in early childhood

As stressed (and variously contested) throughout this book, observation in childhood research is typically associated with what can be seen and registered. It is concerned with collecting data to extract some form of representational knowledge about the developing child. There is a long and varied history of using child observations to further understandings of child development and education (see MacNaughton et al., 2001 for a detailed overview). It is important for the purposes of this chapter though to note that observations are always shaped by the epistemological orientation of the researcher and how they come to define what counts as valid knowledge (Lather, 1993). In early childhood research a variety of observation methods exist from highly structured approaches that view the early childhood context as some form of laboratory for extracting evidence and making truth claims; to more naturalistic approaches where the researcher becomes more deeply immersed in the environment and

relationships that unfold over time and is more open to what unfolds. Regardless of where a researcher sits along this continuum the focus is most typically on the child and tends towards an anthropocentric logic. Researchers become accustomed to making sense of what is seen; what observations can tell us about the child, in the moment, against some narrow imaginary of the developmental child. Feminist new materialist and post-humanist approaches though encourage researchers to question the logic of focusing solely or most intently upon the child in childhood research. Rather the concern becomes to trouble taken-for-granted assumptions by dwelling upon relationalities and what emerges through encounters, being open to surprises and recognising our infected and affected intertwinement with that which we are researching; a recognition and celebration of what Haraway (1988) terms situated knowledges and partial perspectives. The researcher becomes a ‘mutated modest witness’ (see Osgood, 2019 for fuller discussion) by making use of the personal, political, activist baggage she brings to the research. Being explicit about who we are as researchers, the agendas that underpin our feminist, anti-bias, social justice driven projects is now much more readily accepted in early childhood research. I have become increasingly more resolute in making this completely transparent in my research as the years have gone by.

Fabricating a material memoir of the feminist researcher

Thinking back to studies that I have undertaken where observation is a core methodology, I arrive back to the early 2000s and specifically my doctoral research. In my late twenties, with several years as a jobbing researcher under my belt, I was eager to undertake research with an unapologetically political agenda: to hear the voices of working-class women ‘down on the ground’ with young children. This involved extensive critique of government policy, interviews with national stakeholders and localised ethnographic work in three London nurseries. Talking methodologies: interviews and focus groups were privileged but as the research visits unfolded, I found myself undertaking something of an ‘accidental ethnography’ with the inclusion of extensive observations of daily life at the nurseries.

Endless visits to the nurseries involved prolonged waiting around for staff to be available to participate in life history interviews. I spent many hours sitting patiently in either the staff room, book corner, the playground, the manager’s office; or wherever else I was told to wait. This positioning made it impossible *not* to attune to the daily life that was unfolding around me, as I cast an eye back over my fieldwork diary, I can see that some of the richest and affecting data was generated from this accidental method. The observations were entirely

unstructured, not in search of anything in particular, just soaking up the atmosphere, the tempo, the environment, the comings and goings. At the time I remember feeling quite anxious that I would be denied opportunities to collect the data I had come for, i.e. the interview recordings, but I came to unexpectedly enjoy simply hanging around. My fieldnotes attend to smells, weather, sticky surfaces, atmospheric tensions.

One prolonged entry dwells upon a book I happened upon whilst being parked in book corner for over two hours. I am troubled by what appears to be snot and bogies adhered the covers of a book that is torn and has battered pages. Curiously I appear not have made a note of the title of the book, the story line, characters or plot. Rather it is the materiality of the book, its battered and infested state that arrests my attention and sends my thought processes in all sorts of random directions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these observations do not make it into the thesis, but I do recall sharing them with my supervisors; how the microbes, dried nasal mucus, and perhaps other bodily fluids decorating the exhausted book, had troubled me. An encounter with this book worked upon my (pre-maternal) young, (once) working-class body. It clearly agitated ordinary affects and left a lasting imprint as I now notice the care that I lavished upon my own children's picturebooks: wiping them clean, fixing, gluing, sewing, and preserving them, for what I am not entirely sure. That dishevelled picturebook in book corner, Mulberry Bush nursery; an underfunded, voluntary sector nursery nestled within a deprived housing estate in north London, brought to life embodied senses of social class and complex processes of social mobility: a working-class girl from the village, first generation to university, then a doctoral student and now, a professor, a mother. Hauntings of that book and its connections to picturebooks stashed on my children's bookshelves agitate memories of the near empty bookshelf of my childhood home, (with the notable exception of *Mrs Beaton's Book of Household Management*, *Gideons Bible*, *The Gardener's Year* and half a dozen *Reader's Digests*).

The picture book and its hauntings, the vital materialism (Bennett, 2010) of what it was, how it lives on in ways that I could not have anticipated, was at the time laughed away as inconsequential in a supervision meeting. We reasoned that my reaction was symptomatic of tendencies towards obsessive cleanliness, which I had attributed to heightened working-class respectability, as Skeggs (2003) writes about it. The squarely anthropocentric framing of my doctoral research meant that these irruptions and haltings, brought about by everyday affects, were dismissed as an irrelevance and distraction, I readjusted my lens to focus upon social

class as a human, subjective and socially constructed concern that was contained within the immediate ethnographic context of my research. What does make its way into the thesis is a critical reflection about the out-of-placeness of my once working-class but upwardly mobile self:

“By revisiting my fieldnotes I can trace the considerable anxiety I experienced about my ‘presentation of self’, how I was being read, who was *I* to be undertaking *this* research? I was caught between feeling voyeuristic, an encumbrance; overly studious to, at other times, experiencing inclusion as ‘one of the girls, down on the floor with the children’ this was especially the case when I was invited to participate in the Summer Fete, and some months later, the Christmas Party. I continually reflected upon the fact that I was an outsider and the extent to which I was included rested upon a willingness to be accepted into the daily life of the nursery.”

PhD Thesis, p.61

Looking back to these observations nearly two decades later I can appreciate the centrality of the researcher body, and specifically research as a series of embodied encounters that both affect and are affecting, long after the research is published. Thinking with the microbes and dried nasal mucus conjures the current Covid 19 pandemic and the increased precarity of the early years workforce (see Osgood, 2022 for a fuller discussion of this). Alaimo (2010) writes of the proletarian lung of the worker, where the nature of the work inscribes itself within the materiality of the body. On the front-line, early years workers persistently suffer bodily immersion within power structures that have very real material effects: handling toxic cleaning fluids; fatigue from long working hours; spinal problems from sitting on too small furniture, fatigue from long commutes because they are priced out of local housing where nurseries are located, and now, acute and prolonged exposure to a deadly virus. Attuning to the seemingly unremarkable, taking seriously that which causes a stutter in our thinking, that which invites curiosity with ordinary affects, in fact holds the potential to open important ways to consider childhood research that break free from narrow constraints of what we *should* be observing and what it means. As Stewart (2007:10) writes about tuning in:

“The ordinary is a circuit that’s always tuned into something little, something somewhere. A mode of attending to the possible and the threatening, it amasses the resonance of things. It flows through cliches of the self, agency, home, a life. It pops up as a dream. Or it shows up in the middle of a derailing. Or in a simple pause. It can

take flights of fancy or go limp, tired, done for now. It can pool up on the little worlds of identity and desire. It can draw danger. Or it can dissipate, leaving you standing’.

Scripts etched on the body

Another study that floats to the surface when contemplating the embodied complexities of undertaking childhood research observations was that undertaken when I was mother to a young toddler. The research was concerned to explore how best to engage ‘hard to reach’ families in early years music-making (Osgood et al., 2013). A core method employed in the study was observations in several case study early years music-making services. As the study was externally funded by a national charity seeking to reform policy and make improvements to practice, there was a very clear set of aims and objectives to be addressed by gathering evidence from the field. Observations at the music sessions were structured by an observation schedule that directly corresponded to the aims and objectives of the study. The research team was in search of quite precise data about the level and nature of engagement of parents and young children.

However, as is frequently the case when ‘down on the ground’ in childhood studies the encounters quickly became characterised by porous boundaries and messy irruptions and entanglements. In all the research I have undertaken with young children and babies it has been impossible to sit at a distance, to be a dispassionate, objective observer (see Osgood 2019, 2020 and 2021 for recent examples). The observation guide is intended as boundary-setting apparatus but early childhood environments, and child improvisors, movers and shakers actively disrupt such frameworks. I am magnetically drawn into the otherworldliness of early childhood environments; opportunities to tune into children’s explorations and resistances are irresistible. Inevitably I find myself on the ground, with my notebook either forgotten or in the possession of a small child. My researcher body assumes intuitive responses to the situation, in this particular moment my body responded to the affective forces that demanded ‘engaged mother’; having participated in many Mini Mozart and Rhyme Times in the local library with my son, the script is etched upon my body. I am poised, punctual, keen, enthusiastic, there to scaffold a child’s learning. I sense the rules of the game, the unspoken but explicit expectations. I sit crossed legged on the ground suspecting that I know what is to come. As childhood researcher I find ways to resist the script and instead tune in to the chaos and noise, attempting to remain open, to suspend judgement, or as Stewart (2007:1) writes:

Committed not to the demystification and uncovered truths that support a well-known picture of the world, but rather to speculation, curiosity, and the concrete, it tries to provoke attention to the forces that come into view as habit or shock, resonance or impact. *Something* throws itself together in a moment as an event and a sensation; a something both animated and inhabitable’

...A ‘something’ that did not get published:

I sense a small body behind me
rummaging
through a parked buggy lined up against the wall
rustling
rummaging
a packet of *Space Invaders* is unearthed
a look around
rustling
rummaging
then a *Fruit Shoot*
another furtive glance around
a mother’s blushed cheeks
The Wheels on the Bus signals the start

This ‘something’ set in motion all sort of affective residues and tensions during the session, igniting class judgement, regulatory impulses, and subversive satisfaction. Whilst we do not dwell upon this observation in the report (not least because it did fit into the neat boxes of the observation schedule) it nevertheless continues to resurface, to have a vitalism that lingers. Stewart (2007) stresses that ‘a something’ does not work through meanings, rather ordinary affects pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dramas and social worldings of all kinds. She goes on to explain that their significance lies in the intensities that they build and the thoughts and feelings that they make possible. It is not so much whether this something is good or bad per se, rather the point is that it generates ways of knowing, relating, and attending to things that are already present in them, for how they resonate. We note the force of this ‘something’ and other, similar ordinary affects, in the report:

“The social class signifiers embodied in the music leader and her assistant had important affects in determining the appeal of the session and parental ‘performances’ which tended towards an implicit recognition of what was expected of them and their children (punctuality, active participation, adherence to unspoken rules). For example, consuming food during the sessions, roaming free and chatting were actively discouraged and were viewed as signalling disengagement and acting as a distraction”

(Osgood et al, 2013: 50)

*Now they could run around before it started,
then I would arrive,
I always started and finished the session with The Wheels on the Bus –
they knew it was starting
then they knew it was finished.
once it had started everybody had to sit still.
It wasn't playgroup
if one child starts to run, they all run
So, they all sat on mum's knees
or on the floor*

*But every so often
I would explain that letting them run around was spoiling it for everybody else
the idea was the children should concentrate
I mean it really becomes a discipline
children learn what they need for school
and of course
culturally it was interesting
big variations in how parents raise their children
but they all accepted
knew what was coming
I just kept the momentum up
once I started
I didn't stop until the end*

[Librarian cited in Osgood et al, 2013: 51-52]

Not missing the everyday somethings

The everyday somethings that surface in early childhood contexts are at risk of being missed or dismissed altogether. They are rarely what researchers go in search of, yet they have the capacities to demand attention, to provoke curiosity, to tell different stories if we are open to registering affect. Tracing back through decades of research in search of the somethings that were erased, pushed aside but somehow resurface and demand fresh optics has been an invigorating exercise. Bringing the material self into the frame of research and contemplating how research is etched upon the body and the body etched upon the research feels like an imperative, as Alaimo (2010:20) stresses:

As the material self cannot be disentangled from networks that are simultaneously economic, political, cultural, scientific, and substantial, what was once the ostensibly bounded human subject finds herself in a swirling landscape of uncertainty where practices and actions that were once not remotely ethical or political suddenly become the very stuff of the crises at hand.

As I have become increasingly immersed in feminist new materialism and critical posthumanism these practices of noticing, attuning through embodied, affective encounters have become central. Observation has become something much more intuitive, sensory and speculative; indeed much more childlike in its receptivity to the curiousness of the world. Haraway's (1988) figure of the mutated modest witness has been especially helpful when seeking to further explore what else gets agitated when observation is freed from its epistemic, methodological straight jacket. Haraway (2016) urges that as mutated modest witnesses, researchers should engage in deep hanging out, to go visiting and to venture off the beaten path; heeding this advice results in surprising and at times discomfiting research with children. As she states:

The point is to make a difference in the world, to cast our lot from some ways of life and not others. To do that one must be in the action, be finite and dirty, not transcendent and clean.

(Haraway, 1997, p. 36)

Observing the routine, everyday materialdiscursive entanglements unfolding and enfolding within early childhood contexts creates space for other stories to emerge in unexpected and unanticipated ways. In recent publications (Osgood, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022) I recount

strange encounters with routine and everyday happenings that interrupt and fracture the familiarity of being in a nursery, disrupting the predictability and easy recognition of the organisation of space, furniture and materials. Taking up the figure of the mutated modest witness and exercising what Tsing (2015) terms the art of noticing makes simple, mundane acts such as talking and sitting something else entirely. Research in this mode pushes bodies out of place, out of time, making them excessive, all of which creates possibilities to encounter early childhood with a completely different optics:

The ordinary can turn on you...it can flip into something else altogether. One thing leads to another. An expectation is dashed or fulfilled. An ordinary floating state of things goes sour or takes off into something amazing and good. Either way, things turn out to be not what you thought they were...The ordinary is a thing that has to be imagined and inhabited.

(Stewart, 2007:105)

In this key, the childhood researcher is required to be open to the queerness that resides in spaces where habits, magic and fantasy comingle with regulation, containment and surveillance. Taking up an *Alice in Wonderland* sensibility (Nordstrom, Osgood et al, 2017; Osgood, 2020), working with the affordances that discomfort, awkwardness, excess and being out of place generate provides a portal through which to unsettle established ideas about childhood. What counts as valid knowledge (Lather, 1991) and what counts as research (Rhedding-Jones, 2005) is called into sharp focus. Posthumanist enquiry becomes a part of everyday life: everything, everyone, everyplace, each little glimmer and snap has capacities to set off curiosity; provide tentacles to follow.

This researcherly self is not contained within nurseries or other bounded early years contexts. It becomes a way of life (Ferrando, 2012). Furthermore, this researcherly self can be understood as always in the making. Atmospheric attunements, that which hails attention today is informed by long buried nightmares and anxieties from childhood. Living very close to a nuclear weapons base¹ terror sat permanently in the pit of my stomach; afraid to open the fridge as invisible CFCs² escaped into the also invisible Ozone layer; shutting windows tight

¹ A history of RAF Welford: <https://www.greenhamcommon.org.uk/raf-welford>

² Lasting impact of CFCs on the environment: <https://eandt.theiet.org/content/articles/2020/03/old-fridges-found-to-be-leaking-ozone-destroying-cfcs/>

on hot summer days to keep out toxic fertilisers and pesticides³ sprayed year after year on the fields surrounding my family home; charity fundraisers for the Amazonian deforestation⁴; Attenborough warning about species extinction; creatures (human and non-human) deformed by the Chernobyl disaster⁵; relativities of local⁶ and global poverty, gender and classed-based inequalities⁷; these childhood hauntings infuse and infect the materiality of the researcher body, they become reawakened and achingly familiar. Childhood research does not start and stop down on the ground in the nursery, it begins in our own childhoods, in our bones and sinews, and continues throughout the ebb and flow of our lives. The material self configures differently and intensifies as bodies are shaped, and in turn shape the world and its hauntings as we seek to make it a better place, through our research and everyday living.

(Im)possibilities of undertaking research with(out) children

The material memoir illustrates the ways that researching seeps into our pores, our psyches, our muscles and memories, we are always mutated modest witnesses, always affected and infected by that which we research. This has been acutely felt during endless months of being denied opportunities to physically hang out in early childhood contexts. Researching from the depths of a pandemic has insisted upon different optics, in search of alternative places to encounter childhood and contemplate how it is interwoven through space, histories and temporalities that manifest within chance encounters – for example, a walk in the park, an encounter with a nursery outing, lichen and a dead pigeon (Osgood, 2022).

During pandemic lockdown I happened upon an accidental walking method (op.cit); as modern day Flaneuse, I became aware of previously unnoticed events and encounters that unfold in the everyday in-between spaces with sharpened senses ready to attune to sights, sounds and smells that seemed to demand close attention. Cuddles, tears and snotty noses, lichen, bacteria, and liminal animals together populated a trip to the local park during hard lock-down, to offer a powerful account of inequality and precarity, that incited a stutter. Alaimo (2010, p. 28) asserts that one's body is 'never a rigidly enclosed, protected entity, but

³ Cancer amongst agricultural communities: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/3294455/>

⁴ Save the Amazon Appeal: <https://savingtheamazon.org/en>

⁵ Cancer inducing effects of nuclear disaster: https://chernobylguide.com/chernobyl_children

⁶ Rural poverty, increased polarisation <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-and-wealth-across-britain-1968-2005> <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2017/02/how-uk-can-avoid-repeat-1980s-inequality>

Global poverty, <https://ourworldindata.org/extreme-poverty>

⁷ <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2021/11/18/what-was-section-28-law-lgbt/>

is vulnerable to the substances and flows of its environments.’ She goes on to argue that humans and other animals are never separate and distinct from the environments and landscapes within which they exist, and in turn exist within them. I argue that the logics of capitalism determining the nature and availability of early childhood education is intricately bound up with the non and more-than-human. I focus on lichen as story-teller and what the death of a pigeon during lockdown has to tell about multispecies survival in the Anthropocene to argue that we co-exist in a system of constantly interweaving subjectivities which can never be truly separated from each other. Or Tsing (2015, p. 20) asserts:

Precarity is the condition of being vulnerable to others. Unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves. Unable to rely on stable structure of community, we are thrown into shifting assemblages, which remake us as well as others.

Covid-19 has altered life in many ways including how childhood studies are conceived, undertaken and what they generate. The mode of research I am arguing for in this chapter enables the researcher to tap into what virus-ing-with (see Osgood et al., 2022) as method has to offer. It demands that researchers mobilise a deep attunement, to allow themselves to be affected and to wonder at what might be learnt or unlearnt from encountering deeply unsettling time in a portal (Roy, 2022,). As childhood researchers we are in the unique position to learn with and from 'child'. We might take seriously Manning's (2020, p. 6) claim that:

child is a researcher of life, and a maker of worlds. The indefinite runs through the child, protecting it from the frames we so eagerly wish to impose on it. The becoming-child promises no return to an innocent beginning. There is no inner child. What there is, in every line, is an indeterminate tendency for resonating with what else moves across it. This is the becoming-child of the line. . .

Researching down on the ground

For Alaimo (2010) the material memoir is a form of trans-corporeal autobiography typically crafted by an author who has suffered illness. The author interprets the environment through the lens of her sickness, in search of its origin. Narratives of personal history, of local history, of science, and of environment are drawn together in ways that imply an attribution.

Therefore, material memoir is always a genre of doubt, of indeterminacy, of discourse that is speculative and inconclusive. In this chapter, I have made use of the material memoir as a

framework to think about childhood research as etched upon the researcher body and how in turn the researcher body infuses research encounters. Tracing embodied encounters of the feminist researcher shaped by personal and local histories and life in late capitalism together with attuning to ordinary affects of the somethings that surface in childhood research hold the potential to recognise that our understandings are only ever partial and situated. Affective methodologies involve becoming attuned to what (else) a particular scene might offer, and they have the capacity to insist that we get down on the ground to embrace a more childlike approach to research.

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