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C(h)ords of Care

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Abstract

Considering the ambiguous and ambivalent character of care relations, unpacking shared early care and what it *does* is of vital concern. This inquiry explores shared early care in/through conversations between parents and their child's early childhood pedagogue. Situated within an expanding, multifaceted field of arts-based research, this inquiry is not a quest for certainty or to describe, explain, predict, or solve problems. Rather, the aim is to enhance perspectives by generating new questions, concepts, and problematizations. Thus, C(h)ords of Care is created as a concept that expands shared early care into the more-than-verbal realm of affective forces, entanglements of migration, and atmosphere work through which shared early care is relationally produced. This move allows for some of the wonders and struggles involved in shared early care to come to the fore without limiting these to the (good or bad) intentions of human individuals, such as parents and pedagogues.

Introduction

Unpacking shared early care and what it *does* is of vital concern because, as Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) points out, care relations are relations of multilateral interdependencies that “can be cruel as much as loving” (p. 11). This inquiry explores shared early care in/through video-observed and video-recorded conversations between parents and their child’s pedagogue in early childhood education and care (ECEC) institutions. Situated within an expanding, multifaceted field of arts-based research, the aim is not a quest for certainty or to describe, explain, predict, or solve problems. Rather, the inquiry is seen as “an event that creates concepts that problematize” (Springgay, 2022, p. 17). According to Leavy (2017), arts-based research (ABR) “exists at the intersection of art and science” and “involves researchers engaging in art making as a way of knowing» (p. 3-4). Like Ruopp (2019), I find that combining verbal and visual literacies produce a more “dynamic encounter with knowledge” through which “[t]heory becomes research becomes theory (with)in an ongoing experimental disposition with inventive creative inquiry” (p. 2). In this study, ABR offers a way to respond to and explore video-observations and theory in a non-linear process that taps into artmaking’s potential to go beyond what is given (e.g., Grosz, 2019; Rosiek, 2018; Ruopp, 2019). Through this cross-fertilization between artmaking and philosophy (Grosz, 2019), or what Ruopp (2019) portrays as visual and verbal literates, theory is allowed to become “through continuous aesthetic creation” (p. 3). Simply put, arts-based research bring an “enhancement of perspectives” (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p. 96) beyond the limitations of language. I find visual ABR particularly fruitful when engaging with video-recorded parent-pedagogue conversations, because the previous research on parent-pedagogue encounters is dominated by language-centered methodologies such as interview studies and transcribed observations (Angell, 2023).

The enhancement of perspectives aimed for in this article takes shared early care beyond individual intentions distilled through language-centered methodologies, and into the more-than-verbal realm of affective forces, entanglements of migration, and atmosphere work through which shared early care is relationally produced¹. This move opens new problematizations regarding the non-innocence of shared early care while resisting limiting the wonders and struggles of care practices to human individuals’ (good or bad) intentions. The move is supported by a conceptual framework combining affect theory and feminist

¹ This statement points to the ontological framework of this article, agential realism (Barad, 2007). Thinking with Barad (2007), entities and boundaries such as “shared early care” vs. “parental care” vs. “professional care” are emergent and mutually co-created through specific agential intra-actions “where the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and [...] particular concepts (that is, particular material articulations of the world) become meaningful” (p. 139).

conceptions of care relations as more than human-social affairs. More in detail, the expansion relies heavily on insights from Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's anti-anthropocentric contribution to care studies, Sara Ahmed's conceptualizations of affective containers and atmosphere work, and Karen Barad's agential realism, particularly their concept intra-action. Supported by this conceptual framework, C(h)ords of Care is created as a concept that expands shared early care into the more-than-verbal realm of affective forces, entanglements of migration, and atmosphere work through which shared early care is relationally produced.

Three paintings are included in this article as an invite for readers to go beyond the limitations of language, engage with them as traces from visual, sensorial, material, and affective thinking with data and theory, and, thus, add to the event through which the concept C(h)ords of Care spurred.

Chains of Care

Previous research on shared early care emphasizes the collective facets of parental care by employing the care-chain analogy in studies of older children taking care of younger children (e.g., Gullestad, 1979), co-parenting by parents who live together (e.g., Andenæs & Haavind, 2017) and parents who do not (e.g., Jevne & Andenæs, 2017), parents and ECEC pedagogues sharing care for children (e.g., Andenæs & Haavind, 2017; Singer, 1993), and global care chains in which women migrate to take care of wealthier families' children and in turn hire someone to care for their own (e.g., Hochschild, 2000). In Norway, where this research is situated, 93.4% of children aged 1–6 years attend kindergartens (Statistics Norway, 2023). In other words, most parents share the care for their child with ECEC pedagogues and other personnel² from the year the child turns one until they start primary school. This practice has been portrayed as organizing “chains of care,” wherein the kindergarten constitutes one link in the chain (Andenæs, 2011).

The care-chain analogy did enable a significant discursive move from the mother–child dyad nurtured by psychological attachment theories toward a cultural psychology-informed expansion of parenthood that also comprises organizing, monitoring, and maintaining care communities for one's child (e.g., Andenæs, 2011; Andenæs & Haavind, 2017; Stefansen & Farstad, 2008). However, what constitutes entities, such as parental care vs. professional care vs. shared early care, is still underproblematized. Thus, liberal individuals (parents) are portrayed as fixed entities who organize, monitor, and maintain care chains by interacting

² For the purpose of this article, I have chosen to translate *barnehagelærer* to ECEC pedagogues and *barnehager* to kindergartens or ECEC institutions. Around 44 percent of the personnel in Norwegian kindergartens are trained ECEC pedagogues, according to the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training.

with other liberal individuals (pedagogues) who carry other ontologically separate links in the chain. With this article, I argue that care chains can only take our thinking so far because they revolve around ideas of individual intentions and ontological separateness. Thus, to propel further thought on shared early care, I simply ask:

Chains?

Complicating Care Chains

Barad's (2007) agential realism, especially their concept of intra-action, constitutes an ontological premise that enables the move beyond human individual intentions and the interaction between them. In short, the term *intra*-action is not the same as *inter*-action; they are not dialectics wherein separate entities are thought to exist a priori and then meet and influence each other. Instead, intra-action is oriented toward activities involving human and nonhuman agencies through which boundaries and entities materialize and come to matter³ (Barad, 2007). Thinking with agential realism, entities and boundaries such as "shared early care" vs. "parental care" vs. "pedagogies" or "professional care" are not permanent and do not exist a priori intra-actions. Rather, they are emergent and mutually co-created and produce and reproduce themselves. Within the frame of this inquiry, which zooms in on specific conversations between parents and pedagogues, it should also be noted that sociomaterial phenomena, such as shared early care, "are produced through agential intra-actions of multiple apparatuses of bodily production" (Barad, 2003, p. 817). Hence, the intra-actions addressed in this article are just a few among an indefinite number of open-ended practices through which shared early care is produced and reproduced.

The term intra-action takes shared early care from interaction between the intentionality of human individuals and re-orientates shared early care toward activities involving organisms, materials, and discourses through which boundaries and entities of shared early care are iteratively generated but not determined once and for all. This does not imply "a flattening out or erasure of difference" but rather an orientation toward difference formed through intra-activity, "a relation of difference within" (Barad, 2014, p. 175). Hence, "[d]ifference is understood as differencing: differences-in-the-(re)making" (Barad, 2014, p. 175).

In the context of this paper, combining Barad's (2007) agential realism with Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) post-humanist contributions to care theory and Ahmed's (2014a; 2014b) contributions to affect theory allows for the differences-in-the-(re)making involved in shared

³ I nod to this double-meaning of 'matter' through the forthcoming headings "Composition Matter(s)," "Atmosphere Matter(s)" and "Life-sustaining Matter(s)."

early care to be further explored. Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) concept of care and Barad's (2007) agential realism aligns well as they both refuse to disentangle human-social affairs from more than human worlds. Thus, Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) concept of care joins forces with "intra-activity" in taking care beyond the (good or bad) intensions of human individuals. Furthermore, Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) work allows for elaborations of relations and tensions between the affects, labor, and ethics/politics of care. Ahmed seems less interested in posthumanist thought. However, Ahmed's queering of phenomenology (2006) is, in this reader's readings, not anthropocentric and does engage with how bodies come to matter and how space, discourses and objects are oriented around some bodies more than others. While this inquiry does not put queer phenomenology to work, Ahmed's (2014a) conceptualizations of how privileged bodies is allowed to feel at home in rooms such as conversations or institutional frames while others are marked as noticed, strange, or in the way, and often must work to make others comfortable, are vital for addressing the affective forces of shared early care in this anthropo-situated, anti-anthropocentric inquiry.

Next, I outline the research apparatus with which I have worked. Thereafter follows a retelling of this inquiry's uncertain excavations of shared early care through arts-based intra-actions with conversations between parents and pedagogues.

The Research Apparatus

Despite the somewhat linear and orderly presentation in this paper, which is to say it with Juelskjær (2024, p. 148), "of course, a retelling that has pedagogical aims," I must note that the inquiry played out in a messier manner. Osgood's (2023) disruptions of established ideas about observation as a research methodology resonate well with how I found my researcher body, the research phenomenon, and this inquiry shaped by observations. According to Osgood (2023):

[O]bservations 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. (p. 39)

My first observations of these conversations between parents and their child's ECEC pedagogue did indeed etch the affective forces of parental love and bleeding for their child upon my body. I carried their open faces, sorrowed eyebrows, and glittering smiles everywhere. Furthermore, observations oriented me toward the lack of attention paid to care and shared early care in the literature on parent-pedagogue conversations. To add to this compound of transportation, these first observations orbited me to a time forgotten when I

taught what I at the time considered new, exciting perspectives on shared care to ECEC teacher students: care chains. These observational encounters also implanted in me an unease. I was intrigued, marked, and changed. However, these affective transportations left me with few words to address what had caught my interest. Therefore, I explored arts-based ways to entertain questions about shared early care.

Research apparatuses are not passive, neutral devices standing on a shelf waiting to serve a certain purpose and then set in place before the research happens (Barad, 2003, p. 816). Instead, they are productive, open-ended practices always open to the possibility of being changed in order “to work in a particular way for a particular purpose” (Barad, 2003, p. 817). While acknowledging the intellectual and creative efforts involved in such adjustments, Barad (2007) emphasized the following:

Apparatuses are not merely about us. And they are not merely assemblages that include nonhumans as well as humans. Rather, apparatuses are specific material reconfigurings of the world that do not merely emerge in time but iteratively reconfigure spacetime-matter as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming. (p. 142)

Thus, research apparatuses are not merely about researchers, participants, and carefully thought-through arrangements and rearrangements. Furthermore, apparatuses are not just about including nonhuman agencies such as the technologies, material regimes, viruses, spatial arrangements, and institutional frameworks of kindergartens and universities, which afforded and/or obstructed the apparatuses entangled with this inquiry. Rather, Barad (2003) underscores that research apparatuses produce agential cuts and, subsequently, ontological separations. An important premise here is that, to Barad (2007), there is no “outside” that positions researchers, parents, or pedagogues “above or outside the world we allegedly merely reflect on” (p. 133). Rather, Barad’s (2007) performative account “insists on understanding thinking, observing, and theorizing as practices of engagement with, and as part of, the world in which we have our being” (p. 133). Thus, as shared early care became my phenomenon of interest, a performative cut separating “shared early care” from other apparatuses, such as this research apparatus or specific parent–pedagogue conversation apparatuses, was made. Barad (2007) emphasizes that “the cut delineating the object from the agencies of observation is enacted rather than inherent” (p. 142). Thus, the agential cut separating shared early care from multiple other open-ended practices is not absolute; there is still intra-activity. However, the cut creates a local stabilization of “shared early care” and thus makes a part of the world “differentially intelligible to another part of the world in its differential accountability to or for that of which it is a part” (Barad, 2007, p. 342). Through the enacted cut wherein shared early care was made the phenomenon of interest, (temporary) entities such as “phenomena” vs. “apparatus,” “researcher” vs. “participant,” “data” vs. “parent–pedagogue conversations,” or

“care” vs., for instance, “promoting learning,” materialized and came to matter.

The point, however, is not to withhold from making agential cuts; that would be impossible. “The solution to the ‘measurement problem’ is recognizing that what is at stake is accountability to marks on bodies in their specificity by attending to how different cuts produce difference that matter” (Barad, 2007, p. 348). In other words, researchers should be held accountable for the differences produced by specific cuts in/through research. In this article I will pay more attention to how “shared early care” intra-act with and, thus, co-produce “parental care” than to other equally relevant open-ended apparatuses such as “parent–pedagogue conversations,” ECEC “professionalism,” “quality,” “early intervention,” and ECEC institutions as part of “the Norwegian welfare-state” and thereby co-responsible for a conglomerate of societal goals. Further agential cuts are performed, as I include some incidents from the “data” and leave others out in the retelling that constitute this article. Additionally, within the frame of agential realism, research questions are not detached from the world but part of it (Juelskjær, 2024). Hence, questions create separations. Thus, the questions and problematizations in this article are also worlding and performative in that they destabilize chain analogies and generate temporary answers and new questions (Juelskjær, 2024).

Research Material

In this study, I indebtedly draw upon the efforts and courage of 19 parents and 4 pedagogues from 3 kindergartens across Norway, who allowed me to video observe and record their *foreldresamtale*.⁴ In the Norwegian ECEC setting, *foreldresamtaler* are scheduled conversations between parents and their child’s ECEC pedagogue, usually arranged twice a year. The 14 conversations in question took place in April–June 2021 amid a global pandemic. Similar to so many other social encounters during the time of COVID-19, several conversations were moved online. I hosted and facilitated their conversations using the video-conferencing software Zoom. During their conversations, I turned off my camera and microphone to disturb as little as possible. This visual and audio self-muting was not grounded in purist ideas of untouched data. Rather, my reason for wanting to mute my presence was that the purpose of these conversations was not primarily to generate “research data” but for parents and pedagogues to have a chance to talk about their shared responsibilities for a child. Their conversations were particularly long-awaited due to cancelations and postponements of *foreldresamtaler* during the pandemic.

The research project was approved in 2020 by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (now

⁴ A direct translation to English would be parent conversation. For the purpose of this article, I have translated *foreldresamtale* to parent-pedagogue conversation.

renamed Sikt). Subsequently, pedagogues were recruited via contacts in kindergartens and ECEC teacher education programs. Thereafter, the pedagogues each recruited 3–4 families in their kindergarten units. The participants were given written and oral information about the project and the possibility of withdrawing from the study. All participants expressed their consent, and the recordings were stored in accordance with applicable rules and guidelines.

About half of the parents and pedagogues who participated in this project were migrant minorities. I did not ask for their migration stories. However, entanglements of migration arose within the context of their conversations. Parents talked about their family organization, with family members living in different countries, which led to less contact during COVID-19 due to travel restrictions. They also mentioned difficulties, as they had little family support while finding ways to manage both paid labor and reduced kindergarten opening hours. Additionally, parents spoke of facets of the Norwegian education system as unknown to them and of being familiar with ECEC institutions in countries in the eastern, southern, and western parts of Europe, southwestern and northern Asia, and North America. Pedagogues, on their part, inquired about bilingual children's language development at home. Thereby, entanglements of migration came to matter in this inquiry.

That noted, the agential cuts performed by persisting to “recruit” and “collect data” regardless of the pandemic, did exclude participants who were uncomfortable with online research and/or (even) more overwhelmed and overworked during COVID-19. During the pandemic, parents and pedagogues experienced increased stress and care burdens generated by the virus, pandemic policies, and less contact with friends and family outside their immediate households. It is therefore likely that these cuts produced differences that matter (Barad, 2007), such as limiting the “enhancement of perspectives” aimed for in this inquiry.

Combining Arts-Based Research and Agential Realism

The abovementioned observational marks and transportations prompted two challenges that this research apparatus was adjusted to overcome. The first challenge is related to the sketched issue, with the chain analogy rooted in ideas of ontological separateness. The research apparatus was adjusted to overcome this issue by making an ontological shift toward agential realism, especially by employing Barad's (2007) concept of *intra-action*. Changing the inquiry's ontological premise changes the agential cuts through which the phenomenon is carved out, or what Jornet and Damşa (2021) prefer to call the unit of analysis. According to Jornet and Damşa (2021), “units are ‘the limit’ precisely in that they open for new inquiries” (p. 9). Hence, agential realism opens up other conceptualizations of shared early care than those facilitated by other ontologies. With agential realism, it becomes possible to ponder how shared early care can be conceptualized if there is no outside or above “shared early care,” which positions parents as merely reflecting on, organizing, monitoring, and maintaining care

communities for one's child.

The second challenge was related to the power granted to language in the research apparatus. As noted in the introduction, I initially found myself unable to address through words how these research encounters etched upon my body mattered. Furthermore, the language-centered transcription methods this project was initially rigged for turned out to be unfruitful with regard to addressing the abovementioned observational marks and transportations. Instead, distilling these observations by transcription generated an agential cut that silenced more than verbal presence and effort.⁵ So, I turned to arts-based research (ABR).

The play between ABR and agential realism is not friction-free⁶; however, according to Rosiek (2018), agential realism “is particularly well suited for understanding arts based research” (p. 32). Agential realism “takes account of the fact that the forces at work in the materialization of bodies are not only social, and the bodies produced are not all human” (Barad, 2007, pp. 33–34). In other words, agential realism holds space for how, in this inquiry, ABR by painting is an open-ended activity that involves pigments, paper, binders, brushes, temperature, water, affects, and access to space, time, and materials. Within this line of thinking, materials are not merely tools; rather, they respond (Vega et al., 2023). Pigments separate from the mix and move. Water evaporates. Temperatures make finger joints stiffer/softer and affect the speed at which the paint dries. Moreover, it is central to this inquiry that ABR expands Barad's (2007) questioning of the “excessive power granted to language to determine what is real” (p. 133). According to ABR thinkers Barone and Eisner (2012), the dominant idea that research is necessarily formulated in words comes with a prize of neglect of what is then omitted. This call for response-ability toward what Juelskjær (2024) coined as “what is a-voided” and “the violence of the void” joins forces with ABR through “an opening of spaces for response-ability in the manner of re-doing the conditions of possibility of avoidance” (p. 156–157). Thus, infusing research apparatuses with more than verbal techniques is one way of re-doing the conditions for conceptualizing shared early care.

The definitions and practices of ABR are multiple and diverse. My interest in this specific inquiry lies in what the act of painting can do. In this piece, painting with acrylics on paper became an ABR practice for affective, material, sensorial intra-actions with “data” as I returned to the video recordings to “entertain questions [...] that might have otherwise been left unasked” (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p. 96). Turning to ABR was driven by a desire to

⁵ For readers interested, I have elaborated this problem with language-centered methods elsewhere (Angell, 2023)

⁶ An in-depth discussion on the issue can be found in Rosiek (2018).

sensitize my body so that I may notice more, rethink, and articulate these encounters—what Manning (2016) refers to as the force of *what else* or what Nancy (2019) depicts as the potential “to go beyond all that is given” (p. 11). In this way the act of painting became “a synergistic process of knowledge creation in which *thinking* [...] is socially and materially constituted and [...] operationalized by bringing things forth into being,” what Vega (2021) calls “distributed thinking through making” (p. 271). According to Vega et al. (2023), thinking and making constitute simultaneous and mutually supportive processes of the same practical activity. In this inquiry, the practical activity of thinking/painting intra-acts with the practical activity of thinking/writing. Arguably, the main distinction between the two is that painting deploys a more nonverbal and intuitive affective mode of thinking through attentive engagement with artistic materials. Still, this agential cut separating thinking/painting and thinking/writing is merely a local temporary stabilization. With agential realism, there is no definite limit where apparatuses end (Barad, 2007); thus, thinking/writing vibrated while painting/thinking, and vice versa.

Doing ABR is, of course, not the same as “ending up” with a piece of art. Rather, the practice of painting facilitates what Barone and Eisner (2006) described as transmutations of embodied, affective forces in research encounters into aesthetic forms. ABR involves efforts rooted in aesthetic considerations “that, when it is at its best, culminates in the creation of something close to a work of art” (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 11). Consequently, the three paintings included in this piece (figures 1, 2, and 3) are not to be understood as representations, nor are they merely illustrating the words in the piece. Instead, the paintings are to be read as multiplicities of sensations generated through artmaking (Grosz, 2019) and traces from thinking “in the act” (Springgay, 2022, p. 17) with hopes of agitating problematizations that allow these research encounters to matter beyond their specific ECEC contexts. Painting takes time, and these hours and hours of painting honed time and space to remember observations, spark mental images of human and more-than-human care relations, and previously read research and philosophy. Over time, these sparks grew into the conceptual framework on matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), affective forces, and atmosphere work (Ahmed, 2014a).

Matters of Care and Atmosphere

I was initially drawn to Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) contributions to care studies because it comprised both human and more than human relations and thus embraced some of the elements I first noticed while observing conversations between parents and pedagogues. Their conversations were entangled with generative forces such as a pandemic virus, migration routes, internet connections, institutional frames, and paper sheets with notes and schedules for their conversations. Thinking with Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p. 160), care is a personal-collective issue comprising care in human and more than human relations. Hence, caring for a

child is “doing a job for the collective, not only her/his ‘self’ perpetuation nor that of ‘one’ family.” Instead, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) understands care collectives as “contingent naturecultural relational webs of life and death composed of multilateral interdependencies” (p. 160). This anti-anthropocentric move “intensifies awareness on how beings depend on each other” and creates space for exploring shared early care not as a moral principle or duty but as “something that traverses, that is passed on through entities and agencies” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 161).

Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) frees care from its anthropocentric limitations by bringing together Tronto’s (1993) influential feminist notion of care and post-humanist thinking on more than human communities, and defines care as “everything that is done (rather than everything that ‘we’ do) to maintain, continue, and repair ‘the world’ so that all (rather than ‘we’) can live in it as well as possible” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 161). In this move, Puig de la Bellacasa maintains the feminist insight that the cost of such care work is not equally distributed. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) also points out that “care’s unescapable importance makes it vulnerable to become a powerful vehicle of normative moralization” (p. 12). From this onset, it becomes possible to ask further questions about shared early care as labor with ethical and affective implications. Such questioning involves recognizing that “power circulates through care in divergent ways, and that a politics of care must be shifted from seeing care as inherently affirmative and humanistic to something uncomfortable, non-innocent, and complex” (Springgay, 2022, p. 144). For that purpose, I find Ahmed’s contributions to affect studies fruitful.

Thinking with Ahmed (2010), affects are “what sticks” and involve an orientation toward something (p. 29). They are, to say it with Braidotti and Hlavajova (2018), “to be understood as transversal, nonhuman forces that need to be assessed in terms of their impact on subjects and on the world” (p. 221). Initially, being affected oriented my attention toward shared early care. More specifically, this affectedness was related to feelings of awe about the multilateral interdependencies of care (e.g., Chatzidakis et al., 2020; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and the wonders of parental care (e.g., Angell, 2023) but also with an unease. Throughout this inquiry, such affective unease was sparked by incidents in parent–pedagogue conversations which reminded me of three different lines of previous research: First, publications portraying parent–pedagogue conversations as characterized by a warm, informal, or relaxed “atmosphere,” without much problematization of what atmospheres might be or do (e.g., Bakken & Flaten, 2021; Myrann, 2021; Sand, 2014). The second is research on parenthood within the institutional framework of ECEC. One example is Ramaekers (2014) who studied parenting support and pointed out an unease with the predominant presumption that “parenting cannot do without some form of expertise” (p. 1192). Another example is Cannella (1997), who meticulously deconstructed the “assumption that early experience in one way or

the other determines the life of the individual” (p. 65). Through that endeavor, Cannella (1997) demonstrates that the dominant assumption on early experience generates judgment and moralization of children and their families—especially mothers.

The third strand of research publications that my observational unease reminded me of, was publications from Norwegian educational settings, which forefront compilations of equality, unity, and an “imagined sameness” wherein “sameness is seen as a precondition for equality among the citizenry, and difference is seen as a threat” (Eriksen & Stein, 2022, p. 217). This body of research addresses how education policies and practices contribute to a concealment of difference, for instance, regarding religion (Iversen, 2022), race/racism (Andersen, 2015), and the Norwegian education system’s history of contributing extensively to the cultural assimilation of migrant and indigenous minorities (e.g., Andersen & Otterstad, 2014; Angell-Jacobsen & Becher, 2007; Seeberg, 2003). Migration changes the conditions of parental care and sparks encounters between different discourses on childhood and parenting practices (Lidén, 2017). However, it is noteworthy that entanglements of migration in this study are not thought of as something that the liberal individual is assumed to carry or be locked into (e.g., Sadownik & Višnjić Jevtić, 2023). Thinking with Barad (2018, p. 176), the differences within difference matters, and relations such as minority vs. majority are understood as differences-in-the-making.

In this inquiry, Ahmed’s concepts of affective containers and atmosphere work will be employed to elaborate on insights from these three strands of research. According to Ahmed (2014b), “rooms” such as kindergartens, shared early care, or conversations can be understood as affective containers that are shaped by being oriented around some bodies more than others. Through affective containers, some bodies are deemed familiar, while other bodies’ arrival is noticeable or strange. “Those who do not sink into spaces” Ahmed (2014a) writes, “whose bodies are registered as not fitting, often have to work to make others comfortable” (p. 224). This work of making others comfortable constitutes atmosphere work, which will be elaborated on further in the subsequent sections comprising the retelling of this inquiry’s uncertain excavations of shared early care.



Figure 1. “C(h)ords of Care” by Mona-Lisa Angell, 2023.
Acrylics on cotton paper. 56 x 76 cm

Composition Matter(s)

We have arrived at the uncertain excavations of shared early care through arts-based interactions with video-observed conversations between parents and pedagogues. In her book *Chaos, territory, art : Deleuze and the framing of the earth*, Grosz (2019, p. 8) notes that artmaking approaches problems by creating sensations, affects, and intensities, and that sometimes these connect to concepts, which are philosophy's ways of addressing problems. During this inquiry, such cross pollination grew between the act of painting and conceptualizing the entities and agencies that shared early care traverses and is passed on through. From this connection, I began to think of shared early care as *C(h)ords of care* wherein cords and chords are entangled. In the following sections, the unfolding is composed around three key considerations: composition matter(s), atmosphere matter(s), and life-sustaining matter(s). However, these three considerations are not the architecture of a neatly once-and-for-all-defined concept. Rather, they are retellings of emerging connections between shared early care and the aesthetic considerations of this ABR process.

In visual arts, compositions are traditionally thought of as arrangements of elements such as lines, figures, shapes, colors, and hues creating a whole that is “structured in such a way that the configuration of forces reflects the meaning of the artistic statement” (Arnheim, 1983, pp. 215–216). Principles of composition, including the relations among repetition, balance, rhythm, opposition, transition, and subordination, are used, stretched, or broken to articulate the statement (Robertson & McDaniel, 2000). Thinking with agential realism (Barad, 2007), however, composing becomes more than organizing a picture plane, statement, or care chain: Compositions become world-generating apparatuses that intra-act with other apparatuses. Thus, compositions are as much about dissolving and de-territorializing, as they are about carving out phenomena or statements.

Creating the compositions of the paintings in this article was performative enactments; supporting and supported by the process of explorative thinking about the iterative path-making involved in shared early care. I first became aware of drawing variations of path-making compositions when I walked away from my desk and into the woods one day. I have walked those forest trails along the coast of Larkollen in Southeast Norway numerous times before. I know them well enough to imagine large parts of the web of paths beyond the ones before my eyes. My body yearns for the sound to come as I approach the areas of the woods where the blackbirds sing. Yet, at the same time, everything is new. This newness might be subtle, like leaves on the ground having dried up slightly. It might be surprising and rare, like an owl looking at you from one of the top branches of a birch. It might bring wonder, like a stick with intricate outgrowths unlikely to have fallen from any of the nearby trees. Who treasured it and carried it here? As I walked those well-worn pathways bursting with frustration at the im/possibilities of writing, thought images of compositions came to me: I

was walking/drawing compositions for paintings-to-come.

Path-making became the composition matter so that the paintings could connect to care as a doing. Thinking with Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), relationships of care are necessary for anything to function, human or nonhuman. With this line of thinking, care is considered “a concrete work of maintenance, with ethical and affective implications”—a necessary life-sustaining practice that contributes to an “as well as possible” or plainly gets us through the day (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 5). Doing the ground layers of the paintings in figure 1, 2, and 3 sparks off their compositions. My work begins by taping cotton paper onto a wooden plate and spraying it with water. Then, after the water has been partially absorbed by the paper, layer by layer of pigment is added to the surface by following the compositional pathways repeatedly, yet differently.

I paint carrying the glittering smiles of Jakub’s parents, who say it is just the best thing to hear that he is happy.⁷ Jakub’s mom and dad speak of how impressed they are with the kindergarten. When they come to pick up their child in the afternoon, this one pedagogue always remembers what and how much he ate that day. Read through the care chain analogy, keeping an eye on what their son eats when he is at kindergarten and noticing whether the pedagogue too cares about him eating, could be conceptualized as parents reading signs of care. Sign-reading, in this sense, is a way of figuring out whether everything is as it ought to be (Andenæs & Haavind, 2017), a reading that is “part of the running wheel of noticing and responding to another’s needs” (Thorne, 2001, p. 369). However, there is more. Jakub’s parents praise the staff for their patience with the children. “You are amazing. We are so grateful,” this father and mother say repeatedly. Not all parents do this explicit gratitude work, and I wonder what it might be and am curious about what it does. So, I think with care as a concrete work of maintenance (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) and paint iterative path-making with parents who sprinkle their trails with smiles and gratitude.

Then, I paint carrying the smile of another mother who, at the very end of their conversation, asks the pedagogue, “May I show you my baby?”. With a big smile, she lifts her infant toward the Zoom camera. Her movement reminds me of other babies lifted in a similar manner—children in baptisms lifted toward the congregation as a priest announces that this child is now a part of their community. These observations transported me to pre-COVID times, and I recall infants who used to come into the cloakroom with their parents in the mornings as their older sibling arrived at kindergarten. This often became quite an event, as the baby was greeted by children and staff. However, during periods with COVID restrictions, family

⁷ All names are pseudonyms.

members were not allowed into the building. Hence, I paint path-making with babies yet to be welcomed. I paint pathways and think of borders around kindergartens and nations, and parents hindered from letting their babies make kin.

Next, I paint path-making compositions with Gabriel's mother, who is about to guide her child across the threshold to primary school. Gabriel's mother questions how all the COVID-canceled activities will affect the children, particularly the activities meant to familiarize children with their new school. She says Gabriel does not know much about what it is like in Norwegian schools, and, as she grew up in Southeastern Europe, neither does she. "I don't really know the routines and such. I don't know. So..." she says. The pedagogue says the children will probably be allowed to visit the schoolyard, but Gabriel's mom persists: "It's not the building I am talking about." Therefore, I paint iterative path-making with parents who are unfamiliar with the paths they must send their child out to create. I paint with shared early care pushed from "sharedness"—from insider knowingness—by entanglements of migration, a virus, ever-changing pandemic policies, and institutional frames. I paint with entanglements of migration and think of how they magnify the daunting task of all parents: caring for children who live and shall live in worlds unfamiliar to us. After all, children are, as Murphy and Dyer (2021) point out, "not incubators for the adult's desired futures or simply successors to the adult's failures, but often aspiring to usher in a world not yet recognizable to us" (p. 245).

Atmosphere Matter(s)

While creating the color atmospheres of the paintings in this piece, I thought of the affective intensities and flows involved in shared early care. In visual arts, colors are considered a tremendous force that connects to emotions, moods, and other events (Robertson & McDaniel, 2000). In this study, I worked with color and light, hue, value, and saturation, and through painting/thinking, the connection between color atmospheres and the affective intensities and flows in shared early care grew. Through the act of painting, I have associated the ambivalences and ambiguities of these affective forces with both fertility and the slightly rotten smell of moist dirt and with blood and flesh as matters of bleeding and life.

Color atmospheres of paintings (Hwang, 2018) and social emotions (Ahmed, 2014b) are situated, but work in resembling ways as they spread and affect bodies open to attune. However, thinking with Ahmed (2010), bodies do not arrive in neutral:

So we may walk into the room and "feel the atmosphere," but what we may feel depends on the angle of our arrival. Or we might say that the atmosphere is already angled; it is always felt from a specific point. (p. 37)

In other words, neither the parent-, pedagogue-, researcher-, or reader-body arrives at these encounters in neutral. We all come with our worlds (Haraway, 2018), always already in an affective situation (Ahmed, 2010). Painting allows more than verbal forces to come to the fore. Supported by the process of making, I have come to think of the affective and atmospheric forces set in motion in/through shared early care as *chords of care*. I borrow the word ‘chords’—with an *h*—from music where it denotes “three or more single pitches heard simultaneously” (Britannica, n.d.). While painting, I imagine strings on a guitar struck, chords spreading through bodies and air, setting the mood. Then, I imagine strings inside a body pulled, as shared early care also involves evaluating each other’s ways of caring—evaluations that may bring joy, surplus, or bleeding. Thus, thinking/painting with chords connected shared early care to atmosphere work.

From that connection, I mix colors while carrying the face of Lorenzo’s mom as the pedagogue begins a story. It was a day when Lorenzo had been “very restless, all day he was... well, it was a lot,” the pedagogue said. Due to his behavior, the pedagogue warned Lorenzo that she would talk to his parents if he did not do better. “But he was clearly overly tired,” she said. “One could see it.” When Lorenzo’s dad came to take him home that afternoon and asked the pedagogue about their day, she said Lorenzo seemed overly tired. According to Lorenzo’s pedagogue, his father then told her that he and Lorenzo had played football for two hours the previous day. “But the children were on a hike almost all day yesterday!” the pedagogue shouted laughingly. “Yes, I know, I know, I know.” Lorenzo’s dad had said. “Sorry, sorry.” The pedagogue laughed again and said to Lorenzo’s mom, “When he’s on a hike all day, or for hours, he must not do anything more when he gets home. He must relax, because it affects his sleep and then he is still tired the next day.” During this story, Lorenzo’s mom did not say a word. So, I mix and spread colors as I think of how she laughed intensively when the pedagogue laughed and immediately stopped smiling when the pedagogue stopped. I paint chords of care with Lorenzo’s mom’s attunement to laughter, with the intimacy of shared laughter (Ahmed, 2014b) and with my own discomfort. I do not find the situation cheerful.

While painting, my thoughts wander to Ahmed (2014b) who underscores that one can be caught by laughter, even before one knows its object. To stop laughing would then imply becoming affectively out of tune with others. I wonder how this mother feels about the object of this laughter. How their ways of doing family become secondary to the activities at kindergarten. How their parental care is noticed—not fitting, in the way. As previously sketched, according to Ahmed (2014b), “rooms” such as “shared early care” are affective containers that are shaped by being oriented around some bodies more than others. Thus, some bodies are deemed familiar, while others’ arrivals are noticeable or strange, which requires some bodies to work harder to make others comfortable. This *not with* implies that

attunement requires emotional labor and atmosphere work (Ahmed, 2014a), such as carrying out explicit gratitude work and staying affectively in tune with pedagogues.

The atmosphere work of this shared early care also comprises parents receiving unsought instructions on ways of doing family. As I paint, several brief moments from other parent–pedagogue conversations gather like a shoal of fish and swim back and forth in me: pedagogues noting that the hours a child spends in kindergarten does not exceed what the pedagogue deems “too much”; parents getting credit for well performed good-bye rituals; parents being praised for always smiling to and greeting everyone when they come to pick up their child in the afternoon; and pedagogues saying that the content in a child’s lunchbox is “very good” or should be changed. What did these evaluations and advice generate? What withered? What was a-voided through the agencies of advice, evaluation, and instruction?

Supported by the act of painting, I think of parents who do not speak of their families’ “as well as possible” and who, thus, do not disturb an imagined sameness (jfr. Eriksen & Stein, 2022). I think of the oddity of Norwegian lunchboxes and how they orient the borders, deciding whose bodies are strangers or familiar. Furthermore, if differences are seen as a threat, differences regarding socioeconomic objects, such as lunchboxes and nutritives, become something to be avoided. While painting, my thoughts wander beyond appealing but oversimplified individual models regarding parental knowledge, practices, and cultural repertoires when it comes to children and food. I come to think of Lamont et al. (2017), who underlines that parents’ financial situation co-varies with how early they introduce new types of food to their children. Indeed, it is a privilege to have the economic means to put food in your child’s lunchbox that they may not want to eat. What else is never spoken as imagined sameness is sustained? Haunted by Lorenzo’s mother’s face, her shoulders too, I watch the color pigments make their own ways along strands of water. Blue pigments separate from the green mix—sink and add new layers to the atmosphere.



Figure 2. “Your love was sent to me” by Mona-Lisa Angell, 2023.
Acrylics on cotton paper. 56 x 76 cm

Through the act of mixing colors, the thoughts of parents staying affectively in tune with pedagogues connect to the ontological overlaps of care, help, and paternalism—the non-innocence of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Thinking through making spurs memories of research publications addressing how pastoralism materializes in the form of pedagogues giving unsought advice, evaluations, and instructions regarding parents’, especially minoritized parents’, ways of caring for their children (e.g., Ahmed, 2022; Dannesboe et al., 2018; Gulløv & Kampmann, 2021). A study within the context of Norwegian ECEC shows how young Norwegian–Somali parents perform ethnicity in kindergarten to avoid reports to Child Welfare Services:

Dropping off one’s child in the morning, especially in kindergartens, becomes almost an art form. The ‘art’ involves meticulous preparation of both children’s appearance (e.g. clothing, food) and their own behavior vis-à-vis teachers and other personnel. It also involves choosing weekend and leisure activities that portray middle-class

identity. (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021, p. 470)

Sometimes, there is more at stake in the atmosphere work of these affective containers than the slight uncomfortableness of being out of tune with your child's pedagogue. In a Danish study, Dannesboe et al. (2018) connected pedagogues giving unsought advice, evaluations, and instructions to parents being held accountable for not only their "children's lives at home, but also for ensuring that ECEC personnel have the best possible opportunity to support children's development at ECEC institutions" (p. 467). Furthermore, they found that this practice positioned pedagogues as parenting experts (Dannesboe et al., 2018). When parents are positioned as both reliant on counseling from and responsible for supporting the work of pedagogues, alternative perspectives on the im/possibilities of shared early care are a-voided.

Life-Sustaining Matter(s)

*Through the warmthest cord of care
Your love was sent to me
I don't know what to do with it
or where to put it
(Björk, 2001)*

The cords and lines—the binding matter—of the paintings (figures 1, 2, and 3) of this inquiry call attention to the life-sustaining labor and affections involved in shared early care. I borrow the notion of *cords* without the *h* from the artist Björk (2001). Cords allow me to intensify awareness of the entities and agencies that care traverses along or is passed on through (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 161). I paint leaf veins, umbilical cords, roots and shoots, blood vessels, synopsis, organs, stretching ligaments, and the distributary network of river deltas. I paint so they might connect with shared early care as the interweaving of living things, a worlding that underscores, overscores, and rescores—to say it with Stewart (2010). Painting cords of care is not about returning parental care to the mother-child dyad, the womb, round ligament pain, or the umbilical cord. However, I do think of these visual elements as an homage to all life-creating and life-sustaining labor and affection, including mother bodies such as the earth herself.

As I continue to paint cords of care, Marie's mother "tugs my sleeve" (Fels, 2012). At the beginning of their conversation, the pedagogue says she has written on a conversation schedule she forgot to send to Marie's parents that "*det går bra*" (*it's going well*). The pedagogue's statement responds to a question on the schedule: "*Hvordan går det?*" (*How is it going?*). Marie's mother laughs low-voiced and says, "It's going well. Okey." The pedagogue joins the laughter, and says once more, "Yes, it's going well." The laughter fades, and Marie's

mom asks quietly, “I’m sure we will come back to this, but, like, what is the main reason that you wrote ‘it’s going well’?” “Mhm,” Marie’s pedagogue replies. “Yes. Like, do you have it?” Marie’s mom continues. The pedagogue says, “Oh, yes, becau... yes, the main reason it’s going well?” “Yes,” Marie’s mother answers. “Yes, I will kind of come back to it,” Marie’s pedagogue confirms and re-oriens her gaze toward her notes. With the pedagogue’s notes on the conversation schedule as a point of departure that determines the thematic structure of their conversation, they go on to speak of Marie. They speak of how she has been scared in kindergarten—scared of a child, a set of stairs, and the pedagogue, too. Then, Marie’s mother and pedagogue orient toward how, recently, things seem to have changed for the better for Marie.



Figure 3. “Life-sustaining matter(s)”. Mona-Lisa Angell, 2023. Acrylics, ink, and coffee on cotton paper. 56 x 76 cm

Thinking with care chains, this mother’s inquiries may be read as caring from a distance. Similar to Gabriel’s mom, who insisted she and Gabriel needed more information about

primary school, Marie's mother does not immediately settle with the pedagogue's statement "it's going well." Such questioning may be read as monitoring care chains (Andenæs, 2011) and making sure that the lack of specificity is not covering up that a child goes unnoticed in kindergarten. However, Marie's mother's inquiries also call attention to the *with* or *not with* of their shared early care. Thinking with Ahmed (2010), Marie's mother and pedagogue arrive at the room at specific angles. The pedagogue arrives with a conversation schedule, one she forgot to share with Marie's mother. Initially, the pedagogue treats the opening question on the schedule as a question for her to answer. Additionally, she arrives with notes. Marie's mother, on the other hand, arrives without the agenda for their conversation and without access to the pedagogue's notes on Marie. She arrives as someone one can forget to inform about the agenda of their scheduled meeting. Furthermore, she is not included in this initial assessment of her child's status quo. Power speaks here in this moment. Nonetheless, Marie's mother arrives this room from an angle where the importance of her questions has the capacity to outweigh the risks that come with becoming affectively out of tune with her child's pedagogue—at least for a few seconds.

I continue to paint life-sustaining binding matter. This act transports my attention to Nora's mother, who speaks of Nora's crying when she leaves her at kindergarten to go to work. Nora's mother says she used to think the crying was related to whom among the personell was there to welcome Nora, but she now figures this might not be the case after all. "The crying" happens only some days, and Nora's mom says she tries to fend it by preparing Nora for what's to come. "But she is a bit 'mommy-seeking' (*mammaete*). In the mornings it's always a bit 'my tummy hurts,' and 'I don't want to go to kindergarten,' so maybe it's more about detaching from me," she says. The pedagogue tells her that the crying and the asking for Mommy does not last as long as it used to and that Nora really seems to like waving good-bye through the window. "Then she gets to do a proper farewell and see that you leave. She asks... She has asked for you a lot," Nora's pedagogue says. "Yes, I do find it quite a difficult process," Nora's mom says. "So, I have left and been a bit like 'uff.' You know – knot in my stomach. But it will become okey... for both of us... I think." "Do you want us to text you when she stops crying?" the pedagogue asks. "No, I know that the crying stops right away, so in that sense it's fine. It's just that face," Nora's mother says. "Yes, I understand, it's kind of the last thing you see, that she cries," her pedagogue says.

Care can be devouring emotional labor as hauntings from a beloved face ask to be carried and repaired. So, I paint in a state of awe of connectedness and interdependencies. Such interdependencies, Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) writes, is "the ontological state in which humans and countless other beings unavoidably live, despite the aversion to 'dependency' in modern industrial societies" (p. 4). Everything is not connected to everything (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), but this mother's well-being is connected to her daughters' well-being

because she cares. Thinking with Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), care is an affective force, associated with “I care,” as in “love, the recognition that something is important, as well as responsibility and somehow ‘concern’ for another’s well-being” (p. 162). However, as these retellings from parent–pedagogue conversations call to attention, care should not be equated to positive feelings. To care also involves “to be troubled, worried, sorrowed, uneasy, and unsettled” (Murphy, 2015, p. 5). So, I paint care-traversing matter with the imprint in me from parental bodies arrival in affective containers vibrating with the im/possibilities of getting to know and speak of their child’s and family’s “as well as possible.”

Towards C(h)ords of Care

The aim of this inquiry was to expand perspectives on shared early care by generating new questions, concepts, and problematizations. Throughout this piece, I have argued that there is more to shared early care beyond the (good or bad) intentions of parents and pedagogues. There is also the more-than-verbal realm of affective forces, entanglements of migration, and atmosphere work through which shared early care is relationally produced. The conceptual move in this article was supported by a research apparatus combining ABR, agential realism, Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) contributions to care studies, and Ahmed’s (2014a) contributions to affect studies. This allowed video observations of conversations between parents and pedagogues to be rethought through painting/thinking, affect theory, and feminist conceptions of care relations as more than human-social affairs. The inquiry sparked *c(h)ords of care*, a concept that agitates problematizations and thereby allows this research to matter beyond its specific ECEC context.

C(h)ords of care comprise emerging and relationally co-produced cords and chords. The cords and lines—the binding matter—of c(h)ords of care draw attention to shared early care as iterative path-making. In the paintings, life-sustaining cords such as leaf veins, umbilical cords, and the distributary network of river deltas forefront how beings depend on each other and thereby also the potential surplus and bleeding of shared early care. Cords may be in/visible, robust, fragile, transformative, broken, or lush, and they may grow, wither, fasten, invigorate, or pacify, but they are always emergent. Thus, cords hold space for shared early care as open-ended practices comprising entities and agencies such as affections, questions, viruses, policies, text messages when a child stops crying, smiles, windows to wave good-bye through, conversation schedules, spatial arrangements, institutional frameworks, material regimes, and the routes and sticklebacks of discourses, migration, imagined sameness, hopes, and hauntings. Furthermore, the cords in c(h)ords of care attend to shared early care as iterative path-making while being inextricably fused together with these paths-in-the-making. Everything is not connected to everything, but everything is connected to something (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). Hence, sometimes shared early care involves bursting into glittering smiles when told that your child is happy, going to work with a knot in your stomach, and

stomaching the daunting task of being unfamiliar with the paths you must send your child out to create.

Cords touch and are touched and, thus, create chords that spread throughout the room and set the atmosphere. In/through the atmosphere of these rooms—or affective containers, to say it with Ahmed (2014a)—cords change. I borrow the word “chords”—with an *h*—from music. Through the act of painting, chords are connected with shared early care by considering how musical chords, color atmospheres, and affective forces work in similar ways as they spread and affect bodies open to attune. The chords of shared early care trouble how differences-in-the-(re)making come to matter in/through practices of shared early care and thus problematize how power circulates through care. Through differences-in-the-(re)making, affective containers are shaped by being oriented around some bodies more than others. Thus, some bodies, both human and nonhuman (i.e., lunchboxes and the hours a child spends in kindergarten), are deemed familiar, while other bodies’ arrivals are noticeable, strange, or in the way. This requires some bodies to work harder to make others comfortable. From this onset, the chords of c(h)ords of care raise questions that problematize how atmosphere work is unequally distributed in shared early care. Furthermore, c(h)ords of care trouble the so-called warm, unformal, or relaxed atmospheres in parent–pedagogue conversations. They may also be conceptualized as atmosphere work in affective containers where (imagined) sameness is the ticket to sink affectively into the room. For some parents, shared early care comprises staying affectively in tune with pedagogues through explicit gratitude work, accepting uninvited advice, evaluations, instructions, and laughter about one’s ways of doing family. Consequently, c(h)ords of care call for problematizations of the ontological overlaps of care, help, and paternalism involved in shared early care.

Shared early care is of vital concern, and there is more work to be done to unravel what it does. In this article, I have paid more attention to how shared early care co-produces parental care than to other equally relevant practices. Hence, more research is needed to allow for shared early care to be thought of as processes entangled and mutually co-produced with other open-ended practices such as parent–pedagogue conversations, professionalism, pedagogy, and ECEC institutions as part of nations, municipalities, and (welfare-)states and thereby co-responsible for a conglomerate of societal goals. Additionally, methodologies and ontological frameworks matters. This arts-based agential realist research apparatus is unsuited to mediate the perspectives or voices of parents and pedagogues. It does not describe, explain, predict, or solve the problems of shared early care. Instead, this inquiry offers a researcher’s retelling of observational research encounters etched upon a researcher body and the researcher’s visual arts-based engagements with video-observations and theory. This apparatus took those observational marks “beyond the specific early childhood context” and, thus, allowed shared early care “to be thought of as processes that are worldly and confederate” (Osgood, 2023, p.

39). Thereby, this inquiry allowed for the more-than-verbal realm of affective forces, entanglements of migration, and atmosphere-work to come to the fore and for C(h)ords of Care to be created as a concept that problematizes and propels further thought on shared early care.

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