Freedom is not simply something that can be stood outside of and decided upon in terms of freedom to or freedom from. Freedom is fluid, dynamic, and ecological, existing where, in the volatility and unpredictability of the act, difference can be made. In the practice of experience making that Stewart\(^1\) refers to as “worlding,” there exists the processually differentiating capacity to bring to life encounters and events in which the energy of the future lies in the speculative force and living potential of the always not yet known. Autoethnographies are not to be considered epistemological groundings that assert what they mean, or to state what they are or might be in some metaphysics of the future. Working instead with “futurity,” autoethnographic doing is at the forefront, present in the possibilities of the more-than and the always new possibilities that might be just around the corner. The future is never fixed and always lives within the unexpected not-yetness of each new encounter. In the constant processualism of practice, there is a need “to be willing to surprise yourself writing things you didn’t think you thought. Letting examples burgeon requires using inattention as a writing tool.”\(^2\)

In these first processual steps there is a sensing of Haraway’s advice about “staying with the trouble.” She asks, “What must be cut and what must be tied if multispecies flourishing on earth, including human and other-than-human beings in kinship, are to have a chance?”\(^3\) Haraway indicates that within “the bonds of the Anthropocene and (the) Capitalocene\(^4\)” we live in worlds that are dominated by the ethics, values, and practices of neoliberalism. The ways of institutionally organizing economic, social, and cultural behaviors and practices constructed to support this involve highly individualized and forcibly individualizing forms of doing and making ways in the world that have become characterized predominantly by practices of self-making—what she calls “autoopoiesis.” Autopoietic systems act as “self-producing autonomous units with self defined spatial and temporal boundaries that tend to be centrally controlled, homeostatic, and predictable.”\(^5\) Therefore, our inquiries, our ways of doing, and our ways of living in the world can also described, again through the use of Stewart’s term, as “worlding,” and need to be addressed through wholly different ways of being. The self-making, individualizing, and
self-producing forces of “autopoiesis,” therefore, need to be challenged, replaced or, at the very least, ameliorated by, what Haraway terms “sympoiesis.” She cites “sympoiesis” as “collectively-producing systems that do not have self-defined spatial boundaries. Information and control are distributed among components. The systems are evolutionary and have the potential for surprising change.” Ways of doing in the world do not simply involve ways of “self-making” but are more concerned with bringing about sympoietic ways of “making with.” As Haraway says, “Staying with the trouble requires making ‘oddkin’[—]that is, we require each other in unexpected collaborations and combinations, in hot compost piles. Affectively, we become-with each other or not at all.”

Again, with relevance to the processual dynamism of futurity, Deleuze argues that we are in “situations which we no longer know how to react, in spaces which we no longer know how to describe.” Therefore, if “the phenomenological hypothesis is perhaps insufficient because it merely invokes the lived body,” this indicates that autoethnographic practice and inquiry in futurity need to break free from, what Haraway describes as the “self-producing” and “self-defining” autopoietic features that might have characterized some of its practices in the past. Whilst autoethnographies need to continue to work “as a process of collaboration-with other scholars as well as with the persons we love, work with, and study,” they also need to engage in forms of “theorising as practice” and more than simply human modes of activity. Significantly, St. Pierre’s post-qualitative approach to inquiry encourages “concrete practical experimentation and the creation of the not yet instead of the repetition of what is.” Therefore, autoethnographic practices need to pay cognizance to Deleuze and Guattari’s claim that “concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies . . . They must be invented, fabricated, or rather, created, and would be nothing without the creator’s signature.” “Theorising as practice” and concept making as inquiry must also be animate in encouraging autoethnographers to engage in practices in which each new concept is an event. Sensing with Manning that there is “always more than one,” it is therefore clear that the smallest unit is not the simply human body; it is the assemblage of multiple human and nonhuman singularities that, contingently and heterogeneously, are constantly in becoming. Massumi has succinctly described this as “creative-relationally more-than human.” Bennett provides a graphic illustration of the ways in which coming to terms with the smallest unit as the assemblage and not the autonomous individual of neoliberalism and Cartesian rationalist thinking when she talks about her writing practices in the following way:

The sentences of this book . . . emerged from the confederate agency of many striving macro and microactants: from “my” memories, intentions, contentions, intestinal bacteria, eyeglasses, and blood sugar, as well as from the plastic computer keyboard, the bird song from the open window, or the air or the particulates in the room . . .

This exemplification offers a clear way forward in helping to engage with the event/ful/ness of concept making, not as a simply human activity, but one that is, in Haraway’s terms, “sympoietic” in the making with human and nonhuman others and that is also actively attentive to continual movements and moments in futurity. Bennett describes here an “agentic assemblage” of “in-formings” and comings together, clearly illustrating
the operation of collective collaborating forces beyond the individual of human-centric
and phenomenological thought. The “thing power” present in Bennett’s observation
shows that nonhuman as well as human bodies have vitality; they exist together in
affective relationality and, most importantly, they do things. In Spinoza’s words, they
have the capacity to affect and to be affected.

These theorizings as practice and concept making as event will clearly involve auto-
ethnographers in moving toward practices that are less interpretive, judgmental, and
representational and, therefore, toward those that are more creative, speculative, and
experimental. Consequently, it is clear from Bennett’s example that it is more important
to look at these “agentic assemblages,” less in terms of what they might mean, and more in
terms of what they actually do. Totalization can never be achieved when attempts are
made to map events. In short, in futurity, every new event differentiates, and so, in every
encounter, difference is made. Events occur in multiple movements and moments and, in
the potency of these capacious rapidities, they have a tendency to take us with them. This
offers challenge to the orthodoxies of conventional qualitative research practice, including
autoethnography, which continue to be largely concerned with essentially individual
human beings, imbued with consciousness, thoughts and emotions. Aware of the not-
yetness of these speculations and with a move toward further experimentation to the fore,
what might autoethnographies look like if these moves are followed? Stewart’s work as
inquiry into “ordinary affect” suggests

... an experiment, not a judgment. Committed not to the demystification and
uncovered truths that support a well known view 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... 19

In the sympoietic engagement with these forces the potential for speculative and
experimental inquiry is vibrantly becoming in the freshness of appearance. The shared
collective capacities of Haraway’s “making-with” offers becoming in intensity and ani-
mates a kind of wonder in which the repetition of well-worn truths must give way to the
fabulatory excitement of creative differentiation in the collaborative engagements of
always new relational moments—what Manning refers to as “research-creation.” 20

“Staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present... as mortal critters
entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters and meanings.” 21

The affectiveness of the ordinary is related to the capacity of bodies in action; in this we
have to be constantly aware of the rhetorical fundamentality of Spinoza’s oft-quoted
question, “What can a body do?” In the necessity of contingency, we can never know, but
we can always be animate in the indeterminacy of our ongoing, processual knowings.
“Worlding” involves a wondering that is nurtured through the creative deviations
brought to life by these speculations and fabulations. When Manning says, “there is never
a body as such: what we know are edgings and contourings, forces and intensities: a body
is its movement.” 22 we can be assured of the value of the not-yetness of our inquiries and
excited by the potentiality and capaciousness of the words we offer, the “actual
occasions”23 we bring into emergence and the concepts we create. Bodies in motion live in momentary wordings of “now you see me, now you don’t”;24 they are ghostly, sylph-like, briefly apparent, caught in a glimpse and then lost in the wink of an eye. Virginia Woolf talked of her encounters with “moments of being” and how the indeterminacies of these encouraged her to write: “No one could have understood from what I said the queer feeling I had in the hot grass, that poetry was coming true... It matches what I have sometimes felt when I write. The pen gets on the scent.”25

By concluding these claims for the flows and eddies of futurity over the substantive fixities of futures, two things can be offered for emergent autoethnographic practices. The first involves returning to Massumi, to his suggestion that we should take joy in our digressions, invite “the risk of sprouting deviant” and also getting “so caught up in the flow of... writing that it ceases at moments to be recognisable... as your own.”26 The second involves encouraging human and nonhuman kin-making, sympoietic approaches to new and exciting forms of concept making as event, and the encouragement of speculative forays into the unexpectedness and excitement of the always not yet known.

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NOTES
4. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 5.
5. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 33.
6. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 33.
7. I take Haraway’s use of “oddkin” to refer to a more free and wild version of kin that can be understood to extend beyond the kinds of genealogical kinship relations to be found in, for example, religion, family, or a species-oriented form of biology. In this I will suggest that Haraway’s term can be understood in relation to what Manning refers to as “always more than one.” E. Manning, “Always More than One: The Collectivity of a Life,” Body and Society 16, no. 1 (2010): 117–127.
8. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 4.
10. Gilles Deleuze, Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation (London: Continuum, 2004), 44.
21. Haraway, Staying with the Trouble, 1.