Around the day in eighty worlds: Deleuze, suggestibility and researching practice as process

Book Section

Chapter X

Around the day in eighty worlds: Deleuze, suggestibility and researching practice as process

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SUMMARY

This chapter presents theoretical and methodological considerations for a psychology based on relational process theory, sketching the benefits of 'researching practice as process'. Introducing Deleuze's concept of 'event' the chapter illustrates this approach by discussing the interaction of psychological and legal practices as process. The argument focuses on the way the notion/concept of suggestibility undermines traditional assumptions about the relationship between memory, experience and self. By activating the paradox of the psychosocial, suggestibility introduces a type of process thinking into these practices. Drawing on empirical data gathered from experimental psychological practices and in interviews with criminal court judges for research about child witness practice, the chapter illustrates the pragmatic as well as theoretical contribution researching practice as process can make by opening up new perspectives towards conceptions of agency and change.

INTRODUCTION

'A journey around the day in eighty worlds' is the title of a book by the Argentinean author Julio Cortazar (1966 [1986]). I have developed this chapter in the spirit of such a journey, because proposing a journey around the day in eighty worlds means to conceive of the relationship between self/subject and matter as process, rather than seeing them as static entities external to each other. As I will illustrate, this relation can be captured as a process realized through 'actual occasions' as Whitehead (1927-8[1985]) would call them, or 'events' in Deleuze's (1969[2004], 1986[1992]) terms, that configure life as process, as stream of nested worlds constituted through generalised flows of experience. This chapter will explore the methodological dimension of a psychology based on such relational process theory and sketch what it means to 'research practice as process'. I will illustrate the implications and benefits of such an approach by examining issues of experience, memory, suggestibility and self as they become relevant at the intersection of psychological and legal practices. Following past research (Motzkau 2006) specific examples will focus on the complex issues faced by child witness practice, and the central role of suggestibility (commonly understood as 'manipulability' or the tendency to uncritically go along with coaching) within research and practice in this field. I will show that suggestibility itself imports process thinking into those practices, opening up voids that offer a glimpse at the 'event-ness' of practice. I will sketch how attending to and mapping the events/voids emerging around suggestibility could constitute a methodological perspective for a relational process psychology. While I cannot elaborate on issues surrounding child witness practice in

detail, it will become clear how researching child witness practice as process might contribute to moving beyond the unhelpfully polarized positions that characterise debates concerning child protection, and to establish a shared insight into the principle volatility and thus changeability of these practices. Researching practice as process provides a broad analytic perspective that considers practices not as configurations/representations of the dominant discourses they serve/build, but grasps practitioners as nodes in a process (practice), thus opening new perspectives towards conceptions of agency and change.

PRACTICE AS PROCESS: CHILDHOOD, MEMORY, LAW

Since the early 1980s there has been increasing awareness for issues of child sexual abuse in Northern America and Europe, but it was difficult to prosecute because of traditional assumptions about children's immaturity and unreliability. For example in England and Wales children had until 1988 largely been barred from testifying in court by corroboration laws. Since 1990, legislators in England and Wales drew on guidance from psychological research and began to implement significant changes to legal procedure to give children better access to justice, allowing particularly alleged child victims of sexual violence to testify more frequently (Westcott, 2006). Still, conviction rates for cases of rape and sexual abuse in England and Wales have dropped from 32 per cent in 1977 to an all time low of 5.5 per cent in 2002 (Kelly et al, 2005), and 6 per cent in 2005/2006 (Feist et al, 2007). While practitioners internationally (including Europe and Northern America) acknowledge the difficulties of rape and sexual abuse prosecutions, England and Wales (alongside Northern Ireland) register the lowest conviction rates in Europe (Kelly et al, 2005). A recent case recorded in England illustrates the difficulties of such cases and demonstrates the complex inter-relationship between psychology and law in the context of child witness practice. In 2009 one of three persons convicted in what had become known as the tragic 'Baby Peter case' (a toddler who died as a result of neglect and mistreatment by his mother and two of her friends), was also convicted of sexually abusing a 3 year old girl. This conviction rested largely on the evidence given by the three year old girl to the police (changes to legal procedure, implemented since 1991 meant that her testimony could be recorded on video and played in court) and her testimony in court given (via CCTV link) when she was four. Following media reports at the time this made her the youngest witness ever to testify in the Old Bailey, the central criminal court in London. Her young age triggered renewed discussions as to whether young children should in principle be considered too vulnerable to testify in criminal court, and whether their memory and testimony are reliable enough to be admissible. Further, the defence had built their case arguing that the testimony given by the young girl was likely to be false, and the result of deliberate or inadvertent suggestion by carers and investigators. Since the verdict the defence launched an appeal arguing that the influence of suggestion had not been given sufficient consideration. This case does not just underline the timeliness and importance of examining the relationship of psychology and law in the context of child protection, but it also illustrates the central role of suggestibility as the debate shifts from memory to suggestibility. Where initially there had been concern about the immaturity and thus unreliability of children's memory, with suggestibility becoming the focus of attention concern shifts to relational aspects of remembering. Further suggestibility implies that children are sincere but somewhat not in control of their own memories (Motzkau

2007). Herein suggestibility raises interesting questions about the impact of psychological research on legal practice and at the same time about the concept of memory and self that is applied within legal practice. This is illustrated in the following statement by a German criminal court judge, given as part of an interview conducted by the author in 2004, for research comparing child witness practice in England and Germany (Motzkau 2006). This excerpt forms part of a discussion about how psychological research influences legal practice.

> Judge2:
> "…sometimes I feel like a blackout when I read (.) that ahm when I see that well there is the opinion that or (.) or it is postulated as as scientific finding that or it is inferred that well (.) sort of ahm that all we really have are the most subjective memories and that gaps in memory are patched up instantly (1) ahm (2) well in that case (2) you can absolutely forget about a witness statement…[…] luckily so far no defence barrister has brought that up (1) that the other day ahm he read (2) ahm in some science column that ultimately there is no such thing as uninfluenced (.) well that there's no memory and perception that is uninfluenced by by by the own expectations (1) ahm and that therefore we must not consider any of the witness statements (1) well then we would be in big trouble."

This seems an extreme assessment of the interaction of psychology and law, and slightly disconcerting coming from a judge (the German criminal legal system does not employ juries, but one, or a panel of, professional judge(s), investigates the case and makes the decision). We could read this excerpt as characteristic for misunderstandings haunting this relationship, or for the unease with which the law has traditionally approached psychological research and frequently dismissed it, particularly in countries with a common law tradition (Spencer & Flynn 1993). Still, as outlined earlier with regard to the example of England and Wales, the law internationally has recently become more appreciative of psychological knowledge, and this also applies to Germany. This judge clearly does not ignore or dismiss such knowledge out of hand, but is seriously concerned about it. He feels like having "a blackout" and considers it possible that a defence barrister could use such findings, which, as the judge concludes, would mean "we would be in big trouble" because "we could forget about witness statement(s)". At the same time he seems perplexed about the validity of such findings. Unable to really pinpoint it he hesitantly charts and continuously downgrades the potential validity/scientificity by circumscribing such findings as "opinion", then as "postulated", finally proposing that "it is inferred that well (.) sort of…". But peculiarly, despite such evident doubts about validity, he is seriously concerned about the distinct and potentially problematic implications such findings, and the way they are understood, may have for witness practice. This statement then seems to paint a rather absolute and final picture of the relationship between psychological research and legal practice; they seem interlocked in an inescapable double-bind: 'the law ignores psychological knowledge at the peril of missing crucial information about witness memory and credibility, but considers it at the peril of rendering legal procedure as a whole pointless'. We would have to conclude that, as others have in the past (King & Piper 1990), law and psychology simply operate in irreconcilably different dimensions. Still, this reading fails to engage with the existing problem evidently posed by the ongoing relationship between psychological and legal practices. To get a more productive grasp of what this judge is trying to hold in the balance here, and what it is that makes this statement so perplexing, we need to move beyond the immediate

discursive or paradigmatic antagonisms represented in the excerpt and consider it as practice in process.

The judge's account also raises the question of the relationship between experience, self, matter and memory. His statement seems to posit that the validity (i.e. admissibility) of witness statements depends on the 'objective' nature of witness memories (i.e. not being "subjective"), which he explains as, originating solely from the witness' own perception, and thus being attributable to their singular self. Hence not a product of suggestion, "influenced"; while at the same time being fixed, static, i.e. not 'patched up' or influenced by "our own expectation" (memories have to be 'inside' the subject but must not 'be' subjective). So apparently the relationship between experience, self, matter and memory has to be immediate, static and unambiguous in order to be negotiable by the law. But how could this possibly work in practice? Again, I would like to show that considering this on the background of relational process theory, as practice in process, will provide a more acute sense of the efficacy, but also volatility of such conceptualizations of memory, matter, experience and self. This focus will illustrate an analytic approach that allows to grasp the diverse facets of meaning (i.e. what is made to matter within an account) emergent in the instant of expression, capturing what Deleuze calls 'event'.

FROM SPACE TO PROCESS: EVENT

'Around the day in eighty worlds'

Cortazar declares his title an inverted homage to Jules Verne (thus 'eighty worlds'), but notes that the number of worlds may vary in any specific instant or day as "…there could be five and then this afternoon a hundred and twenty…" (Cortazar 1966[1986] p. 145). Taking an ontological perspective we could say that by turning Jules Verne's title inside out Cortazar performs a shift from a traditional conception of matter and subject as separate, towards life understood in the spirit of a Whiteheadian process ontology. Jules Verne's journey around the world in eighty days illustrates what Whitehead (1927-8[1985]) termed a 'bifurcation of nature' into 'objective causal nature', i.e. matter, and 'subjective perceptions', i.e. subject: in Verne's journey the person encounters the world, i.e. matter, as a purely spatial, enduring entity, external to- and independent of themselves; and while a linear succession of time passes 'for' the person (eighty days), matter (the world) does not in the same way part take in this passing of time. This echoes the German judge's account, which implied a purely static and linear relationship between matter and self as mediated through memory. Contrary to that, Cortazar's inversion highlights the generative dynamism of time/process. In suggesting that the journey takes place around the day he implies that it is a dynamic of relating in the process of which both matter and subject emerge as the effect of continuous actualizations, instant encounters, and thus nested worlds, within experience. By moving from a world we can travel in eighty days, to a day travelled in eighty worlds, we move from matter as fixed, timeless extension in an abstract Newtonian universe, to a relational process ontology where experience is not split off from 'objective' reality or matter, but is conceived as the very becoming of 'objective reality' to which its expression is a contribution.

Cortazar's inversion resonates closely with what Stenner (in this volume) outlines as a shift from a psychology in the key of matter to a psychology in the key of life, that is, a psychology in the spirit of a Whiteheadian process ontology. Working on the basis of a process-centred ontology means to grasp the world as constituted through a continuous succession of instantaneous configurations of matter. Here mind, self and matter are not seen as separate 'states' or 'substances', but are equally considered to be founded in ongoing processes and practices of relating. In this sense human social and psychic existence is continuous with a wider nature which can itself be characterized in terms of the experiences and expressions of coordinated events (Brown & Stenner, 2009). Clearly the concept of experience implied here incorporates far more than the conscious experience of human beings. To illustrate this I will sketch the nature of Deleuze's concept of 'event' and of relational process thought in some more detail.

Taking a musical example, we could imagine a score and the different keys in which a tune can be played. Different keys express different moods in music. In western music for example these moods, e.g. sad and happy, are associated respectively with a minor and a major key. These keys dictate specific musical conventions of scales, intervals and notations relevant to that key. Looking at a score one can see that the music is noted according to such fixed rules. There is an orderly progression of notes, black dots, on the lines of the score. The spatial relationship of these dots towards another on the score (depending on the key the scale is organized prioritizing certain intervals) reflects the key and in turn defines the perceived mood of the piece. Still, what really expresses the mood (here sad or happy) is neither the key nor the dots, nor the sounding of just the individual notes, but it is the resonance between the notes as they are played. The key, and thus the mood, expresses itself in this void space between the black dots and in the process of their simultaneous or consecutive sounding when played. So it is not the dots themselves or their position, but their concrete relating, the simultaneity and the difference expressed between them, and perceived (in western music) as dissonance or harmony in the process of sounding. This is what expresses the actual mood, the energy, or force as we could say, at the specific moment of their sounding. What occurs here could be called a confluence of a variety of forces. These forces include those emanating from the sound waves and resonances, but also those emergent from the conventions of western music and the embeddedness (or not) of a potential listener/player into such traditions. Such a confluence of forces is what Deleuze (1969[2004]) terms 'event'. It is that which is made actual in a state or happening (or practice), it is the change generated at the moment of such forces' interaction, an incorporeal transformation. Crucially, at the level of event, what is expressed in this example as a 'mood' is understood to be a-personal, or 'a-subjective' as Deleuze terms it (not attributable to a subject); however, at the same time it is not 'abstract' but singular, that is, concrete to a specific moment in time, constituting a specific individuation as Deleuze would call it (Deleuze, 1969[2004]). In relation to our example we can see that the mood as such is not necessarily that of the player, listener or composer (even though it could manifest as their mood too), nor does it have to be attributed to them (even though it could also have been intended by either of them), but in essence, as a force, it subsists autonomously in between, is expressed through the concrete process of differing in the singular moment of the music being played. It is in the same way that we might speak of a tune 'having' a certain 'mood' without implying the tune was a person or a conscious, thinking entity. By introducing the analytic

dimension of event Deleuze does not want to dismiss the 'subject'. But looking at the practice of playing music as a process, event, means to move to a mode of analysis where the person/subject features as a node or nexus of the forces that resonate and flow together in-between. In a similar way the dots marking the notes on the score are not considered irrelevant, but when focusing on the expressive forces resonating between them as music is played, they figure as the framework, or nodes through which the music operates, they form the coordinates of the difference that is expressed between them.

Broadly speaking, what Deleuze is trying to capture is the dynamism of the forces at work at the exact moment at which something happens. He looks at the moment in which one thing becomes another thing, and rather than focusing on the state of the 'thing' before and after the change, he looks at the dynamic of change/becoming/event itself. In the spirit of a process ontology this captures the confluence of forces that insists within, continuously providing the stream of change/becoming that is the constitutive 'cohesive' for everything. So crucially, understood as an ontic dimension 'event' (or 'becoming' as it is called interchangeably) is not a disruption of some continuous state, but rather any state is always already constituted by continuous 'events' insisting, or underlying it; and when actualized they mark every moment of the state as a transformation (Stagoll, 2005). In the same way Cortazar's continuous journey around the day is constituted through the nested worlds, which we can now call actualizations or events. So what I presented in the context of my limited musical example should be understood as illustrating an ontological dimension which is itself exemplary of the generative processes of life as such. As noted above, in this context experience is not so much an individual property, rather subjects are constituted in relations with experience itself, that is, by means of individuation; we are made up of relations we encounter in continuous life practices. In the words of my musical example we could say that on one level subjects are configured (recogniseable) as series of dots, notes, or indeed positions, marked on a score (of discourse or life if you want). But to capture efficacy in process (i.e. subjectification) we need pay attention to the resonances between those dots, i.e. experience in flow, that constitutes them in their relating as continuous change/becoming, an intrinsically multiple and volatile confluence of forces, event.

This in turn means that crucially event also denotes the potential immanent in a particular confluence of forces, expressed in a concrete practice or occurrence. Still, as the multiplicity of forces emerging from concrete processes of relating, it carries no determinate outcome "but only new possibilities, representing a moment at which new forces might be brought to bear" (Stagoll 2005, p. 88). In this sense event designates what I call a void, an opening, a volatility within set practices/occurrences and thus it might express itself as uncertainty, perplexity or paradox. At the same time it figures as a potential for change, i.e. a moment of suspense, where there is a shift in the way things come to matter within practice and thus 'new forces might be brought to bear'. I will demonstrate later in how far the German judge's statement expresses such a moment of perplexity but also shift in the process of mattering.

The Belgian philosopher Stengers (2007; 2008) illustrates the methodological relevance of such process thinking in relation to practices by positioning it as a shift from 'matter'

as a substance to 'to matter' as a verb. Moving from matter as a substance to processes of mattering means to refocus on the concrete instants when/how something comes to matter in concrete practices (Stengers 2007). In an article introducing Whitehead's work in this context, Stengers (2008) illustrates the benefits of process theory for subverting the limiting experimental practices of modern sciences, as inaugurated by Galileo via the experimental apparatus he designed to prove the nature of velocity by sending round balls down an inclined plane. Stengers explains that characteristically for the way modern sciences were constituted, the central aim of this experimental practice was to smoothen the plane and the balls in order to make sure in the process the rolling ball gave evidence only of the speed it gained and thus reliably testified to the forces of gravity. For this to work, friction must not be recorded. "When friction matters, the motion of the ball no longer illustrates one particular solution to an abstract, anonymous differential equation." (Stengers, 2008, p. 95). Whitehead's aim however, Stengers elaborates, was to maximize friction, not just within experimental practice, but in the understanding of overall scientific and life practices, in order to recover what is lost in such selections. In this sense researching practice as process means to attend to 'frictions', that is, to the processes/dynamics of mattering as and when they emerge within ongoing practices.

I will now return to witness practice, and show how suggestibility causes such friction within psychological and legal practices and thereby opens up voids within the organising structures of these practices. In doing this it underlines process and relationality and thus undercuts clear distinctions between self, subject, memory and matter, making them visible as event.

SUGGESTIBILITY, MEMORY, SELF: THE PARADOX OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL

Suggestibility is most commonly considered as the propensity of a person to uncritically and/or unwittingly take in, and assume as their own, external ideas, attitudes or information. It has often been framed as a deficiency in will power and rational thinking, yet looking at the history of suggestibility within psychology, it is clear that suggestibility has remained an ill-defined, troublesome concept. In the late 19th century suggestibility was, next to memory, considered to be one of the key topics of investigation for the emerging discipline of psychology. But while it enjoyed great popularity among social scientists at the time, it also posed a paradox: On the one hand suggestibility was considered to be a personal propensity to irrationality and manipulability, but on the other hand the ability to be suggestible was seen as vital for social cohesion, learning and the formation of the self, in short, it was considered the *sine qua non* of human existence (by for example Boudouin, McDougall or Sidis & James, for detailed discussion see Motzkau 2009).

At the time for example Tarde (1903) embraced this paradox, and underlined the importance of imitation and thus suggestibility as a dynamic constituent of the self as the social, implying the possibility of limitless personal change and interrelationality. Such an open relational conceptualisation of the subject/intellect ran counter to, and

threatened the concept of the rational, enlightened autonomous self that was at the heart of the existing social order at the time (Blackman 2007). Hence, Tarde's ideas were misunderstood and contemporaries, such as Ross or McDougall (1911) helped establish suggestibility as denoting deficiency in rational thinking and manipulability. In this context suggestibility played a key role for asserting the difference between assumed primitive, inferior, irrational forms of thinking and the superior forces of reasoning attributed to the 'rational autonomous subject'. Such inferior forms of reasoning were variously attributed to women, children, colonial subjects or the working classes, warranting their need for guidance and control, and justifying their exclusion from certain political and legal practices (Blackman, 2007). These assumptions are to an extent still perpetuated in discourses around children's immature memory and reasoning and thus diminished reliability as witnesses in courts of law (Motzkau 2007).

In Motzkau (2009) I argued that through the ambiguous questions suggestibility raised in the late 19th century around self and memory, it constituted the 'paradox of the psychosocial'. I termed this the paradox of the psychosocial because it captures the essence of what was to become the lasting dilemma of understanding the relationship between the social and the psychological at a time when the split between the two entities (social and psychological) into disciplines was only just occurring (Stenner & Taylor 2008). The paradox expresses two inseparable questions raised by suggestibility: Firstly, the question of the self, and of self-other relationality, that is, 'how can we relate while also being separate contained selves?' Secondly, it raises the question of the characteristics of knowledge/knowing, that is, how do we 'know', how can we trust our knowledge, or indeed memory, while continuously having to express and perform this knowing and thus re-assessing its origin and value in relation to ourselves and others? I will show how by raising these combined questions within practices, suggestibility seeds ambiguity, friction, within these practices and thus opens up a void. Specifically, suggestibility undermines the implicit assumption of a purely spatial relationship between subject and knowledge/memory that law and experimental psychology are based on.

As I will illustrate in more detail in the next sections, experimental psychological, as well as legal practices, are organised around stabilising and controlling (and disambiguating) the self and memory. This was evident in the excerpt quoted earlier, of the German judge whose attempt at disambiguating memory for legal practice hinged on establishing the fixity of memory and its relationship to a distinct subject/self. For legal as well as experimental psychological practices memory implies the possibility of the continuity and authenticity of knowledge and thus the possibility of truth. At the same time the assumption of a discrete, distinct 'self'/subject 'owning a memory' is important because law/psychology need to assert the source of a memory, in order for it to be attributable to someone, who can then be held accountable for it (as a witness, experimental subject). I will show that, where these ordering apparatuses exert their power by representing, categorizing and stabilizing (e.g. to assert stable concepts of memory/self), suggestibility unsettles this process by causing friction and opening up voids in this ordering structure. These voids suggestibility exposes at the heart of practices in process, resonate with what I have earlier introduced in relation to Deleuze's work (1969[2004]) as 'event' (or 'becoming'). In this sense suggestibility exposes event, or becoming, that constitute a vital part of the dynamic processes of

being as such and thus subsist within any activity or practice. Deleuze argues, this 'event/becoming' is commonly obscured and arrested by the power of the dominant binary logic that forms the basis of the representational logic at work within the institutional reasoning of modern sciences as well as the law. This obscuring of 'event' is exemplified in the way legal and experimental psychological practices are organized around the assumptions of a fixed, stable, relationship between memory and self.

As outlined in relation to the fate of Tarde's work, throughout the early 20th century the paradox of the psychosocial, was obscured and kept in check by dominant discourses of modern science. It ended up buried beneath the assumptions and performances of individual psychological autonomy that constituted the backbone of the modern psychological discipline that sought to assert itself as a science during the second half of the 20th century. Yet, as I have demonstrated in Motzkau (2009), particularly more recently suggestibility has continued carrying the paradox of the psychosocial into the ordering disciplinary structures of psychological and legal practice, as it keeps emerging at the heart of concrete performed practices, causing friction and challenging their disciplinary power.

In the following I demonstrate what it means to research practice as process and give detailed examples of the way suggestibility opens up voids within psychological and legal practices. I will illustrate how such voids can be seen to shift the dynamic of mattering within practice in a way that could help address the complex issues of child protection emerging at the intersection of psychology and law.

EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICE AS PROCESS: SUGGESTIBILITY DISSOLVING SELF AND MEMORY

A study by Erdmann (2001) provides a good example for the way suggestibility opens up voids within experimental practices, destabilising conceptions of memory and self. This study aimed to examine whether it was possible to implant entirely fictitious memories, 'false events', into children by repeatedly interviewing them about such false events in a suggestive manner. 67 primary school children were submitted to four interviews, each time prompting them to report four specific events from their past. Two of the prompts referred to true events, but the other two prompts hinted at 'false events' that had been invented specifically by researchers and parents for each child (e.g. excursion in a hot air balloon, being stung by a bee or having a bicycle accident). While successfully demonstrating that in a final fifth interview an impressive 58 per cent of the children delivered detailed accounts of false events, the experiment also produced a peculiar side effect: With some children the narratives of false events had grown so detailed, that the researchers suspected the 'false memory' cues might have elicited true memories of real events. To clarify the researchers sought confirmation from the parents. Remarkably, even though parents had initially assisted inventing these 'false events', when confronted with their children's narratives some parents now said they also remembered the events, and others were unable to disconfirm, leaving the matter unresolved. Either these narratives did refer to true memories (possibly 'recovered'), or the accounts of 'false memories' had been enriched with an unknown amount of details from real events, or, after all, parents and researchers had fallen suggestible to the result of their own suggestions, now believing that the 'false events' they had implanted, truly

were memories of real events; or ultimately they might be memories the parent's recovered unwittingly building them into the false memory cues; and so on, as this reasoning is self-perpetuating. This incident challenges assumptions about the personal ownership and integrity of memories, as well as those about linear modes of relating between discreet subjects. Here memory becomes visible as a process of relating in time and not a static entity or property of discrete subjects.

This example shows how suggestibility undermines the framework of experimental practice that is set up to organise and control the roles of separate subjects and enable the unambiguous attribution of remembering. Suggestibility summons the paradox of the psychosocial within the setting, explicitly playing out the impasse of the 'subject/self' and of 'knowledge': how can those involved be separate, yet relate? Who initiates or controls the direction and meaning this relationship takes on, and who holds the key to ascertaining the truth or falsehood of memory and how can this truth be anchored within these relationships? Here the hierarchical organization of roles and the clear separation of subjects that the experimental set up relies on has broken down. Rather than affirming the stable positions of 'subjects' or 'agents' operating in an experimental setting, what comes to matter in the specific moment the 'new', unaccounted narratives take effect, are a set of multidirectional dynamics of relating, flows of affecting. We get a vivid sense of a confluence of diverse forces. At the same time, the external truth criteria, carefully laid down by the experimenters have collapsed into an ambiguous (yet creative) multi-referential dynamic. In this sense I argue suggestibility opens up a void in the organising structures of experimental practice. Crucially this void is not a void in spatial terms, it is not a 'vacuum' or an 'empty space'; on the contrary, it is an abundance of meanings and signs summoned at once, that they lack in direction or shape. Hence it is a structural void, a lack of direction, a suspension of the ordering structure/power of psychological experimental practice allowing interpretations and meanings to emerge and develop into every direction at once. By suspending the limiting and organising power of experimental structure, this void provides a momentary glimpse at the abundance, the excessive flow of meanings emerging at the moment children, parents and experimenters relate within this specific moment. Suggestibility travels beyond the experimental setting and foregrounds the process nature of the reciprocal relations between children, parents and researchers; as a result what comes to matter at this instant in the experiment is the relevance of their own lived experiences, memories and relationships. Further, the experiment itself becomes suggestive, and rather than controlling it, researchers are transformed into unwilling protagonists of the set up they engineered. And for a moment what is allowed to matter within the process of this practice, is the strong sense that even in an experimental set up it is impossible to control the efficacy of suggestibility and attribute it solely to the manipulability of children. This is a temporary phenomenon, and the researchers are likely to gloss over this void suggestibility has opened up and re-instate the order of experimental practice by reframing and dismissing it as an experimental artefact. Crucially however, for a moment the efficacy of the void does communicate itself to the researchers who cannot completely ignore the side-effects that have afflicted the experiment.

The dynamic described above expresses the properties of what Deleuze calls 'event'. It illustrates the instant of a reciprocal flow of relations between children, parents and

researchers at the moment the experimental memories are generated, while the question of their 'origin' is rendered meaningless. This is a very concrete singular instant, as it happens as part of this specific experimental encounter and at this specific moment in time. Further, there is a sense of an a-subjective mode of relationality because the narratives that emerge seem autonomous, they exceed what could be considered any one person's individual memory, or agency. That is, the narratives generate more information than was suggested by the experimenters, but neither are they purely attributable to children's memory, because they develop further when parents and researchers engage with, believe, or are perplexed by them. In this sense they are a-subjective singularities. We can say that the narratives emerge from, and pick up momentum at the interstices of the relationships, they are resonances between those involved in this practice; and express a-subjective singularities. They are singular yet a-subjective in the same way as in the earlier musical example the 'mood' was conceivable as that of the piece as being played. Looking at what happens in the process of this experimental practice, it makes sense to understand these memories as part of an ongoing process, a rhythm of change and relating, constituting a series of simultaneous nested worlds opening up temporarily, presenting diverse, complementing as well as contradictory, sets of potential meanings/experiences (not all of which are actualised). This is what I meant earlier when characterising 'event' as multiplicity of forces emerging from concrete processes of relating, that carry no determinate outcome "but only new possibilities, representing a moment at which new forces might be brought to bear" (Stagoll 2005, p. 88). So despite not implying any one determinate outcome, by offering up diverse potentialities, these voids are also openings for change.

Considering this experimental practice as process, we can see that the experiment reveals little about children's manipulability or the possibility of 'suggesting false memories', but much more about the limiting power relations and practices of reason that form the basis of such experimental procedures. Again, the researchers in this example may or may not become aware of this personally, but when examining this practice as process we can see that, for a moment the dynamic of mattering does shift towards offering a glimpse at the dynamic processes of remembering, and the possibilities proliferated within, thereby revealing the precarious position of children in this experimental set up. Further, what comes to matter for a moment, via this void, and is thus recognisable, is that memory itself resides in the ongoing relationships between those involved and that suggestibility proliferates regardless of age or position in context.

Crucially, by looking at practice as process we can now consider suggestibility as the expression of the processual nature of memory. Understood in this way suggestibility forms a constitutive part of the productive dynamic of relationality as such; it is the processual essence of relating, and denotes the ability to at once affect and be affected. In relation to the self/subject suggestibility could be said to express (constitute) the self/subject as the result of instants of knowing in the process of relating. This is precisely the type of dynamic introduced earlier alongside Cortazar's journey around the day in eighty worlds. A dynamic of relating in the process of which both matter and subject emerge as the effect of continuous actualizations, instant encounters, and thus nested worlds, within experience.

LEGAL PRACTICE AS PROCESS

As I outlined earlier, experimental as well as legal practices are based on the assumption of a stable and unambiguous relationship of memory and self. However, suggestibility undermines this set up. Where memory implies the possibility of the continuity and authenticity of knowledge, the possibility of truth (as required by the law), suggestibility also implies knowledge, an abundance of it, but it strips this knowledge of the power it claims to define what is real (true) and what is an illusion. It thereby undermines the very idea of the singular authenticity of memory and its locatedness within a subject, replacing it with a sense of a dynamic flow of relational knowledge, that is situationally contingent, not fixed and cannot be singularly attributed to an individual subject; so it illustrates a-subjective forces.

Re-considering the Germany judge's comment as practice in process we can now see it as an expression of event, an example of a void opened up by suggestibility. As outlined earlier, applied literally, as this judge seems to suggest, the apparently ambiguous research about memory and suggestibility would make legal practice as such pointless, as no witness would be considered credible (and strictly speaking the court personnel would not be able to trust their own memory either). Understood in this way legal practice would be impossible. What the judge is wrestling with is the attempt to integrate the notion of a fixed relationship between memory, experience and self with the assumption that psychological knowledge operated directly upon legal practice, i.e. instructed it directly. While this may sound like a reasonable assumption, at the moment of expressing this stance in relation to a potential case (with a defence barrister involved), it grows ambiguous and perplexing. So in being uttered this statement opens up a void which highlights the importance of the concrete and volatile processes involved in such operations of application, i.e. the 'work' that goes into 'applying knowledge' (including the judge's own work the consideration of which seems conspicuously absent from his account as we can now see). This highlights that psychological knowledge does not operate directly upon legal practice but that it is the dynamic of concrete operations of application that make practice possible in the first place. It is the specific negotiation, and thus resonance of such knowledge/information and its efficacy at the interstices between those involved, as well as the details of the case, that constitutes the process of application. At the same time it is clear that in the process such practices of applications are volatile and, similar to experimental practice, hard to control.

Additionally, what is allowed to matter for a moment while the perplexity of this judge's statement resonates, is the relational process nature of memory; because paradoxically the statement illustrates the opposite of what it is meant to say: it highlights that it is clearly impossible to separate experience, memory and self in the neat fashion the judge suggests, but in turn imaginable that it emerges in process, at the interstices, of witness' and legal practitioners' engagement in this practice. Here for a moment the ordering power of the dominant discourse of psychology and law are suspended and the judge is exposing (and possibly exposed to) a sense of a confluence of forces operating simultaneously, event, creating uncertainty as well as potential for change.

> "For personal uncertainty is not a doubt foreign to what is happening, but rather an objective structure of the event itself, insofar as it moves in two directions at once, and insofar as it fragments the subject following this double direction." (Deleuze, G. 2004[1969], p. 5).

In this sense we can see that 'personal uncertainty', or indeed perplexity as expressed by the German judge, is not an indication of 'bad practice' or misunderstanding, but it forms a regular feature of practice in process. It marks the constitutive void at the centre of practices in process, here highlighted via the paradox of the psychosocial introduced by suggestibility. Looking at this judge's utterance as practice in process we can see that what matters for a moment are not the controlling forces of either legal or psychological discourses, but what matters at this moment is the concrete personal involvement and relational nature that characterises the 'work' of simultaneously 'applying' psychological knowledge, laws of evidence, case findings, convictions and personal knowledge to the assessment of a specific case.

It is these moments of perplexity that also indicate the volatility and changeability of such practices, this is where new forces could be brought to bear. More pragmatically, researching practice as process would aim to illustrate the constitutive and recurring presence of such voids. Making such voids negotiable could help practitioners to drop concerns about reconciling static assumptions about self, knowledge and application, and encourage them to consider their existing perplexity as a way into re-thinking practice productively, and beyond polarisation and defensiveness.

CONCLUSION: MAPPING THE VOIDS

Suggestibility is not in itself 'event', but by introducing the paradox of the psychosocial it peels apart the ordering and limiting structures of psychological and legal practices to give a glimpse at the flux of change, event; or as we could say, suggestibility highlights the event-ness of practice in process. While it does not as such create change, by virtue of creating recurrent perplexity it provides an insight into the constitutive volatility of practice in process and highlights the multiple emergent potentials accompanying this process. Returning to Stenner's notion of moving from a psychology in the key of matter to a psychology in the key of life (Stenner, in this volume), we can now see why suggestibility creates friction and dissonance: within a psychology in the key of matter it resonates in the key of life.

The methodological relevance of this discovery lies in the way such voids lay bare and potentially transform the dynamics of mattering within these practices as they reveal a dynamic that continuously undermines the limiting controlling procedures that organise practices, while also communicating this volatility. Researching practice as process illustrates that such paradoxes are frequent and following data collected in my own research (Motzkau 2006), they cause surprise and re-orientation (as in the experimental example), but are also expressed as perplexity and sometimes laughter. Almost inevitably they will be glossed over, but they are a re-curing feature of practice in process and thus worth exploring. They do not just express the internal volatility of dominant practices in process, but also the openness and multiplicity of forces involved thus illustrating emergent potentials for change, points where new forces might be

brought to bear. A systematic mapping of such voids would be a first step to illustrate the recurrence and systematic nature of those voids, underlining their essential role within practice, and using them as a way of relating to practitioners.

As such the suggested approach of researching practice as process is not limited to legal or psychological practices, but could be generalized to other contexts, thus inaugurating a methodology for a psychology/social science in the spirit of relational process theory. It provides an analytic perspective that considers practices not as configurations/representations of the dominant discourses they serve/build, but grasps practitioners as nodes in a process (practice), thus opening a path for new conceptions of agency and change (Motzkau 2009). Herein a psychology based on relational process theory echoes Cortazar's project of re-imagining the role of time, relationality, affect, self and experience in literature beyond the stranglehold of dominant conceptualisations provided by those he calls 'bureaucrats of the mind'.

> "This day has eighty worlds, a figure chosen to make you understand and to please my namesake, but there could be five and then this afternoon a hundred and twenty; who knows how many worlds there are in the day of a Cronopius or a poet, only bureaucrats of the mind decide that their day is comprised of a fixed number of elements, of chitinous little legs, that agitate furiously in order to progress on the straight line that they call the mind." (Cortazar, 1966[1986] p. 145, *translation amended by the author*).

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