

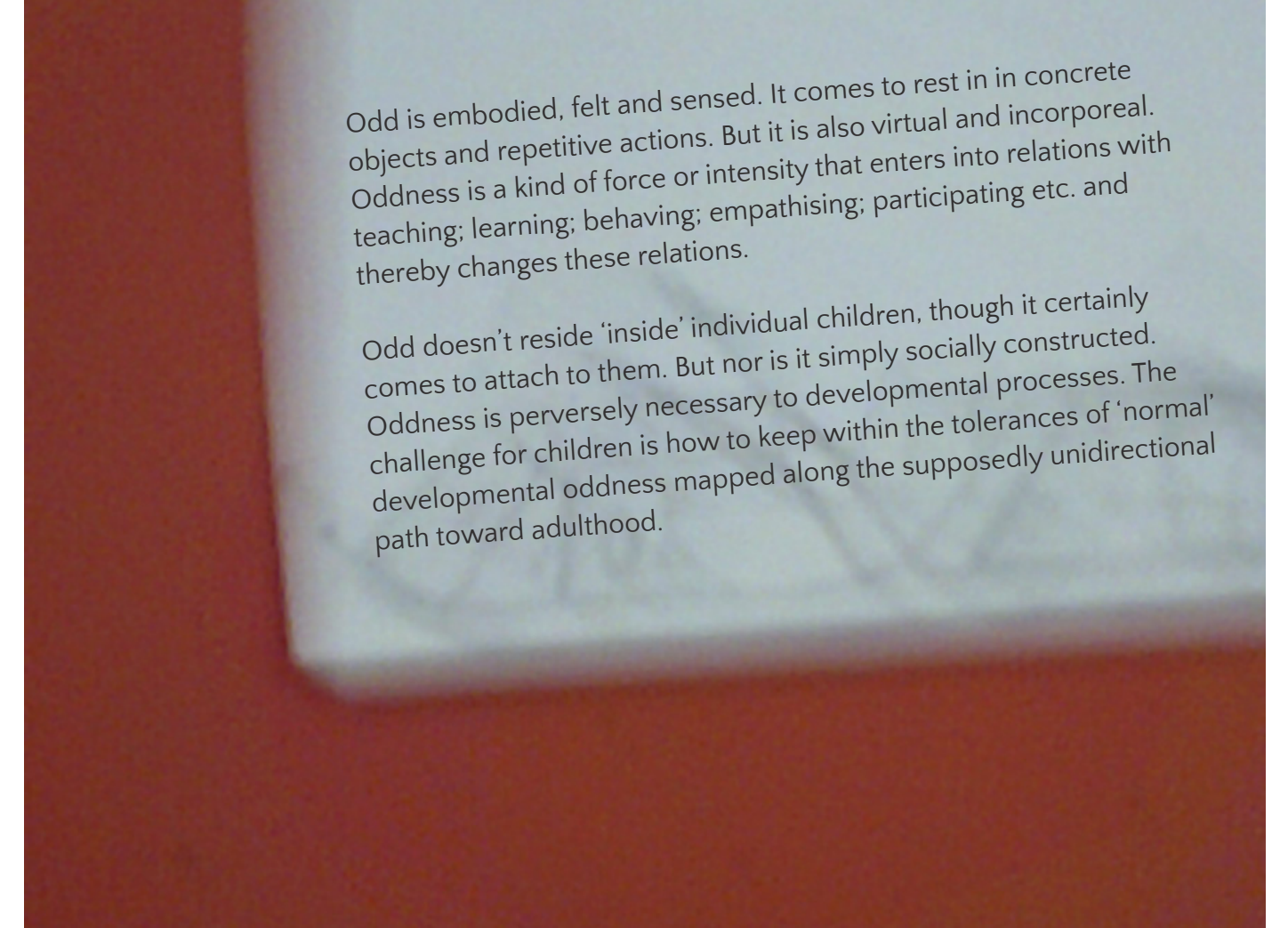
Odd propositions

Oddness is itself 'odded' by childhood
Oddness isn't personal (although it also really is)
Oddness is a feeling that is both mine and not mine
Oddness has no place, yet is always grounded
Odd is both material and ideal
Oddness is a virtual (as well as actual) event
Odd experience can never be fully captured in words
Art can create new modes of apprehending the energetics of oddness
Odd is fundamentally transversal

I am odd, feel odd. But the odd also comes from elsewhere.

We don't really know what it 'means', who it belongs to, where it 'is', what kind of valence (positive, negative) it will assume, which affective tonalities it will accrue etc.

Odd is something that you 'can't put your finger on' - though you definitely can discern its ethical and pragmatic effects and implications for the children and adults involved. Oddness also definitely 'takes place', and is grounded in actual events, and in the collective experience of all those who are caught up in them.



Odd is embodied, felt and sensed. It comes to rest in concrete objects and repetitive actions. But it is also virtual and incorporeal. Oddness is a kind of force or intensity that enters into relations with teaching; learning; behaving; empathising; participating etc. and thereby changes these relations.

Odd doesn't reside 'inside' individual children, though it certainly comes to attach to them. But nor is it simply socially constructed. Oddness is perversely necessary to developmental processes. The challenge for children is how to keep within the tolerances of 'normal' developmental oddness mapped along the supposedly unidirectional path toward adulthood.

There's something about oddness that resists capture by language. Although it's crucial to listen to, and conjointly act on, what children are able to tell us about their experiences of odd, and how it feels, there will always be something uncanny and undefinable that exceeds those accounts.

Art has the potential to create new (possibly uncanny) spaces that we are unable to anticipate from within our common-sense attitude. Not only artist-researchers can be artisans. Children have some special potentials in this respect, to the extent that they are less tightly locked in the 'fettters' of representation.

As affect, oddness is pre-personal, pre-conscious, yet also fundamentally connective and collective: a kind of intensity forging connections across domains that are often thought of as distinct - people, objects, emotions, discourses. It is actualised in very diverse entities - clothing, facial expressions, interests/obsessions, gestures, vocalisations, thoughts, words.

How can research try to effect more ethical and productive experiences for those who are caught up in odd events?

Reference:

MacLure, M., K. Pahl, and S. Pool (2019), 'Odd encounters "Theory"', Paper presented at the 2019 American Educational Research Association Conference, Toronto, Canada.