

# *place & becoming*

*a study of graduate teachers in rural schools*

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*If we dare to engage in the dynamic process of looking at  
the field (of education)  
using new tools  
and questioning those areas which have been uncharted  
and treacherous,  
we may enter insecure territory,  
but one that holds layers of meaning we may not have  
otherwise encountered*

*- Gustavo Fischman (2001:32)*



## *acknowledgements*

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## *abstract*

Rethinking graduate teachers in rural schools as *becomings in place* allows different explorations of the issues surrounding teachers in rural schools. In the past studies of rural teaching have often focussed on the short length of stay of teachers in rural schools and have presented this mobility of rural teachers as problematic. The rural has often been depicted as both *other* and uncomfortable, and teachers appointed to rural schools have been viewed as temporary visitors. Phenomenologies of place enable us to conceive of teachers in rural places as part of those places; as sensing, corporeal bodies, who experience place and all it contains (human and non-human, animate and inanimate), and whose sense of place is influenced by the experience of both other individuals and the collective practices in place. The perspective of Deleuzo-Guattarian rhizomatics enables a shift from the individuated subject of self (a teacher) and place (rurality) to imagining a becoming-teacher—a multiplicity which is part of a teacher-place assemblage. While rhizomatics has a tendency to ignore the physical body, representing it in abstractions, phenomenology insists on the corporeal. This thesis juxtaposes these competing yet complementary notions of the body in place to explore the nature of the relation between place and becoming through conceptions of graduate teachers as both (i) sensing, corporeal bodies which are a part of place, and (ii) becomings which are a part of teacher-place assemblages. Using an arts-based methodology in the collection, analysis and representation of graduate teachers' descriptions of their lived experiences, this research aims to produce different knowledges of rural teaching.



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*a different type of research; a philosophical approach; the notion of becoming—rhizomatic becoming, assemblages, multiple becomings, becoming as movement, lines of flight; becoming-teacher; why study place? what is place, what is space? a phenomenological approach to place; the study of lived experience; arts-informed research*

### *points & lines*

*map-tracing assemblages—teacher becomings, place and educational research, becoming-teacher and place; the “rural” as place; rurality; rural education research; the arts in educational research; imagined lines of flight*

### *stories of place & becoming*

*becoming—researcher, research, researched*  
*the researcher’s becoming; developing collaborative, arts-based research; the places of this study; ethical considerations; the participants’ stories*

### *place*

*“tell me about this place - collect some objects from your place”*  
*an awareness of place—the animate and inanimate; mutuality; the embodiment of place; intimate relations with place*

### *teaching*

*“tell me about teaching in this place ”*  
*creative representations of teaching—in images; in sound; in performance; conversations and correspondence about teaching; affects, relations and body; time, affects and place*



 **relationships**


*“tell me about your relationships with ...”*

*complexity of relationships; I-It & I-Thou; non-symmetrical double deterritorialisations; reterritorialisations; alliances; the anomalous; collective practices and institutional relations*

 **teacher**

*“tell me about yourself as teacher in this place”*

*haecceities, planes and movement; becoming is unpredictable; performing teacher, performing place*

 **the silences**

*“what things have you not told me?”*

*silence and secrets; spaces of solitude (and silence); home; Indigenous Australians and stories of place*

 **reterritorialising/deterritorialising**

*graduate teachers in rural schools; place; becoming; lines of flight; different ways of thinking, feeling and being*

**an afterword****endings**

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~ *photography by Mike Brooks*

~ *photography by Genevieve Noone*

*all visuals and objects constructed by Genevieve Noone*