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Dance of designing: Rethinking position, relation and movement in service design

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Abstract

Despite the recognised need for service design (SD) to understand the complexity in which it intervenes, we are concerned with its desire to fix dynamic configurations through a dominant instrumentalized worldview. We critique the journey map – an iconic method in SD – as one illustration of this fixing tendency in order to highlight how nuanced details are sometimes designed out and argue why such omission is ethical and political. In contrast, following feminist theory, we ground our accounts of practice to argue that service ecologies are situated and continually emergent, constituted by the changing configuration of various things. Instead of *fixing* to make static or finalise, we use *freezing* as a temporary state to trace and orientate our movements in a co-design workshop. The similarity of and tension between notions of *fixing* and *freezing* is used to call out nuanced differences and attend to the intrinsic, dynamic and temporal nature of service design.

KEYWORDS: positionality, politics, emergence, feminist theory, participatory design

Introduction: Accounting for relationality in service design

Service design operates in the realm of emergent and dynamic relationships – among people, between people and things, and between those differently situated. Relationships in service design are also created by imaginations of what things, spaces, places, and people could or should do in the future, and how access to those futures are framed. Closer examinations of the relational also include accounting for perspectives of people doing describing and intervening through design. In other words, how a practitioner orientates to service design decides what matters, shapes their experiences, suggests what is deemed ‘knowledge’, and more. If such phenomena and dimensions are significant in noticing what emerges through interventions, and what (designers) can imagine, we question why they are recognised or ignored and attribute these to two broad tendencies, centrally related to worldviews.

One tendency stems from tendencies to frame and report on design as a ‘neutral’ site. This approach often relies on detaching people and things through abstraction in order to shape what they become as material. Such abstractions can be seen in the popularity of methods coming to define the practice of service design, including personas, stakeholder mapping, service blueprints, system architectures and more. Their ease-of-use and replicability are their strengths. These have become desirable components of toolkits, purchased by clients and packaged by practitioners as training programs for organisations. The emphasis on method means one practitioner can become inter-changeable with another who has the training and capability to use them (Akama, 2014). Here, why, where and with whom methods are used matters primarily for the purposes of achieving the intended outcome, and/or sharing learnings about methods that can be replicated and generalized. In this way, service design has successfully commoditized such methods across a range of sectors – from corporations to government to non-profit services – and made demonstrating its value as a way to diagnose and ‘improve’ ‘poor’ services part of the practice itself. This focus on concreteness, however, leaves less room for mess or unpredictability beyond that already accounted for by the service proposition.

This worldview also sees systems (and/or projects) in a ‘functionalist’ way, influenced by operations management and systems thinking. This paradigm suggests that a complete understanding of systems and their parts are possible (see example Fig 1) by stripping away cultural, social, geographical and political dimensions. Visual models, like the journey map, are believed to be able to ‘document and represent this complexity ... where models are used as surrogates of real-world situations’ (Sangiorgi et al., 2017, p. 55). Yet, what is a ‘complete system’ and what does this assumption skew or omit? Design studies scholar, David Brody (2015), has studied the impacts of design of hotel services on housekeeping staff and other laborers. He notes how designing the multiple components of a hotel service – furniture, aesthetic flourishes, systems for housekeeping and ‘green’ incentive programs – also calls into question the experiences of those who bring it into being and maintain it. At the centre of hotel design are deeper questions about who makes choices, who is impacted by them. Who is considered the ‘user’, for instance, in the selection of bathroom sink cabinets or hotel beds? In determining whose ‘journeys’ are centred, how are labour conditions, such as (negotiated) wages and (racial and gendered) experiences, accounted for? What is the role of unionization in how hotel services are imagined and represented? How are histories of race, class, and gender-based organizing around work considered? Who and what is mapped and accounted for, and on what terms, in order to present an envisioned designed service? We begin to see how these questions and more seem to be omitted, either from consideration or from inclusion, in this functionalist worldview. This concern echoes John Law’s (2004) call to retain the *mess in social science research* and constrict tendencies towards ‘methodological hygiene’, which we imagine here in relation to design research and practice.

Another worldview, shared by the authors of this paper, takes a feminist, phenomenological and cultural studies-led view. Arguably, this orientation may be a less common and popular framing in design, yet it is making strong in-roads owing to notable scholars in anthropology (like Jeanette Blomberg and Lucy Suchman), design and architectural studies (such as David Brody and Mabel O. Wilson) and participatory design (PD) (like Anna Servalli, Mette Agger Eriksen and Ann Light) who have argued for ways of seeing design more dynamically, constituted by and impacting upon the sociality and messiness of our world. It is important to note the distinction in the messiness we speak of here. It is not the same as the iterative, ad-hoc, intuitive, improvisatory attitude to indeterminate and unfolding situations of design with materials and creative processes that was always part of design’s story (e.g. Schön 1983). Instead, the mess we refer to is the relational politics among people with different agendas and working with contingent dynamics with people situated in different ways to negotiate overlapping or contrasting goals (Agid 2016b; Akama & Light 2018). Many others scholars have made such compelling arguments in SD. For example, Lucy Kimbell and Jeanette Blomberg (2017, p. 86-87) build on PD to reframe designing services as a ‘socio-material configuration’ in which services ‘are experienced and co-production is achieved through the situated, local participation of a range of actors’ and ‘constituents become agential through

their inter-relating'. Here, the drive for replicability and generalizability as primary design goals is reimagined through the lens of sensitivity to power, politics, class, gender and embodied knowledge and practices where these dimensions constitute how design is performed and impacts on others. Anna Seravalli and Mette Agger Eriksen (2017) take 'infrastructuring' as a relational approach to understanding and working in and through infrastructures in PD to call on service design to delve further into acknowledging the tension between designers' agendas and lack of control by attuning to the always-incomplete, always-in-process nature of infrastructuring and systems' complex contexts.

Accounting for our worldview is a risky move, especially if objectivity is privileged as the basis of knowledge. However, we have learnt that how we account for worldviews among actors and how we engage with their interrelations and differences, *matters* for how we make meaning and take action (Crenshaw, 1991; Grossberg, 2010; Hall, 2009; Hall et al, 2013; Haraway, 1991). We counter the criticism of lacking objectivity to argue that assuming or ignoring one's worldview is as problematic in understanding and sharing the complexity of design practices. This is because (service) design is a discipline geared towards changing and intervening in people's lives and futures, allegedly for their 'betterment'. If this is design's claim, we argue that making transparent how and why designers and researchers privilege certain phenomena more than others is an ethical concern and commitment.

Thus, our approach is to inscribe the person, their relations and positions, 'back' into service design to speak to factors that are imagined as components of services but left conspicuously missing. The methodology of this paper is to use a series of vignettes tracing key moments of a co-design workshop as a means for re-thinking the role of people in designing for service.¹ We ground this discussion in our differently situated experiences of the workshop, written alternately by each author (Shana Agid as S and Yoko Akama as Y in italics). The experience of being positioned through this workshop, and of trying to position participants, respectively, is framed as a metaphor for our work across fields of co-designing with people (including SD and PD). We use this narrative as a core fulcrum to discuss the importance of positionality, relationality and movement in service design as both emergent conditions and as (unknown) material. It is important to note that the workshop *itself* is not service design or undertaken as part of a service design project.

These vignettes are devices providing entry points for readers to imagine this experience together, using an auto-ethnographic technique that Yoko has been using. The stories are 'anecdotal and recalled that way, given that they were never formally documented. They were developed from notes and reflective thoughts combined with recollections, as a way of creating accounts for entry points into experience... there is a fictocritical quality to the fragments in order to accentuate moments and my perception that can never be captured in a video or a transcript' (Akama 2015, p. 265). It echoes John Mason's (2002, p. 57) *Discipline of Noticing* to give 'brief-but-vivid narrative', and Stacy Holman Jones' (2016, p. 229) critical autoethnography, where; 'Instead of stories *or* theory, aesthetics *or* knowledge, art *or* autoethnography, we need a language that unsettles the ordinary while spinning a good story.' Thus, the methodology switches between two modes of writing; one based in the workshop description and reflection, and another that unpacks and frames this through service/participatory/design discourse. In the analysis, we use the customer journey map as a fulcrum, selected from the plethora of methods on offer, as the best illustration of use that predicts or prescribes actions between people and their idealized outcomes, often with the aim to *fix* the positions and relationships as an end-point or in their use to diagnose problems at specific 'pain points'. Through the vignettes and their discussion, we propose instead that how we find and make capacities for creating knowing in practice needs to attend more to what we call *freezing*. By this we mean making provisional stops in the midst

¹ This co-design workshop was led by Sissel Olander and Shana Agid during a design conference on design and power at NORDES 2017. The workshop sought to explore strategies for "doing" critique and making (possibilities for) action in constructive design research. Its aim was to investigate and discuss how practice-based design researchers position ourselves as critical and / or post-critical interveners and change agents in complex project set-ups with collaborators situated in a range of ways (Agid, S. and Olander, S., 2017).

of designing with people to see how practitioners are positioned, in relationship to whom and to what, and grapple with what this means for what comes next in emergent processes intended to design open and ‘ongoing’ services and systems (Servalli & Eriksen, 2017). In sharing our reflection and analysis in a deliberately unconventional way, we demonstrate three things in line with our argument on the doing of service design and the positioning of designers and the people we imagine in services:

- 1) This way of accounting commits to feminist and phenomenological worldviews by making ourselves accessible and situated. The co-design workshop is a distilled story to illustrate how it can perform almost like a parable or haiku in offering up lessons on specificity and emergence. We attempt to make our stories relevant to others by overlaying them with analysis and interrogation, thereby combining theory and everyday language. This technique is offered as a speculative means for insights and granularity to be shared as research, in contrast to reporting that strips away personal voices and partial perspectives.
- 2) The drawings we show as examples articulate different traces of movement. They work to fix and freeze positionality, relationality and movement. But, we argue that the intentionality and possible effects of each differs; one attempts to learn, open up, and co-explore together (Fig. 2, 3), and another attempts to capture and prescribe how something ought to be, how it can be, or has been imagined to work (best) (Fig. 1). We argue that the affordance and intentionality of the former drawings could re-frame the way a method like the journey map could be considered and used.
- 3) Taken all together, we go beyond accounting our worldview to posit the need for pluriversal (rather than universal) and heterogeneous ontology of design as a significant paradigm shift in service design to accompany the transitions it is making from the previous focus of the materiality of objects and touchpoints to intangible experiences and infrastructures. We believe this can help to acknowledge that we are living in a continually emergent world, constituted by changing configurations of various things, including the positions and relationships of people in and to the various systems and infrastructures that make up the field of service design and its realm of practice.

Journey Maps: rethinking positionality and relationality

Author S: My co-facilitator and I proposed a workshop at a design conference, to learn from one another and from participants’ experiences and ideas. We brought the usual materials – pens, sticky notes, big sheets of paper – to help us in this task. The space and people were new to me, and our focus was on ideas I was still working through. I was nervous. We’d planned a series of nested exercises, moving participants from individual questions to mapped networks of ideas and practices, and a final, if still provisional, outcome. As we got underway, I quickly began to see that how people oriented to their own questions, practices, and expectations didn’t always align with what we, as workshop designers, had planned or anticipated. Our explicit aim had been to bring differently situated practitioners and researchers together, but what we discovered in real time was that even anticipating difference does not account for how it emerges in practice. Some people came late and others had to leave early. We hadn’t anticipated the impact of what registered as disruptions and severed conversations, as lost points of connection. I stood alternately at the front of the room and close by people working at tables, and watched the participants’ knitted brows as they engaged with the workshop activities. They seemed focused and willing, but also were clearly trying to sort out what we were asking them to do. I wanted to make it work better, to make sense, and I wanted us to be able to talk about what we’d (all?) come to talk about – to be useful. My co-facilitator and I exchanged glances, questions, and ideas as we worked to make sense along with them, reorienting people’s engagements back to the workshop aims, and our own efforts toward keeping meaningful conversation going so that we might emerge with outcomes we had planned in hand, or at least in progress...

We start here with the aims and emergent dislocations of a design workshop to acknowledge that, first, how people are positioned in design processes and designed systems matters. From this facilitator's perspective, we can see that people's positions, needs and assumptions about their own and others' participation are simultaneously anticipated and impossible to anticipate. This impacts both how and what is designed, despite or because of intentions and capacities to anticipate or prepare. That people would bring a range of interests, investments, and imagined outcomes was never in question. How these would shape interpersonal dynamics, the use and capacity of time and materials, and activate the positions of various actors in the space was emergent and highly relational. In other words, this workshop, like most co-designing with people, had multiple and unpredictable levels of nuance to be navigated and negotiated by all those present, together and separately.

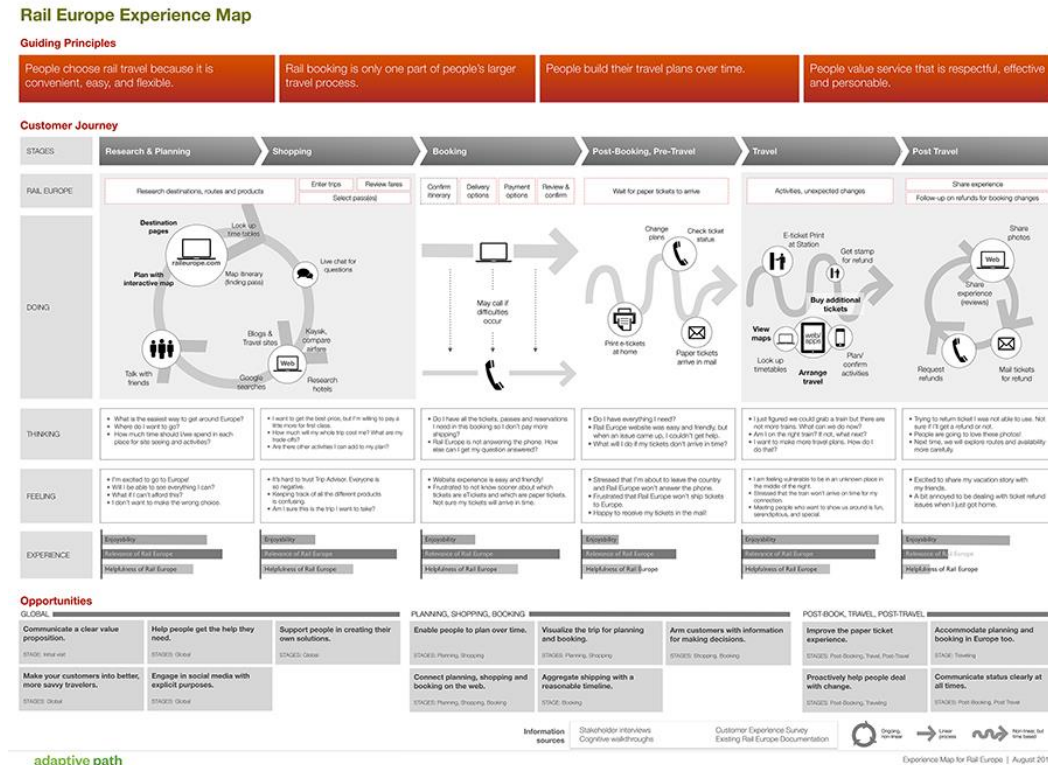


Figure 1. A journey map from Polaine, Løvlie and Reason (2013)

In contrast, current methods like personas, journey maps and blueprints can artificially pin down the experiences of various human and non-human actors in service systems for the purpose of understanding people and what they might do or ought to. This is evident in the example journey map (Fig. 1). The problem of fixing these too readily has been critiqued by scholars and practitioners in service design (see Akama & Prendiville, 2013; Blomberg & Darrah, 2014). As evidenced by widely used 'how to' books by Stickdorn & Schneider (2011) and Polaine, Løvlie and Reason (2013), we observe that personas tend to rely, even at their best, on amalgams of a 'majority' – real or imagined – made by designers or some, but rarely all, of the people implicated in a service. The journey map is often used as a means for mapping and reading into the behavior of an existing or imagined actor in a service system, in order to either diagnose problems or predict use. The blueprint, like the architectural document for which it is named, is a literacy-specific totality – seeking to map an entire service system, but often in a way only some can fully understand. These tools, as they are often used, rely upon producing abstractions of a sometimes limited range of experiences as a means for generalizing ideas around which a service might be designed. In other words, the tools themselves are meant to produce concrete (enough) answers to questions typically framed by designers or clients, to move the design towards 'improvement'. In this way, these methods capture 'insights' to be fashioned into proxies for people in service design

processes. The people imagined in relation to proposed services or in analyses of existing services can only be as complete or real as the comprehension and representation allowed back into the service process. As such, accounting for people – who, indeed, is imagined and how – strike us as the most important questions and means of producing knowledge in the ongoing development of service design practice.

Designers are often imagined, explicitly or not, as owners of agency and action in a design engagement; their work both defines and guides the participation of others, usually toward known or anticipated goals (even if also aimed at discovering unknowns along the way). But the vignette above starts to skew this perception to reveal ‘what shapes the social practices in which such experiences are embedded or to their politics’ (Kimbell & Blomberg, 2017, p. 85). In order to illustrate this further, we give another account by a participant (Author Y) to uncover how participants engaged in designed activities are situated as actors in their own right in defining or reimagining possible outcomes, through relation to both facilitators and to other participants. Y’s vignette below accounts the specificity of how she came to find herself at, and oriented to, a designed space or interaction. In this sharing we explore the implications of squaring our attention on both this specificity and the emergent experiences and ideas of an actor through their participation.

Author Y: I participated in this workshop because I know the facilitators, and I wanted to support their work, and the theme suggested to be co-explored was intriguing. Quick introductions by the other attendees revealed a mix of diverse experiences and backgrounds, some who I knew already, and this promised to make an exciting exploration. Soon into our small group discussion that covered rich and vast grounds, I realised that our conversations were sliding all over the place. Maybe our group drifted away from the main focus, or the style of facilitation was to keep it free-flowing and accommodating. My group was getting confused, and I sensed that other participants were also becoming thrown. I didn’t want to interfere with the facilitators’ desire for openness and inclusivity to see what might emerge, but I also felt their nervousness, so I tried to rein the group back on topic again, but by then, I had lost why and what we were attempting to do.

As Y reveals, this group of participants was not a neutral clustering of strangers, and extending this observation, it is likely that others, too, had motivations, expectations, characteristics and pre-existing relationships that conditioned their participation. As the group moved forward, those who had begun to invest in the process – those who planned it, and those who followed or helped to guide and remake it – also began working together. This kind of engagement, then, balances on a knife edge between resisting the fear of getting nowhere and being content with, even open to, arriving somewhere different than expected. Here, the dynamic of the group seemed responsive to the dynamic of the facilitators, who in turn were also responding to the group.

Attending to these nuanced ways of being situated, as participants, designers, and facilitators, allows for more complex positions and possibilities to emerge, where, for instance, as both Y and S describe, there is a shared sense of confusion, hopefulness, interest, or frustration. This becomes, in turn, a site for building shared (or divergent) process. As Y observes, the feelings of ‘drifting’, being ‘thrown’ and ‘lost’, means there is an unmooring or disruption to certainty. Rather than mitigating this as a problem, such disruptions are productively harnessed in PD as ‘agonistic pluralism’ (Björgvinsson et. al, 2010) as a way to reveal phenomena, agendas and politics hidden from view. Instead of attempting to synchronize the articulation of issues, some scholars in PD have embraced conflict, contradictions and the contingent as the premise of group dynamics. ‘Being thrown out of one’s certainty and comfort is to also discontinue, abandon and reorient one’s approach and to change tack’ (Akama et al., 2015, p. 142) so that we might let go of our own perspectives in order to see others’, or to reimagine or intervene on the way forward. We see this in action in the next vignette.

Fixing, freezing, and being in motion – making sense with the unknown

Author S: *I was sensing among participants a difficulty in materializing or embodying what was taking place. I wondered where we would find ourselves and how we would see each other if we moved off the page and into the room. In a flash of mixed desperation and excitement – a familiar emotional state for a facilitator – I remembered an activity I'd learned recently, and with just fifteen minutes left, interrupted the process underway and asked if the group would be open to trying it out. The activity I proposed was entirely about motion, making tentative bonds of relationship that shift according to individuals' positions and decisions and to the group's form and environment. I asked everyone to walk around the room, avoiding objects and other people, at a range of paces, according to numbers that I called out – 1 being slow to 10 being a run. As people got used to this movement, I introduced a new rule: choose two people without telling them, and continue moving about the room at a medium pace while now also trying to keep yourself in an equilateral triangle with the people you've chosen.*

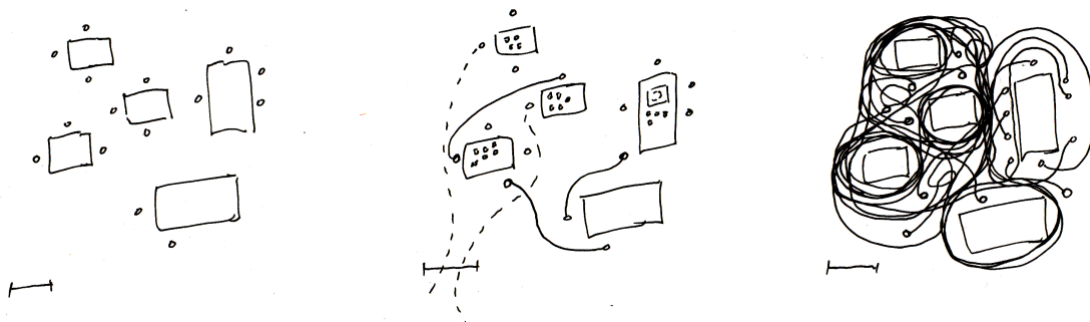


Figure 2. A sketch notation of physical movements in the workshop, as people left mid-way, groups reconfigured in adjustment, and, finally, during the impromptu exercise

Author Y: *The task sounds simple enough when we're sitting and receiving the instructions. In order to move away from a sense of going nowhere towards doing something, we all eagerly start walking. As soon as we meander among the tables and chairs, I have become part of an uncontrolled larger mass of bodies, constantly moving at different speeds, negotiating pace, proximity and visibility. My whole attention is taken by the focus I give to the two people I have locked on to, though they don't know it, and it's impossible to keep in view what others are doing. I am pulled and shunted by the uneven pace of the two bodies, shifting angles when they do, and I find myself trying not to bump into other people and the desks. It feels chaotic even when we are all following and conforming to a simple instruction. It's only when we are asked to stop that I can make sense of everyone's position.*

The two vignettes, from facilitator S and participant Y, describe many movements. We see a shift in direction by the facilitator in response to the time limit and their hopes, but mainly by considering the participants' confusion, and thus, a move toward an altered way of engagement and thinking. The new exercise provides a learning opportunity about being in and out of position. It also helps us see that it is about being in relation to others and being in motion in a way that makes maintaining position difficult, or in the throes of process that is always contested by the space, by others, etc. As described by Y, there are multiple bodies in motion that determines Y's intention to simply be in equidistance to the other two people. She feels being 'pulled and shunted by the uneven pace', of trying to both stay connected and be aware of obstacles and the unfamiliar space. Her individual agency and intention is compromised constantly in the evolving circumstance and it reveals this is not in anyone's control – not hers, not the facilitators', and not the two people whom she is following. These stories together reveal the ways in which what we can know, and what we can build (on), is dependent on how that knowledge is made in relation to others, to emergent needs and shared aims, and in the practice of our movements together (Agid, 2016a; Gordon, 2004; Suchman, 2002).

These vignettes are also moments of frozen motion that enable us to look at positions in relation in detail (Fig. 2). Indeed, this is also the case for Y, who can only 'make sense' when

she is 'asked to stop'. Like a game of freeze-tag, stopping in place is only fleeting before we can run around again. In other words, these frozen moments are hypothetical or imagined states that helps us to understand where we are positioned proximally or remotely to others, that can help 'make strange' a phenomenon that might be fleeting (Bell et. al., 2005).

This brings us to the core critique of our paper. To confuse this momentary freezing with what we've described above as 'fixing' is highly problematic to us because it highlights deliberate omission when there is a strategic focus to streamline and manage (or put in more menacing way, 'control') the ways people might *join>move>pay>use>leave* or such stages in a seamless flow, as implied by diagrams like figure 1. We know as people interacting daily with service providers, that our motives, behaviours and experiences are never this clear, logical or seamless. We also know that as practitioners with experience creating the journey map that the whiteboard or the workshop wall is covered with an explosion of 'insight' sticky notes, yet the method requires us to wrangle order through deletion, generalization and looking for common patterns to synthesize and present something that resembles figure 1. What is deleted, ignored or omitted from synthesis is often the random, illogical, unpredictable idiosyncrasies that arguably make us human. These are the kinds of inconsistencies that feature in our vignettes. Any intervention and decision-making in designing is an ethical and political act, yet not enough attention is placed upon what is *left out* as well as what is *left in* a journey map, and as significant, the processes finally proposed through such tools.

How can such methods can be reimagined, added to, or problematized? Instead of drawing inspirations from systems engineering and architectural blueprints with lines already laden with precision and prediction, what if we looked to notations in music, dance and performance (Fig. 3)? Could we practice *with* these vicissitudes and interruptions, and with the necessarily contradictory and conflicted orientation many have to the services, institutions, and infrastructures with which they engage – as workers, customers, or recipients, whether by choice or not? Could a different articulation be attentive to possibilities, and discomforts, of 'being pulled and shunted' or 'shifting angles' with others in a design process?

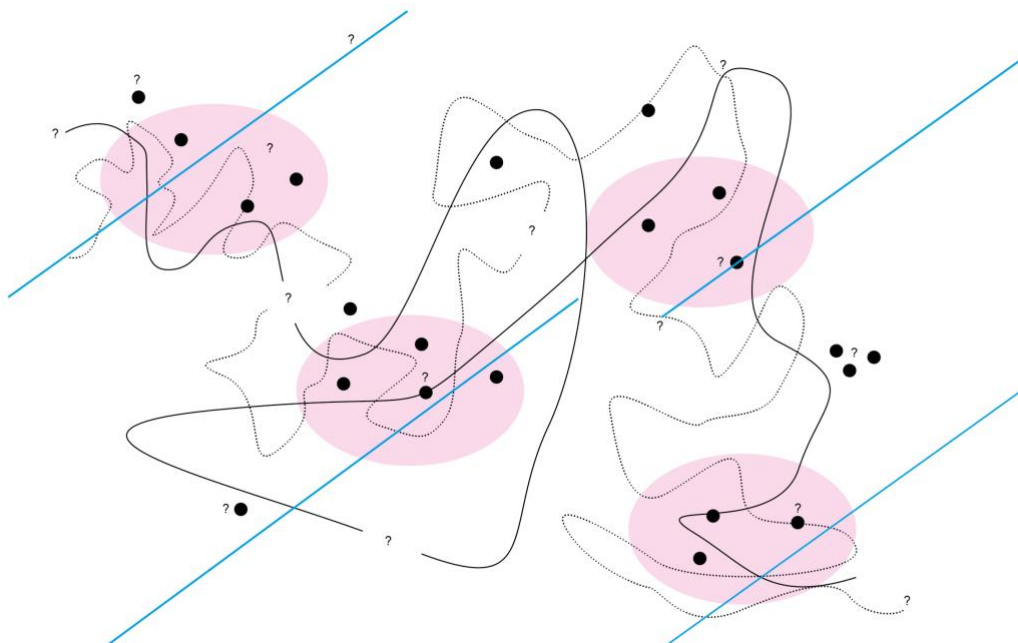


Figure 3. A metaphoric notation, inspired by John Cage's *Fontana Mix* (1958)

The proposition of this approach, we imagine, is an argument for producing these movements and their notations in conversation with people deeply implicated in and affected by an existing or proposed service ecology (Agid, 2016b). Each of these graphical elements – lines, dots, circles, etc. are open-ended questions for co-exploration. They can

become placeholders to freeze dimensions that may or may not matter – moments of clarity or confusion, being on or off track, getting lost or finding a new direction. This approach attends to the shifting production of knowledge and meaning among participants that might confound or rearrange what we think we were doing in a given process. This is not a journey map as we know it, but it is another kind of mapping that could be created processually, to call attention to how we orient to things like listening and sensing, and how we choose to work with, or cast out, answers and experiences that are unexpected or that fundamentally challenge questions or goals with which we begin. If we engage in the work of understanding how people that are differently situated might experience, desire, or dread engaging with a service system, we can begin to treat these maps as placeholders or catalysts with known limits. They do not suggest representing the ‘real’ or the ‘whole system’ but can be used in context and in action to reveal or produce meaning.

In this way we can ask questions of our tools and ourselves as we use them. We are free to transparently frame another purpose for use in context. These tools and our use of them could become a means for talking about experiences, opening up nuanced and shifting understandings of stories / meanings / needs / desires / values that will, in turn, be raised by and negotiated in a designed system. It might reveal people about whom assumptions are being made, or to whom no outreach has been made, such as the housekeeping staff of a hotel, discussed earlier, or as with *Airbnb*, those implicated in the disappearance of even more affordable housing. We might even go as far as saying that our ethics of using such tools is to reveal conflict, serendipity, cultural assumptions, missed connections, or false promises, rather than hide or disguise them under more desirable experiences. Knowing and using our tools (and their limits) this way requires both an openness to irresolvability and mess and to new meanings - even ‘undesignable’ ones - being revealed as critically important in the process. This, we contend, means taking seriously the real potentials and complexities of putting people at the centre of service design.

Conclusion

The emergent is clearly a primary material and condition of service design. Services and the people who use them, work in them, and oversee them are all inherently inconstant. This acknowledgement has yet to have significant impact in service design, due to the legacy, mindsets and dominance of a certain worldview, as discussed in the introduction. Such dominant tendencies can *fix* what cannot be predicted by creating models of what is deemed most imagineable, likely, desired (often by a service provider or company), or pragmatic (Dorst, 2015). We argue that shifting from materiality of objects to focus on immaterial experiences and infrastructures requires a fundamental shift in this worldview. We have been reminded through embodied experiences of being a workshop designer, facilitator and participant, that relational encounters are more nuanced and continually changing than is planned or often allowed for in service design discourse. We suggest that turning our attention to the mess of emergent, unfixed knowledge, experience, and positions might allow for an approach to service design that makes more room for people and our relationships to human and non-human actors (Seravalli & Eriksen, 2017). Scholars, most notably in participatory design, have already argued the need for designers working with people to become aware of and understand our positions in relationship to a ‘rich, densely structured landscape of identities and working relations’, inclusive of the ‘subtle and profound differences that actually do divide us’ (Suchman, 2002, p. 92). This is of most use when designers, as Light and Akama (2012) suggest, make space for the inevitable upset plans, rerouted exercises, and reimagined outcomes. Working *with* disruption and collective reimagining emerges as a means for building collaborative capacity (Agid, 2016a).

This continuous re-configuration – the *dance of designing* – means that the attention to our own and others’ space, orientations, capacities, and specificities and their meaningful differences and confluences, point to the usefulness of temporarily freezing motion-in-

action. Acknowledging such moments for analysis, reflection, and building mutual knowledge as a provisional means of creating understanding is to accept that this is always partial. As our experience of the co-design workshop has shown, this orientation to temporality and emergence allows for the meaning made through misunderstandings, newly discovered needs, or restricted opportunities, as they are experienced and shared back by people in service structures, or participating in the process of service design itself. As an epistemological approach to service design, this resists the fixed story preferred by an example like a journey map that relies upon constructing an artifice for the whole of possible experiences, touchpoints, and service flows, by making new, divergent, even oppositional ways of engaging with a system neither visible or actionable. In other words, we are not proposing a new ‘journey map 2.0’ or another critique of method-centricity in (service) design. Instead, we locate our questions at a higher order to ask what the use of such methods conceals, assumes and reveals about our worldviews, and to explore what designing could do beyond disciplinary tendencies and expectations for *fixing*.

We argue the *proof of concept* of such methods, their use and inculcated assumptions – what they make knowable, and how we imagine that to matter for designing – must be revised to premise emergence and the unknown of the social, cultural, political as the material and condition of service design. As a community of practice and research, we need to explore ways to tell stories that may or may not conform to what a designer or client imagines, and may or may not seem to present ‘designable’ opportunities. This means shifting our approach that makes central the conditions of possibility and particularities of experience, and arguing for the value to design and the design of services of these ‘undesignable’ complex engagements and sites of difference. In the spirit of continued inquiry, we propose that more accounts of and deep engagements with how people, systems, objects and all this complex social messiness figure into services are necessary to invite debate and propositions as service design comes of age.

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