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# Precarious Feminine Identities

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by

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## Abstract

This thesis explores, from a DeleuzoGuattarian perspective, the motivations that women find for, and the actions they undertake in leaving intimate partner relationships under which they have suffered emotional and physical derogation at the hands of their abusive other. It seeks to investigate and describe their “minoritarian” actions in the context of a DeleuzoGuattarian stylistic and strategic approach towards departing intimate partner violence (IPV). In this, as well as considering particular aspects of Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptual apparatus, the study pursues the differences opened up by affirmative engagement with the hopefulness of virtualities, and the “lines of flight” these offer for creative possibilities, enduring connections, and novel – if precarious – identities.

The extremes to which the women in this study were pushed reveal the stresses and conflicts in the bid for autonomy and equality inherent in unhappy intimate partner relationships without the frequent rhetoric that masks the difficulties of domestic life. Compounding these women’s problems is the fact that there are few obvious avenues for escape for those trapped in abusive situations, limited support for independence, or programmatic advice on the broad social mandate they must negotiate. The women’s stories reveal deep fissures in the structures of conventional New Zealand families by showing that the latter cannot accommodate or validate relationships that privilege outmoded gender practices over care, commitment, and opportunity for growth. Their stories articulate social and cultural uncertainties about the unstable positions of women in unequal relationships, the physically and emotionally draining demands to which they are subjected, and the struggle to find acceptance in their relationships, which are too often structured not by good will, affection and effort, but by traditional roles and economic hierarchies. The narratives contribute to the conversation on persecuted women’s courage and determination to endure and resist, to develop lines of flight and to expand their lives despite intolerable pressures, as well as offering a DeleuzoGuattarian conceptual pragmatic underpinning of action. It shows that assertive independent action engenders empowering becoming, and it suggests that where women initiate schizoanalytic breaks, where they embrace precarity, they can discover creative and fulfilling lives.

### Key words:

becoming, schizoanalysis, lines of flight, majoritarian, minoritarian, molar, molecular, rhizome, deterritorialization, desiring machines, body without organs

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## Preface

### Precarious Feminine Identities

. . . the real issue is not exhausted by stating it as an aim, but by carrying it out, nor is the result the actual whole, but rather the result together with the process through which it came about (G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §3).

Intuition is the joy of difference (Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts*).

It would be interesting to know what it is people are most afraid of. Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what they fear most . . . (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Crime and Punishment*).

Life is a process of becoming (Anaïs Nin, *D. H. Lawrence: An Unprofessional Study*).

### Research Goal and Questions

The goals of this research project are:

- Through the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, to examine and consider a selection of women's narratives of living under and moving away from situations of domestic violence.
- To identify the range, structure, selection, content, form, and presentation of the discursive and other performative strategies used by women living with a history of intimate partner violence (IPV).
- To analyse the strategies used by women living with a history of intimate partner violence, and to identify those strategies which are particularly efficacious in moving out of abusive environments.
- To develop an interdisciplinary research design that blends findings from sociological, philosophical, psychoanalytical and political theories, which is relevant as valid, reliable and practical application.
- To expand the understanding of IPV through increasing knowledge and justified interpretation of relational factors, social, historical, material and interpersonal; thence, to identify a portmanteau of effective strategies that oppressed women might use to develop

subjectivities that their “social scripts circumscribe” (Hekman, 2010, p. 100); hence, to suggest that women’s “ontological desire” (Braidotti, 2002, p. 22), is their wish to create themselves as independent singularities; thereby, to assert female difference as both epistemological standpoint and political project.

- To contribute to the programme of decreasing the incidence and degree of intimate partner violence through the use of effective strategies, discursive and other actual productions and movements, as applied DeleuzoGuattarian pragmatics.

### Structure and Presentation of Thesis

Following the title of this thesis, and suggesting both the fragility and the strength of women in precarious positions, I adopt three images from fiction: **Josephine** (Kafka, 1952), **Reepicheep** (C. S. Lewis, 1978), and **Ratty** (Grahame, 2010). These creatures are figures of minoritarian positioning, set somewhat apart from mainstream inclusion, yet, or *due to* their distantiated perspective, offering connective insight, and recuperating the positivity that can be obtained from the term ‘precarity’. Reepicheep, a "gay and martial mouse" (Lewis , 1978, p. 73), “well over a foot high” (p. 73), speaks in a shrill, piping voice, and, though, according to his author, he represents nothing, he is nevertheless emblematic of courage, vision and unconquerable determination. For Kafka, of all the Mouse People, Josephine is the only one who understands the power of music; “when she dies, music – who knows for how long – will vanish from [the Mouse People’s] lives” (Kafka, 1952, p. 304). Ratty, friend and supporter of all the creatures in the wide wood, possessing a deep sense of community, is awakened by “a sweet unrest” (Grahame, 2010: p. 94), and “[s]uch music as I never dreamed of” (p. 75), and is ever ready to follow those forces that lead to great adventure. All exemplify the resolution, independent thinking, and purposefulness of the women in this study.

Following the Introduction, Josephine begins Chapter Two, “Deleuze and Guattari’s Ontology”. The Mouse Singer’s openness to new experience and her capacity to de- and re-territorialise her situation compares with a similar ability of the women who developed the trajectories of their lives through increased and strengthened affections. Josephine introduces Deleuze and Guattari’s theories as they apply to the study. Chapter Three, “Conceptual Underpinnings”, like Ratty’s Piper at the “Gates of Dawn” (Grahame, 2010, pp. 71-80), provides the rationalisation

for Deleuze and Guattari's theories, while Chapter Four, "Prereflexions", investigates the requirement of thinking through the background issues surrounding the undertaking of this work. Chapter 5, "Disruptions and Transitions", explores, like Reepicheep, the voyages and processes undertaken by the women. Then, Reepicheep's and Ratty's and Josephine's heroic actions demonstrate many of the characteristics of the women in Chapter 6, "The Women: Mobility, Transformation, Identity".

In the "Conclusion", Josephine reminds us of the vulnerability that opens existence precariously to both pain and joy, fear and overcoming, hurt and new life. Precarity has motivational and ethical value, in contrast to the negative (patriarchal) assumptions of helplessness and deficiency. As the women show, it may prompt the development of self-awareness, compassionate empathy and communal interconnectivity.

The last word goes to C. S. Lewis: "Some day, you will be old enough to read fairy stories again", he said. The stories in this study are of such stuff because they are, in the main, what the women dreamed they might achieve. "We are what we believe we are"<sup>1</sup>, said Lewis. The women enacted their beliefs.

Throughout, footnotes appear at the bottom of pages to provide supplementary information, to sustain focus, and to avoid the clutter of references and the irksome task of scrolling to locate endnotes.

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<sup>1</sup> Both quotes from: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/three-objections-to-fairy-tales-and-c-s-lewiss-response>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract		ii
Acknowledgements		iii
Preface		iv
Introduction	Why Domestic Violence? Why Deleuze and Guattari?	1
Chapter 2	Deleuze and Guattari's Ontology	12
Chapter 3	Conceptual Apparatus	45
Chapter 4	Prereflections	73
Chapter 5	Disruptions and Transitions	107
Chapter 6	The Women: Mobility, Transformation, Identity	128
Conclusion		227
References		231
Appendices		260



## Introduction

### Why Domestic Violence? Why Deleuze and Guattari?

It is estimated that one in three women in New Zealand is the victim of family violence, physical or sexual (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). The 2018 New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey estimates that about a fifth of New Zealand women experience one or more episodes of intimate partner violence (IPV) during their lifetime, and on average, police attend a family violence incident every five and a half minutes – 279 calls every day, though it is estimated that at least 80% of family violence incidents are not reported to the police. Between 2009-2015, 92 people, mostly women, died as the result of intimate partner violence. On average, 13 women are killed each year as a result of family violence (*It's Not OK*). This homicide rate per capita is more than twice that of Australia, Canada or the United Kingdom (Milne, Maury, & Gulliver, 2018).

In 2013, there were 95 080 family violence notifications made to police. Some 70% of these call outs were IPV. Sexual violence is also frequent: 16.8% of New Zealand women report having experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime; 33-39% of New Zealand women experience physical or sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime (Fanslow et al, 2010; *Snapshot: New Zealand Family Violence Clearing House, Data Summaries 2017*), and one in four women in New Zealand report having been sexually abused in childhood (Fanslow et al, 2010).

The study by Martin and Pritchard (2010), indicates that a woman is in most danger of being killed when she threatens to leave, or actually leaves her partner. Most children killed in domestic violence incidents are killed before they are five years old, and nearly half are under one. This suggests that the time of couple separation and the first year of having a baby are crucial points for the eruption of violence. In my own area, the Eastern Police District has higher than average call-out rates for offences relating to family violence (*New Zealand Police, 2015*). In the year to June 2011, some 3500 Protection Orders were recorded in Napier and Hastings (*DOVE, 2011*). In 2016, police conducted 118,910 investigations relating to family violence, 55% of those violent towards women were partners or ex-partners (Swarbrick, "Domestic violence", 2020).

Intimate partner violence is a serious social issue in New Zealand. The opening estimate is that one in three women<sup>2</sup> has been the victim of domestic violence in their lifetime (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004), while a more recent estimate is that only 9% of sexual offences are brought to the attention of police (Mayhew & Reilly, 2007). When psychological and emotional abuse is added to the list, 18.2% of ever-partnered women claim to have experienced one or more forms of IPV (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). In New Zealand, a woman is killed every 3½ weeks by her partner or ex-partner, and a child is killed every 5 weeks by a member of his or her own family. On average, 14 women, 6 men and 10 children are killed by a family member every year. Between 2000 and 2004, 56 women, 26 men and 39 children under the age of 17 were killed by a family member (*New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2007*). Between 2002 and 2006, 70 of the 79 perpetrators of couple-related homicides were men. 60 of the 77 victims were the perpetrators' female partners or ex-partners (Martin & Pritchard, 2010). In 2014, NZ Police recorded 7 homicides by an intimate partner – 5 women and 2 men (*New Zealand Police, 2015*). Police are called to some 200 domestic violence situations a day – one every seven minutes. In 2005, New Zealand Police recorded more than 60 000 offences and non-offence incidents involving family violence, at which some 74 000 children and young people under the age of 17 were present or involved in some capacity (*Risk Assessment and Intervention for Family Violence – NZS 8006: 2006*).

In 2014, 101 981 family violence investigations were reported (Fink, 2015), and in a recent NZ study, Fanslow and Robinson stated that “5% of ever-partnered women [claimed to have] experienced IPV in their lifetime: 33% had experienced more than one type of IPV (usually psychological/emotional violence and physical and/or sexual violence), and 22% had experienced one type of IPV” (Fanslow & Robinson, 2011). In 2017, 55% ever-partnered New Zealand women reported experiencing IPV in their lifetime.

Nevertheless, thousands of cases go unreported; police estimate they see only 18% of all violence within homes (*New Zealand Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2007*). The economic cost

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<sup>2</sup> NZ research on partner abuse indicates that 33-39% of women experience violence (Fanslow & Robinson, 2004). UK and Australian Research into violence against women (VAW) shows that some 50% of women are affected by VAW in their lifetime (Walby & Allen, 2004. Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey, London: Home Office; Mouzos & Makkai, 2004, Women's Experiences of Male Violence: Findings from the Australian Component of the International Violence Against Women Survey, Canberra, Australia Institute of Criminology.)

of these incidents is estimated at between \$1.2 and \$5.8 billion each year (Snively, 1995). Yet it seems that silence surrounding the issue of IPV is not the problem. In Towns and Adams' (2000) New Zealand study, over 75% of respondents reported that they had told someone about the violence; over 40% indicated they received no help.

Further, a 2011-2012 UN report on the progress of the world's women revealed New Zealand's high rate of maternal mortality, and high intimate partner violence. In the report, *Progress of the world's women: in pursuit of justice*, New Zealand is ranked 14th of 14 countries for incidence of domestic violence, and 30% of New Zealand women reported having experienced physical violence from intimate partners over the period 2000-2010. Sexual violence from intimate partners shows a similar trend with New Zealand coming 12th of 12 countries with 14% of New Zealand women stating they had experienced sexual violence from an intimate partner.

In addition to the obvious emotional distress of women who experience domestic violence, the weight of statistical evidence supports the view that repeated experience of IPV is a major contributor to women's ill-health and undergirds a range of health outcomes, including poor mental and physical health, lowered self-esteem, anaclitic dependency, suicidal ideation, and other problems of daily living. Women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to experience pain, depression, and sleep problems.

The rates of domestic abuse and the strong associations with multiple physical and mental health effects imply that intimate partner violence is as significant a factor as poverty in contributing to ill-health. With regard to this, the *New Zealand Women's Refuge Report (2014)*, finds that victims of domestic violence are 55% more likely than others to be receiving a benefit, and 15% more likely to be unemployed. When psychological abuse was included, 55% of New Zealand women have experienced IPV. In 2015, when psychological abuse is included, 18% had experienced one or more forms of IPV. One in three (35%) women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence in their lifetime (*NZFVC Data Summaries, 2017*). Safety concerns obliging some women to leave their homes and correlative support networks and the costs of ill health associated with lowered income (e.g., respiratory illnesses, nutritional complaints, days off work), combine to form a depressing outlook for women in these circumstances.

The high prevalence of domestic violence and its association with a range of physical and mental disorders and social disruption warrants attention as a significant factor requiring preventive methods focusing not just on reducing the incidence of violence against women, mainly intimate partner violence, but also on developing and making available to women and girl victims of violence appropriate discursive strategies within their domestic settings as part of a wider strategy against domestic abuse. The New Zealand Government, spurred by the burgeoning statistics of the hitherto explicitly denied or repressed reality of domestic violence and the instigation of the first Women's Refuge in 1973, passed the Domestic Protection Act (1982) through Parliament, which aimed to address intimate partner discord through interventions such as marriage counselling. Regrettably, these interventions have not had the sustained success hoped for, perhaps because the parties concerned lacked the sophisticated understanding required for success, perhaps because targetting violent men and battered women actually confirmed pre-existing groupings. Most programmes, from the ongoing Hamilton Abuse Intervention Programme (HAIP) to the erratic Owen Glenn-funded investigation into domestic violence, have failed to lessen the incidence of domestic violence, and despite the continuing search for models for conceptualising, identifying and intervening IPV, little effective progress has been observed.

These issues warrant a considerable, sustained investment in policy formulation and the provision of resources for prevention of violence against women. There may be circumstances in which medication assists initially in the clinical management of symptoms associated with personal problems, and there are certainly situations calling for community intervention. But long-term solutions require approaches that women can actually use to effect change and develop autonomy, purpose and relational harmony. Intervention initiatives have generally focused on quantitative empirical studies (Jackson, et al, 2003), that often lack sufficient size to justify authentic generalisation (see Feder & Wilson, 2005; Laing, 2003; Robertson, 1999). Difficulties with standardisation of measurement, participation and selection biases, Type I and II errors, all decrease the statistical power of conclusions. Moreover, safety concerns, history effects and the placebo effect diminish the validity of results obtained through quantitative research, though findings gained through such measures have an ultimate role to play in underpinning conclusions reached through qualitative endeavours.

Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are two sides of the same coin; indeed, it may be said that the more deeply a researcher uses the one method, the more obvious it becomes that the study demands the implementation of the other. This study respects both theoretical approaches as it focuses on the stories and perspectives of those women who have been directly involved in IPV and whose experiences form the heart of the investigation. Nevertheless, because so many variables in this study are indeterminate of description and measurement in any objective way, e.g., building a relationship between interviewer and participant, establishing trust, respect, and confidentiality, and developing flexibility in adjusting to the flow of discourse, that an approach more attuned to the nuances of participant response with no sacrifice of rigour is required.

A critical analysis of talk provides the potential for such a programme where it allows for case-by-case ideographic and deductive/abductive/inductive simplifications of new conceptualisations via transversal “lines of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 89) – Deleuze and Guattari’s “deterritorialization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 12, and elsewhere)<sup>3</sup> – so that perceptions change their nature, and new roles, identities, relationships, desirings, and ways of being in the world are explored. “Critical” here is used in the specific sense of investigating connections that may be obscured, like the connections between language, power and ideology. A critical analysis of women’s discourse investigates these gaps and contradictions and seeks to identify determinants – both empowering and confining – hidden in the overarching system of personal and social relationships, and how these might be altered, both by becoming aware of linguistic conventions and by changing language, to the advantage of women suppressed by dominating discourses. Utterance is action and the performance of speech acts is a form of action that presupposes the capacity to resist customary subjectivities and adopt/create new ones, always changing. Deleuze’s thought is concerned with the real effects of “multiplicities”, i.e., relational entities, particularly the relation to oneself, and this requires the construction of new concepts, so as to think the unthought, “the [unconscious] other in me” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 81). Acts of thinking through the dynamic field of forces of

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<sup>3</sup> “Deterritorialisation” occurs when an event or body frees potential from its origin in an act of producing new lines of becoming. Acts of deliberate deterritorialisation in which bodies are transformed are elements of an *active* philosophy. In contrast, where such acts refer back to some original presence, sense, affect or being, they are part of a reactive worldview. “Reterritorialisation” is the next step, wherein new machinic assemblages, identified only by their connections, are temporarily formed. On Deleuze and Guattari’s view, no aspect of life is other than machinic; life just is different connections producing different machines.

action imply sensitivity to prevailing conditions and comprehension of non-proportional and non-linear connections of cause and effect. Acts of thinking serially deterritorialise an individual's spatio-temporal boundaries because they concern differences between forms, prompting a becoming-different, a movement (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 3). This displacement signals a productive present, tenuously assembled between a past whose aleatory forces have had unpredictable effects and a future<sup>4</sup> whose different forces will constitute new events. Subjectivity is produced in a process of "individuation", which is always already populated by "gangs" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 19) anyway, of conjugalities, each going about its own business, making its own demands, which the individual claims as her identity.

The implicit social and political background, insisting on the dialectic relation of knowledge within its social embeddedness (Bakhtin's "primacy of context over text" (1982, p. 428), is the site providing emotional and ontological support, and at the same time offering the opportunity of movement towards differing expressive knowledge and the reconfiguration of new tacit knowledge, new desires, and more assertive behaviours. In the interview situation, this approach – listening awry – involved helping women to express their desires and fears in a social space of interviewer/interviewee: a space of symbolic self-restraint, benevolent distance, and acceptance, and dual knitting-together. Attuned to syntactic displacements and condensations, to themes of coherence and consistency as well as to pitch, tessitura, modulation, and pace; to absences, disturbances, resistances, evasions, aposiopeses, pleonasm, paraprasms, verbal compromise formations, "the domain of free syntheses" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 54), and other inconsistencies, this approach proposes a model where the asymmetric yet reciprocal nature of speech creates, like threads woven into tapestry, a discourse not captured by the capitalist programme of Lacan's University Discourse (2007).

In a backgrounded world of constantly changing cultural images, exploitative consumerism and transient relationships, the search for an "objective correlative"<sup>5</sup> of meanings at the intersection of the interpersonal and the wider social sphere has become urgent. The public

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<sup>4</sup> For feminism, the nature of Deleuze's conceptualization, following Bergson (1988, 1992) of the virtual and the actual offers a creative, transgressive, and unpredictable future "propel[ing] the present into a future not entirely contained by it" (E. Grosz, in Buchanan & Colebrook, (Eds.) 2000, p. 230).

<sup>5</sup> T. S. Eliot (1921). "Hamlet and His Problems" in *The Sacred Wood*.

discourses available for discussing intimate partner violence sideline changing perceptions and practices of family care and responsibility in favour of those of a cultural tradition that appears irrefragably natural and inevitable, yet surprisingly open to change when challenged.<sup>6</sup> “Contemporary evidence is contemporary interpretation,” asserts Whitehead (1967, p. 4), but the momentum carried forward from an earlier impetus has slowed and new keys better fit the old locks. Failures in outcomes can be sheeted home not just to deficiencies in technique of remedial intervention, but also to the necessity of abandoning conventional proprieties of unexamined social relations. And applications of new formulas require a change in old ways of behaving. It’s not so much that the wrong questions are asked or that the wrong answers are given, but that the vital questions don’t even arise.

But saying that something is wrong, that current thinking isn’t solving the problem, is not sufficient. What is needed is a deep understanding of the satisfactions and benefits that some women obtain from unhealthy relationships – a site where anamorphic inspection and theory crucially come together. How is it that some women stay in abusive relationships where it seems they actually desire their servitude and subjugation as if it were their salvation? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 28). Why do women invest so much in a system that constantly humiliates and denigrates them? The answer is both chillingly complicated and absurdly simple: As vital parts of the capitalist system, marketing and advertising elevate and channel people’s varying drives into an overwhelming sense of ego-identification that is then considered to be the best, or in the most urgent interest of the person. When someone chooses a course of action over others, it is in line with the currently dominating drive that the person considers to be her core or identity. Deleuze terms this the method of “dramatization” (Deleuze, 1967, 2004a, p. 94).

Accordingly, it is important, as Freud said, that research should focus not merely on the intractability of problems or on the difficulties of interpretation but also on identifying, applying and theorising appropriate abstract ideas.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the seeming impossibility of change due to the vitiation of independent identities in such circumstances is paradoxically the motivation for a quest for the opportunity to create new and flourishing identities. What sorts

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<sup>6</sup> Alisdair MacIntyre writes of Captain Cook’s astonishment in learning of “the lax sexual habits of the Polynesians” (2007, pp. 129-130), as compared to their strict taboo against men and women eating together. Some 40 years later (1819), the latter regulation was abolished with no social consequence.

<sup>7</sup> S. Freud (1933/2001), *S. E. XXII*, p. 81.

of identities? Should women accept a notion of human identity as elaborated by the masculine ideal of the rational, self-sufficient individual with a stable sense of self-identity through time? (Lorraine, 2000, p. 179). Should women, rather, define themselves as “ambiguous, open-ended project[s] of temporal becoming”? (Lorraine, 2000, p. 179). This quest, of necessity, requires two lines of departure because such changes require at least a double movement: the first, a change in the real practices, activities, and exchanges of everyday life, and the second, an abrupt, discontinuous shift in the perception of that reality.

The difference between the two is that of physically transforming the situation in innovative ways and of creatively envisioning new ways of acting: a difference between changing some things in the environment and changing the environment altogether. One of the strategies can be implemented without the other, yet the challenge is to combine the two in temporarily stable synthesis.

While there are competing discourses of intimate partner issues in circulation (e.g., Towns, Adams & Gavey, 2003), I use the expression in its Foucauldian sense as expressing a way of talking about experience that generates and shapes categories and vocabularies, providing a formative impact on the individual’s beliefs of what is real, true, and unchangeable. For women in unsatisfying relationships, a masculine discourse becomes hegemonic when it proposes a comprehensive unification of diverse signifiers, promising the illusion of enjoyment where none exists, prompting repeated acts of identification that attempt to obtain it, thereby encouraging women to engage in a *jouissance* that maintains the status quo. Despite this, contemporary understanding of discourse as constructing unstable and vacillating identities invites a move beyond the limits of language towards acting in the world.

The research offers a perspective that widens the conventional approach to interventions in the domestic sphere by allowing the inclusion of interacting elements of interpersonal, social and political determination, because interactions are dynamic and evolving, multi-linear, multi-causal in both the family and the environment, because minor changes can result in large effects, and because solutions emerge from participants in their specific circumstances rather than received as impositions from outside. What might be changed for future interventions are the broad patterns and systems of disorder and dysfunction in which participants engage, in order to achieve stability by moving from ambiguous “unknown unknowns”, through



unconscious “unknown knows” to clear “known knows” (Žižek, 2006, p. 137). At this location, cause-and-effect relationships can be readily identified, and possible solutions can be acknowledged because both partners in a radically new programme might be empowered to share understanding and agree on ways to respond to and resolve their issues.

Beyond the interview situation, women who come to recognise the subject-positions<sup>8</sup> they hold as signifiers for other signifiers in a fragile programme always with the potential to collapse, may be encouraged to enact other ethical positionings, new agentic power (power as knowledge), and to develop an enhanced capacity to work out matters for themselves. Perhaps the most difficult task is in distinguishing the discourse of precarious justification from that of the value of the partnership. Implicit knowledge, once recognised, expressed, rehearsed, and practised, becomes implicit again, as an additional frame is added to the existing ones and these frames, as new borders, encourage the relationship to self-regulate. The same skills and the same symbols may be present, but they may be reconfigured to form different relationships with real events. The synthesis is not only innovative but is also a creative destruction of entrained thinking and behaviour. It involves women understanding the dispossession, exploitation and “subversion” (Lacan, 2007, 17/12/69), of their language under which they can never fulfil their wish for signification because the imagined consistency (which may nevertheless be fluid and rhizomatic), of signifiers constitutive of their identities is relative to a field of elements externally unintegrated. The project, a never-ending story, can never be concluded, because, unlike economic transactions in late capitalism/consumerism, there is little symmetry or time limit. There may be no one right answer, no precise sense or ultimate value emerging from the project because relationships are always in flux and because dissent demands different approaches according to the situation: the only imperative is to first staunch the bleeding.

In this fashion, under the Guattarian apragmatic model of free speech, parrhesia, implicit knowledge as instrumental use and commodity, as unrecognised intimate linkage between product and means of production, might be revealed to be nothing more than alienated knowledge and deferred desire. The task then, for interviewer and participant, is to determine,

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<sup>8</sup> Throughout the essay, the term “subject” is used, not in the traditional psychological sense of someone who is acted upon in the research project, but in the philosophical sense of personhood and the way this is theorised.

in meaning, where truth is the cause of the speech event and where it is the effect. Where knowledge resides in the position of truth, in Lacan's figurations of discourse, there might it be directed to the production of new ethical behaviour, action stemming from the interactions of the interviews. The significance of social and personal narratives is in the emergence of phenomena repressed by the power formalisations of dominant discourses in intimate partner relationships. Through an examination of women's talk, descriptions of prevailing linguistic practices might not just be described but also offer explanatory power as the particular products of relations of power and the struggles for power. The assumptions of expected roles in the domestic sphere are ideologies, which closely inform, underpin, and legitimise the exercise of power differentials through deprivation, coercion and the disciplining of consent.

Resistance and change are possible, as this study shows. Women in the study *have* made changes and they *have* created new identities and desires. They have incorporated causal accounts which re-present events of becoming and enduring, describing how things came to be as they were, how they are presently and how they expect to be in the future. As retroductive methodology for future victims of IPV, these understandings are fundamental to achieving desirable outcomes. There are modes of existence, writes Deleuze, that imply "there are things that one cannot do or even say, believe, feel, think, unless one is weak, enslaved, impotent." But there are also "other things one cannot do, feel . . . unless one is free or strong. *A method of explanation by immanent modes of existence* thus replaces the recourse to transcendent values" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 269, emphasis in original).

Guattari and Deleuze offer inspiration for the project, particularly in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) and in *What is Philosophy?* (1994), and in Deleuze's (2005) *Expressionism in Philosophy* and *The Logic of Sense* (2004b). One understanding offers a different way of viewing IPV: what does IPV in a partnership do? What is its function? In Zayani's (2000, p. 95) words: "not 'What does it mean?' but 'How does it work?' ". This obliges a focus on dynamic movements, flows and events, rather than on "static principles" (p. 95), an emphasis on difference and becoming over being through socially transmitted beliefs and conformity to prevailing modes of static positionings. The study then, shows how particular discourses are used and maintained in battered women's talk about their affective relationships and how these discourses are used in sustaining a continued association with their partners. It proposes the adoption of a Deleuze

and Guattarian rhizomatic approach, in order, first to examine the success stories of women who have escaped from intimate partner violence, second, to investigate and describe the self-destructive, yet paradoxically rewarding, linguistic practices that battered women use in talking about themselves and their experiences, and third, to encourage the development of new, resistant identities via the development of empowering language capacity, flourishing desiring positions, and alternative identifications in order to subvert and supplant constricting and denigrative dependencies.

Deleuze and Guattari select the botanical term **rhizome** to present a different way of conceptualising thought and action. Contrasted to traditional arboreal, linear and hierarchical thinking, rhizomatic thinking and behaviour illustrate how divergences from, and horizontal connections within and between chains of organisations, power structures, attractors and events, persons and things, always flowing, often simultaneously, always taking lines of flight, branch multiply outwards from the middle (not the centre), interconnect in many unexpected ways, often producing novel structurings. No main root, no end point, no apex, no necessary link between cause and effect, no transcendental grounding; instead a series of conjunctive “ands”: “and” . . . “and”, and a staging of becomings, an expansion of capacities. This is the pragmatic nomadic mobility of the women in the study.

Some women subjected to IPV not only escape terrifying conditions, but also go on to lead successful, flourishing, and meaningful lives. In this investigation I contend that a very real and pragmatic set of practices are available to those women suffering duress: the women in this study exhibit just those overcomings that promote authentic living. If the only options available for establishing a kind of harmony are acquiescence and submission, neutralisation by way of diversion, or defiance through determined independence, then the women in this study have surely chosen the last.

## Chapter 2

### Outline of Deleuze and Guattari's Ontology

Josephine is the singer amongst her people. As the only one who is musical, her art, admittedly “nothing out of the ordinary” (Kafka, 1952, p. 306), is boring to those who listen. True, there is a history of singing, barely remembered from the old days, but her art does not really emulate it. Josephine’s singing is so far removed – and yet so familiar – from the everyday “piping” (p. 306), that is the characteristic accomplishment of the Mouse Folk, that her delicate skill invites investigation. Curiously, she does not sing of the Mouse Folk or for the Mouse Folk and her songs offer no message, no edification, no uplift. To engage with her peculiar charm, her auditors need to listen and view her performance, which is always one of tender and gracious care, if somewhat frailer than conventional piping. Perhaps it is because she makes a ceremony of a performance that everyone else has forgotten because they are too immersed in the daily practice; perhaps it is because they “admire in her what [they] do not at all admire in themselves” (p. 308), perhaps it is because she approaches each song as if for the first time as a novice.



“Josephine the Singer, or The Mouse Folk” is the last of Kafka’s stories, reportedly the only one he requested be published after his death. Written in 1924, the story expresses a kind of subjectivity that shows no linear movement, no narrative plot, no allegory, no desiring individuality recognised as such. Instead, Josephine’s singing is a singularity emerging from the “feeling of the mass” (p. 309), as a desiring flow that connects with other affective flows,<sup>9</sup> to still, if just for a minute, the people who are “almost always on the run and scurrying hither and thither” (p. 311), to create a temporary cessation of formless “smooth space” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 380, and throughout), in order to differently reterritorialise that space in acts of de- and re-territorialisation. Her performance “comes almost like a message from the whole people to each individual; Josephine’s thin piping amidst grave decisions is almost like

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<sup>9</sup> Virginia Woolf’s novels exhibit this same capacity to multiply affects and intensities to produce possibilities for different experiences. In *The Waves* (2015), for example, characters’ viewpoints are less their own than affective and perceptual flows moving indecisively across personages.

our people's precarious existence amidst the tumult of a hostile world" (p. 315), eliciting in the mass a collective yearning for an unrealised virtuality.

What is the Mouse Folks' desire that constitutes their fascination for Josephine's singing? The reason has to do with their corybantic mode of life from which she emerges as a phenomenon of singularity. The Mouse Folk are continually on the move, constantly under siege from a barrage of "apprehensions, hopes and terrors" (p. 310), precociously fleeing for no reason, endlessly overflowing boundaries. Their deterritorialising impulse, their incompatible "lines of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 3, and throughout), open up smooth spaces in a perversely masochistic way. The separated and indistinct nature of these smooth spaces makes it difficult to conceptualise or measure distance or location because there are no signs to reconcile one position with the next, no gauges to tell the speed or direction or how far one has gone "in an infinite succession of local operations" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 383). The "nomads" who inhabit such spaces are immobile because their apparent movement can't be represented; they don't actually move so much as cling to these spaces and even construct them in their own likeness.

For the multitude of mouse folk and other people, the problem of condensation and settlement arises. The reason is that a Deleuzian deterritorialisation requires the complementary practice of re-territorialisation, not just for the security of system, organisation (defined as "spontaneity reflecting upon itself", Negri, 2014, p. 32), and functionality:

we like to come together, we like to huddle close to each other, especially on an occasion set apart from the troubles preoccupying us; it is as if we were drinking in all haste – yes, haste is necessary, Josephine too often forgets that – from a cup of peace in common before the battle. It is not so much a performance of songs as an assembly of the people, and an assembly where except for the small piping voice in front there is complete stillness . . . (Kafka, 1952, p. 313).

Josephine provides the reason for assembling. The announcement of her intention to sing opens an approach to reterritorialisation, in a space "where she likes, it need not be a place visible a long way off, any secluded corner pitched on in a moment's caprice will serve as well" (p. 310).

The territorialisation occurs in the companionship of assembly through her streaking of the space and the affinitive sociality emerging therefrom. Josephine's singing is not to be considered deterritorialising as flight from existential panic, desolation or saudade, nor is it reterritorialising as regimentation, retreat and retrenchment. Her singing, as self-determined intensification, projects both as differential relations based on shifting interactions between forms of content and forms of expression, her performances contract and condense time by simultaneously offering suggestions of future actualisation and symptoms of the past: paths not taken and opportunities that might be seized. From the multiplicity of processes that are available, the phylogenetic and ontogenetic cultural and material forces that Josephine brings to the event find meaning in a meeting of the forces that envelop the potential to affect and to be affected, to release and to realise differential processes. Thus, it is that the gift of the singer's art exists at one and the same time as an encounter between two complexes of forms: expression and content, *énoncé* and *énonciation*. Both of these exist on the side of the performer and on the side of her audience, and manifest as the attributes of signifiers. On the one side is Josephine's physical body and posture, her productive voice, rather "delicate and weak", her agentic will (aka "desire"), translated into expressive action, her use or threatened withholding of 'grace notes', and, from another perspective, the incomplete captivation by the natural and cultural fields that surround and construct her in a network of social forces as if she were a simple piece of inorganic material.<sup>10</sup> But for Josephine, "[n]omad thought" does not lodge itself in the edifice of an ordered interiority; it moves freely in an element of exteriority. It does not repose on identity; it rides difference" (Massumi, 1992, p. 5); and for Josephine, "there are many things in the body that you do not know [and] there are in the soul many things which go beyond your consciousness" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 61).

This study highlights a number and variety of Josephines and their grace notes. It articulates how the actions and beliefs of individuals challenge and exceed the given identities formed by consciousness and prescribed social mystifications. It examines how particular discourses are used and maintained in particular abused women's talk about their affective relationships with their partners and how they explained the actions they took. The study develops a discursive investigation of selected women's mnemonic faculties of procedural memory

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<sup>10</sup> "Josephine, the mouse singer, sometimes holds a privileged position in the pack, sometimes a position outside the pack, and sometimes slips into and is lost in the anonymity of the collective statements of the pack" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 243).

(memory as practical habit, *savoir faire*), and semantic memory (evoked verbal recall of previous experience) as the foundations of an ethical invitation to regard life in terms of becomings rather than representations and discovers a scrupulous potential for liberatory action against intimate partner violence and abuse.

The study is discursive in that it examines women's lives as they tell their stories from both their personal experiences and in their constructions of identity within social contexts, and it is investigative because the relatability of the stories focuses on their sense of self as reflected and confirmed by the accounted events. The precise relation to truth and to the sometimes painful accounts that are specific to each woman are viewed through a broadly psychoanalytic lens because their symptoms are linked to language (via condensation and displacement, and metaphor and metonymy (de Saussure, 2011; Freud, 1900, 1901, 1905; Jakobson, 1956; Lacan, 2006, pp. 412-41), rather than to an "organism" (Freud, 1925/1926), and because the participant often speaks without full understanding but with an unconscious and highly significant reconciliation to the ideals and values that are important for her. "Death, the passions, sexuality, madness, the unconscious, the relation to another: it is these that mould the subjectivity of each person, and no science worthy of the name will ever exhaust the matter, fortunately" (Roudinesco, 2001, p. 12). "Psychoanalysis . . . restores the idea that human speech is free and that human destiny is not confined to biological being" (ibid, p. 12), and it is these aspects of subjectivity that can be neither objectified nor measured.

But they can be subjectified and should be. Just as in capitalism the general equivalent of money is supposed to provide a link between present and future,<sup>11</sup> so much more do the equivalent mergences of personal and social memories of past events, lodged in "the belly of the mind",<sup>12</sup> serve as fuel to fire potential action, stoked by the hyperboles of hypermnesia, the substitutions of cryptomnesia and the repressions of allomnesia. The accounts reveal that however it may have been that respondents in this study had lived, they demonstrated through their subsequent behaviour that they were capable of living and thinking differently. Consciousness becomes reworked as a

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<sup>11</sup> Keynes (1936), p. 185.

<sup>12</sup> Augustine. *Confessions*, Bk 10, Ch. XIV.

register of the identity effects that are produced by the body in its relatedness in encounters with other bodies and minds and is no longer viewed as sourced from individual priority.

A critique, [says Foucault] is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are it is a matter of pointing out upon what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest . . . Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult” (Foucault, 1990a, p. 155).

As a prelude, therefore, to identifying and describing the issues and themes in this thesis, it is appropriate to examine and question the roles and processes of relevant contemporary theory. It is the responsibility of the researcher, first, to outline her understanding of, and reflection on, the tradition and practices of the psychoanalytic, political and relational fields and their connections with other pertinent dimensions concerning human intimate relationships. A conventional discourse might show how major ideas emerge from, and connect to, the personal oral histories of people in the study. A developmental narrative could show how theory can be altered in response to new experiences. A philosophical narrative should show how the ideas form an interconnected conceptual whole. Notwithstanding the respect expected from a purview of the traditions of modernism and postmodernism, it is not my intention to rehearse and reinvigorate the assumptions implied in these theories, especially as they may now be seen as having been regulated by the unrecognised biases of those times. But it is valuable to identify such assumptions, if only to attempt to avoid committing similar errors; they will be addressed insofar as earlier theories impact *a tergo* on present theory and interpretation.

To this end, it is useful to evoke Heidegger’s explication of truth in *The Essence of Truth* (2002). Here, Heidegger claims that the ancient Greeks had two different concepts of truth. The first, akin to that to which we are accustomed today, posits truth as “correspondence, grounded in correctness, between proposition and thing” (p. 2), which paradoxically also implies that we know what truth is, *déjà là*. However, the correspondence of a proposition might also refer to another correspondence, and so on, ad infinitum. Are we to take the first propositional



expression of the thing as its unique referent? And is this because of the proposition's resemblance to that thing? In what does this resemblance inhere? A deeper definition is required.

The second concept of truth is what the Greeks termed the "unhidden": that which is without hiddenness, privative. "Truth as unhiddenness and truth as correctness are quite different things", says Heidegger (2002, p. 8), and so, building on this assertion, the task of examining women's stories about their experiences is not exclusively about searching for pre-existing "truths" – however these may be construed – but rather to strategise a departure from conventional methodologies which some scholars believe equates to validity, towards an end not of discovery but toward the emergence of a continuing process of creation. In short, a search for a broadly axiological series of deterritorialisation is required, one that emphasises the changing trajectories of the women's lives by investigating their autobiographical, relational, and political experiences over the contingencies of location and time.

A significant part of this work, therefore, is an investigation into current ideas of the constructions surrounding intimate partner violence while self-consciously attempting to navigate between the ordinates of dogmatism, the *puncta* and *studies* of assertively perspectival positions. Several theses competing to explain human behaviour operate simultaneously: for instance, a woman departing from her husband might be described by a psychiatrist as having a manic episode; by a Freudian analyst as acting out her hidden aggressive impulses towards her father; by a physiologist as exhibiting a metabolic deficiency; by a Marxist as demonstrating false consciousness in betraying class origins . . .

However, following Renouvier's reformulation of Lequier's "double dilemma",<sup>13</sup> I argue the validity of two major points: the conscious sensible enactment of free and purposeful activity, and Deleuze's<sup>14</sup> theory of spiral repetition, where elements enter into relations with one another in ways that inevitably provoke changes in the items due to those encounters. These repetitive changes cannot be subsumed under any general concept but allow – invite – new formations, which offer productive possibilities in their new arrangements of existing

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<sup>13</sup> Ruyer 2016, pp. 4-7.

<sup>14</sup> Deleuze, 1994, pp. 38-39.

networks. Situations and events, morphologically similar to biological and mathematical imaginaries, are thereby capable of originating new ideas, new attitudes and new identities. As Bergson, an important theorist for Deleuze's ideas, remarks: "The idea of the future, pregnant with an infinity of possibilities, is thus more fruitful than the future itself, and this is why we find more charm in hope than in possession, in dreams than in reality" (Bergson, 2001, p. 10).

There is a practical wish that the ideas unpacked in this study readily engage with reality as the participants shape it, and with events in the real world. The feminist commitment to cross-disciplinary conversation resonates with the pluralities and multi-layered complexities of women's natures and their socially constructed experiences (see Butler 2004, 2005, 2012) – "Woman is not a completed reality but a becoming . . . her *possibilities* should be defined," says de Beauvoir (1956, p. 61, emphasis in original). At the same time, the process of undertaking this thesis necessarily includes a palimpsest of my own experiences and reflects that reality in part by reflecting on the stance I adopt as researcher. A researcher becomes a researcher by practising and developing particular skills of attending to others and to herself. This implies that truth and objectivity can be understood only in the context of lived experience, where they show certain family resemblances, revealing differences as well as similarities. I too endured denigration. I too left my partner.

To repeat, it is important for this study that the kinds of differentiations described at the level of the individual be further explicated at the level of theory. Throughout the thesis, I make use of key concepts in discourse and political theory, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, and particularly the works of Deleuze and Guattari, who are insistent on the value of producing new concepts. In their notion that thinkers should no longer accept words and concepts as gifts, "nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them . . ." (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 220, emphasis in original), Deleuze and Guattari argue that the successful creation of a new concept "posits itself in itself: the most subjective will be the most objective" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 11). To this, I add, "[w]e reason deeply when we forcibly feel" (Mary Wollstonecraft, 2009, p. 107), and where the participants in the study, like Josephine, make "a ceremonial performance out of doing the usual thing" (Kafka, 1952, p. 307).

This chapter, **Why Deleuze?** outlines a rationale for the application of Deleuze and Guattari's understandings to the problem of women's identifications and describes the novelty of incorporating contextual outliers as significant contributors to change. It includes a discussion of **changing Identities** in which the capacities possessed by the participants that enabled transformative **subjectification**, including the women's facilities in accommodating disruptive change in affirmation of more positive lives are elaborated in Deleuzian terms. The concepts "territorialisation" and "lines of flight" are introduced, and the section provides an orientation to some of the conceptual underpinnings of Deleuze and Guattari's thought germane to this thesis. Although Deleuze and Guattari's approach is at the core of the study, the conceptual apparatus can be daunting, not helped by their usage of new terms and their reworking of existing terms into new meanings. Clarity, utility, durability, and fecundity are the hallmarks of robust concepts, and so, applying Deleuze and Guattari's concepts, it is important to understand not only their concepts, but also our understanding of their understandings. The intent of this section is to lessen the daunting.

In the following chapter, **Conceptual Apparatus**, problems of identity are conceptualised first, to introduce relevant concepts for approaching women's changes after escaping intimate partner violence. From difference and individuation, concepts like freedom or lines of force are brought into play with women's values, desire and life with consequences for their retelling in research processes, and for new concepts of identity and thinking.

### **Why Deleuze?**

"Why Deleuze?" asks Claire Colebrook in her (2002a) book, *Gilles Deleuze* (p. 1). Her response is determinedly persuasive: because, according to Deleuze, all life consists in an organism's power to develop problems, and to respond in ever-increasing sophistication to the complexities and complications of the forces that the problems with which it engages and with which it has affinities brings forth. "We will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon), if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing", says Deleuze at the start of *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (2006a, p. 3), and further (p. 4), he claims that "[A] thing has as many senses as there are forces capable of taking possession of it". Among all the senses of a thing, be the latter inanimate, animal or human, that sense which gives it – and yields to – the force with which it has the most affinity may be defined as

that object's "essence" (p. 4), and the value of that thing is "the hierarchy of forces which are expressed in it as a complex phenomenon" (p. 8). The subjective meaning of an object (individual or thing in a semi-stable state), therefore, becomes evident in the presence of the signs or qualities that accompany the object and which envelop multiple actions, materials and degrees of combination and action, including potential actions and ways of being. This of course is not to be viewed as any kind of phenomenological reduction to an Heideggerian Dasein, nor to a Sartrean *être-en-soi*, not only because these nominations implicitly refer to some kind of extraneous and transcendent normative standard, both for experience and towards which humans can appeal for moral substantiation, but also because such references posit an unexamined stance above and beyond such judgemental interpretations.

If a Deleuzian viewpoint on women's experiences of intimate partner violence is to be adopted, what insights might it yield? That Deleuze and Guattari have made a significant contribution to theoretical analysis is widely recognised: "everyone from Žižek to Badiou is fond of saying that the conceptual and methodological tools with which we make sense of this age are Deleuzian tools" (Jun, in Jun & Smith, 2011, p. 1), but can Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts be applied, not just to the description and explanation of situations and (bracketed) individuals, but also, going further, to devising alternative interpretations and strategies for their improvement? Can their programme "give feminist thought a new way of proceeding"? (Colebrook, 2000a, pp. 14-15). Further, might not the critical insights and interventions (allowing they can be identified in the writers' intellectually arcane language), be found to have little resonance for the persons they are supposed to support? Might not their programme in fact be little more than a subtle rejection of activism and an obscured justification for continued phallogocentric<sup>15</sup> dominance?

Notwithstanding these criticisms, Deleuze's philosophy has been accepted increasingly by feminism,<sup>16</sup> not only because "he [and Guattari] . . . invests the site of the feminine with positive force" (Braidotti, 2012, p. 23), but also because such transformative action aligns with the feminist exigency of realising the potentialities of new, transgressive forms of affective

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<sup>15</sup> "Phallogocentrism" is a portmanteau word deriving from Jacques Derrida's "logocentrism" which emphasises the dominance of language in assigning meaning in the world, and "phallogocentrism", which privileges all things masculine (source: Wikipedia).

<sup>16</sup> Feminist writers, despite an initial wariness (e.g., Butler, 2012; Irigaray, 1985; Jardine, 1984; Spivak, 1988), have engaged positively with Deleuze and Guattari's project as they have recognised the possibilities for deeper theoretical understanding and innovative practical application.

subjectivity that privilege encounters, relationality, multiplicity, materiality, and fluidity over identification, representation, and linguistic articulation. Granted that some writers on the left, like Alain Badiou (1999), and Slavoj Žižek (2004, 2008), dismiss Deleuze and Guattari's ideas of autonomy, disruption, transformation, and multiplicity in becoming as just so many permissible deviations within a monolithic liberalist capitalism that accepts, even encourages, these manoeuvres as signs of a non-revolutionary compliance with the status quo. On a different analysis, and from a different perspective, it may be discovered that the tiny resistances and minor rebellions embedded and enacted in the ruptures of mundane dysfunction open a multiplicity of combinations and positions where the grand goals of transcendent change are secondary to the pivotal dynamics of individual transformation.

So, this study makes extensive use of Deleuze and Guattari's ideas because their philosophy offers pragmatic enhancement as well as a sound theoretical basis in arenas where women's lives have a contemporary potential to change their relations of their social and political environments. In the present age, rapid, continuous flux and the confinements and restrictions these commonly engender, are not necessarily reflected in any parallel change in existing modes and relations of production; nor is it easy for a person, be she interviewer or interviewee, to identify or accept the continual self-reflective challenge of thinking about process and transformation rather than linear and objective conceptualisation (Braidotti, 2002). Shifting connections, afferent and efferent, endogenous and exogenic flows of information and experience require transcendence of an Heideggerean "inability to translate fluid realities into discursivity" (Irigaray, 1999, p. 3). If the individual person is constantly involved in dynamic alteration, this suggests that the individual, too, is always already decentred, multiple, and fluid.

Then too, it is salient to remember that the recording of language, as in interviews of this kind, has been, at least since Sumerian civilisation (c. 3000 BCE), an instrument for accounting and hence, of the representation of accountability. This inflexion persists to the present, made especially manifest when questions invoking a confessional tone and a corresponding implicit moral import are posed, regardless of efforts to present the dialogic exchange as neutral: Explain yourself. For what behaviours are you answerable? Why do you think this happened?

Speech in this format is inevitably forced and to some degree, false. Responding personally, describing one's actions, beliefs and feelings, being constantly on the defensive, the specificity of one's personal history inevitably involves some degree of self-deception and misrepresentation, as well as constant transformation.<sup>17</sup> The interviewer probes for the real person in all her over-determined positivity but the aleatory subject posits only a formless Lacanian lack, subjugated to the contexts of time and space. Any statement is made to order life, "not to be believed . . . Every order-word, even a father's to his son, carries a little death sentence – a judgment [sic], as Kafka put it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 76). Form is at least as significant as content and alternative facts suggest that the dominating hegemony has so appropriated meta-narrative critique, that there is no longer one truth, "no such thing as natural, unmediated, unbiased access to truth, that we are always prisoners of language, that we always speak from a particular standpoint" (Latour, 2004, p. 227). If a Hegelian/Lacanian view is adopted (Hegel, 1977; Lacan, 1998), the desiring subject is always seeking recognition from another to constitute herself as a viable social being and as an implicit validation of her identity.

But for Deleuze and Guattari, as for Irigaray, fluidity is an elemental metaphor for change because a fluid composition is never fixed or static, but ever overflowing boundaries, never contained in a confined "identity". Identity is not an "envelope" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 16). Taking action in terms of seeking a better life – materially, emotionally and socially, provides a philosophy of mobility, provisionality and identity formation which questions the abandoned givens of the previous worlds of the women in this enquiry and those worlds' seeming unchangeable values. Deleuze and Guattari, acting within the post-structuralist movements of the late twentieth century, insist that understanding the currents of life can not be achieved by examining experience alone, nor captured adequately by investigating systemic structurations. Their observation that human experience can not be organised into contained structures invites

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<sup>17</sup> It was Kant, in his Third Antinomy (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1998, pp. 485-489), who showed that the idealist Platonic account rests on some thing that is ultimately undetermined by any thing beyond itself; and that at some point, the Aristotelian immanent account appeals to outside agency as causative; i.e., both theories mirror each other, one theory collapses into the other. (And of course, mirrors can only represent if they are stable and independent of what they reflect.) Following, thought itself is in constant self-transformation, although Kant insists that even if the mind does not accurately mirror reality, it is, nevertheless, a stable, bounded, and independent entity. Against Kant's Categories of the Understanding, Fichte (2005, and elsewhere), believed that freedom is possible, but limited, never absolute. He claims that a self strives to transform both the natural and the human worlds in accordance with its own freely-positing goals, but because the self is finite and divided against itself, it strives for a self-determinacy it cannot achieve. Thought does not mirror reality, but transforms transformations, from which it itself is not immune. Thought in continual transformation cannot accurately portray a static world, far less an ever-changing one.

and opens up opportunities to explore, invent, and test different ways of being in order to transform life and create tentative new identities. Becoming, on this view, is not a final end of being, but a continual effort to reject the fictions of contemporary Western thought, including the fictions of the human subject and the stable continuity of the world. Accordingly, human life is free to develop new images of itself, beyond conventional relationships, and celebrating the immense diversity of the possibilities of identity, subjecthood and thought itself – a truly grand act of decolonisation.

Ever-renewing responses to changing systems and events imply a criticism of existing forms of social convention and the confinement and “resignation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 59), of desire to the repressions of bourgeois family life. Throughout *Anti-Œdipus*, the authors argue that new attitudes, values, and desires can be created in proliferating connectivities of partial objects, in “schizo” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 34, and elsewhere) flows and zigzags. Informed by Marxian analyses of capitalist modes of production, Deleuze and Guattari claim that social repression enforces psychic repression in such manner as to fix people in unconscious patterns of behaviour that deny individual expression and enforce asceticism. The schizo way of thinking and acting, offered as a means of liberation to this servitude, in contrast to the predictable reactions of the typical paranoid subject, opens experience to new ways of interpretation, where a fixed viewpoint is eschewed in favour of multiple perspectives as *simulacra*,<sup>18</sup> analogous to the experimental strategies of the cinema process. When cinema frees the sequencing of images from any one point of view, the possibility of alternative perceptions can be co-opted to transform everyday life. Colours, sounds, images, movements, textures, and lights may not be coordinated in conventional ways, and from these disconnections and disruptions, affects might erupt and interrupt order and cohesion, liberated from organisation and structure, taking the singular as exemplary in freeing perception from dogma, “common sense”, and fear of the unknown.

Thus, exploring the issues of various women’s stories inevitably connects behaviours to the constrictions of political subjectivity and to the women’s opportunities, decisions and will to escape subordination, to change, to access new non-phallogocentric modes of representation

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<sup>18</sup> “Simulacra” are appearances-in-themselves, as opposed to “phenomena”, which are appearances of some world behind or beyond. Simulacra interact, according to Deleuze, without recourse to any underlying ground. In avant-garde cinema, images are not tied to a singular organising perspective, and it is this non-human and plural position that invites new ways of thinking and acting.

of and for themselves in their determination to become new desiring subjects. But the will to be different refers not to the content of the women's behaviour or to their speech (Braidotti in Boundas & Olkowski, 1994, p. 161), and desire is not (just) a sexual, but also a(n) (pata)-ontological quest (pp. 161, 162).

A theory or an idea may be examined in its different aspects: a syntactic or logical point of view, focusing on the formal structure of the model; a semantic perspective, which attends to the meaning of the theory; and a pragmatic frame of reference which addresses the practical uses to which the theory may be put. Within a theory, analysis can be divided into the theory itself, factual evidence, and interpretation. The first of these, theory, requires an outline of various hypotheses and a series of propositions emanating deductively from them, whose validity is confined by a particular time and environment.

Propositions, in turn, require factual evidence, and any interpretation that ensues feeds back into the theory, abductively, in such manner as to justify the idea(s). As Williamson (2017, pp. 334-335), states, "abductive methodology is the best science provides". This opens up a subjective perspective into the narratives of participants and links to the research programme I have selected. A caveat here: there is never one univocal explanation of evidence because there are always competing contemporary theories, some of which lead to different conclusions, and because all evidence is always already theory-laden. As Karl Popper asserts, "We cannot justify our theories but we can rationally criticize them, and tentatively adopt those which . . . have the greatest explanatory power" (1972, p. 265). An affirmative and productive model is needed, say Deleuze and Guattari, one that expands its speculative orientation, becomes apparent through the connections it makes in assembling disparate concepts, and imagining "new ways to think, to create and to live" (Stark, 2017, p. 15).

Our society accepts that networks of causal connection sit within, and are modified by the cumulative effects of repeated stressors, personal affect levels, beliefs, and attitudes (Phillips, et al, 1993), social relationships, coping strategies (Taylor, et al, 1997), and the ways that people internalise, accept, resist, manipulate, and embody cultural diktats, which vary depending on factors such as age, personal history, social position, and societal expectations, as well as resisting ". . . focus[ing] so much on what you should feel,[so that] you don't really know what it is you do feel" (Jean Holloway in "Euphoria", *Gypsy*, 2017, Episode 7). Desire, for



instance, so important in this study, conventionally valorises a sedimented sexual and social conformism emanating from the economic imperatives of a capitalism that privileges identity over difference, masculinity over femininity, the literal at the expense of the metaphorical or metonymic, content over affect, presence and stability over the virtual and potential, the transcendent over the immanent, hierarchy over flow, and substance over expression. A DeleuzoGuattarian expatiation of desire, as elaborated in these pages, radically breaks with this tradition.

Taking his lead from Spinoza, Deleuze adopts an epistemological plan that co-opts that philosopher's concepts of attributes and modes to emphasise the "univocity of Being" (Deleuze, 2005, p. 63). Like Pip observing the doubloon nailed upon the mast in *Moby Dick*, the women in the study, all survivors of horrific abuse, recognise that there are differing perceptions of events, but, unlike Ahab, they do not seek ultimate or heroic realisations of their situations. They do not seek nor find transcendent truths, but instead enact particular behaviours that they believe might offer deeper opportunities for living more energetically, more collectively and with greater intensity. A basic insight of psychoanalysis is that people say more than they are aware of, that their varied expressions and behaviours are significantly shaped by dimensions not always available to consciousness, but whose patternings weave the texture and shape the contours of consciousness and influence life trajectories in ways that are much more than parasitical supplements or marginal causations. The insight suggests that the women in this study skirt the compromise formation of a Kantian transcendental illusion, vainly imagined as a paradise-to-come, moving between and beyond an acquiescence to majoritarian<sup>19</sup> rule and a potentially meaningless "anything goes", nihilistic future. They avoid the techné of means and ends in enacting a praxis of genuine breakthrough toward higher levels of achievable happiness, offering the liberation of new, continuing subjectivities and of living well, freed from that cyclical repetition that Freud called "satisfaction and Lacan termed "jouissance". *"We do not even know of what a body is capable"* (Deleuze, 2005, p. 226, emphasis in original). A thing is not only described by what it is, but also what it can do, how it

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<sup>19</sup> "Major", "majoritarian", "molar", "minor", "minoritarian" and "molecular" are Deleuze and Guattari's terms for describing the organisation, structure, and power of objects in Western culture, referring not to quantity or size but to significance. "Major" applies to that which has precedence, status, normative acceptance and value, and the right to designate, categorise and measure. It privileges sameness, representation, and hierarchy, whereas the "minor" lacks these capacities and qualities. Characterisations of majoritarian bodies include husband, father, reason, able-bodied, white, property-owning, heterosexual . . . (Braidotti, 2011a; Colebrook, 2002a; Deleuze, 1986, 1997; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987).

expresses itself, and how and to what degree of intensity its affections are engaged (Deleuze, 2005, p. 217, and following).

Within the neoliberalist<sup>20</sup> expression of contemporary capitalism, space for such an analysis exists in the aporias and lacunae of that system because its structure and working produce these gaps as part of its demand for excess, and because it provides blueprints<sup>21</sup> for how people are persuaded to select and obtain the forms which relate to their satisfaction. Though any society requires some repression in order to function, late capitalism demands what Herbert Marcuse terms “voluntary servitude” (1969, p. 6), and “surplus repression” (p. 37), where the “conceptual apparatus becomes so embedded in common sense as to be taken for granted and not open to question” (Harvey, 2007, p. 5), where, “in the “normal” development, the individual lives his [sic] repression “freely” as his own life: he desires what he is supposed to desire; his gratifications are profitable to him and to others; he is often and exuberantly happy . . . Repression disappears in the grand objective order of things which rewards more or less adequately the complying individuals and in doing so, reproduces more or less adequately society as a whole” (Harvey, 2007, p. 43).

Insofar as the individual’s desire remains confined to the pathways, capitalism insists it follows, there can be no hope of genuine satisfaction, only a substitute and tenuous “happiness”, attendant upon gratifying basic needs and purchasing commodities. Nevertheless, as Foucault contends (in his *History of Sexuality*, 1978), it is not through force, denial, or repression that capitalist society ensures its continuance, but through its channelling desire into consumerist and consumptionist flows (Braidotti, 2002, p. 177). It is this (actual) repressive force – *potestas* (m) – that Deleuze and Guattari reject because it denies the individual her powers of free-

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<sup>20</sup> Neoliberalism refers to the political, economic, and social configurations within contemporary society that valorise market forces, remaking the state and its role in human affairs as a space in which ordinary people are enjoined to accept individual responsibility. Generally understood, neoliberalism is interpreted as being the extension of competition into all areas of life (Crouch, 2011; Harvey, 2007). Accompanying this drive is the promulgation of a set of normative authoritarian impulses and (unconscious) values and practices. These strategies and internalisations have intensified in recent years (see Piketty, 2013, 2019).

Under neoliberalism, “the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, and substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs” (my emphasis). Accessed 25/10/20, from: <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/neoliberalism.html>

<sup>21</sup> These “blueprints” are what Laclau (2005, p. 105), calls “empty signifiers” whereby the content of any label is filled in the operation of naming, and act as Lacanian points de capiton to provide the meaning(s) its auditors want to hear. In this way, neoliberalist tropes act as reifying and totalising discourses, rather than the actual language practices that resound the specificities and commonalities of social life.

flowing desire, thereby depriving her of the enjoyment – *potentia* (f) – she is capable of achieving.

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the subject as neither unified nor genetically programmed, but always in the process of becoming, expressed in terms of "difference" and "repetition", and leading to and emerging from the circumstances of particular events, comes at a time when the authors of *What is Philosophy?* propose that concepts "are defined by their reference, which concerns not the Event but rather a relationship with a state of affairs or body and with the conditions of this relationship" (1994, p. 22). Conventionally, the subject has been seen as a transparent locus of identity (Descartes' cogito, Husserl's intentional ego), indivisible, relatively stable, objective and ubiquitously rational. This ahistorical site of judgement "converts being into being-for-us" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 379), acting as a disciplined, muted and obedient subject, capable of rebelling in only archetypal manner and with clear, predictable effects.

Following Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari advance the challenge of the givenness of this inheritance, questioning the necessity of such universalisations and proposing new concepts – and therefore forms – of the subject (after all, concepts of subjecthood as concepts are open to interrogation). In any woman's social or political dynamic, "molar" representations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 276), i.e., the relatively well-defined patterns and structures of totalising movements, efforts and events, if directed specifically toward their burgeoning subjectivities, may be seen to be associated with deterritorialisation and viewed simultaneously as reciprocally entwined with the molecular fluidity of individual actions in an abundance of creative relationships and interactivities: "The whole creates itself, and constantly creates itself in another dimension without parts – like that which carries along the set of one qualitative state to another, like the pure ceaseless becoming which passes through these states" (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 10). Living forms are open to the world, Deleuze says, and the world itself is open when movement occurs, not merely as oppositional context to the given ground but as an event in itself, as real in its intermediation as any stratified, fixed identity.

Deleuze especially finds that an alternative theory for the subject requires new functions and theories due to:

the difficulty in orienting oneself between a “spiritual” identity that has been devastated and an “American” economism, between a loss of meaning and an accumulation of signs: so many instances for the investigation of the diverse figures of the “subject”. The question therefore bears upon the critique or deconstruction of interiority, of self presence, of consciousness, of mastery, of the individual or collective property of an essence (Jean-Luc Nancy, in Cadava, et al, 1991, p. 5).

Feminist views of gendered identity are necessarily intertwined with political positioning and ontological and epistemological subjectivities. It is, then, imperative to recognise that women’s desire for change, coupled with the realisation of determinative agency, “implies the construction of new desiring subjects” (Braidotti, 1994, p. 160), and “a site of empowerment for women” (p.160). These acts are not to be seen as endorsing or instantiating any kind of dichotomy, essentialist or otherwise, but rather as inviting flows of action that encourage multiplicities and “disjunctive syntheses” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 12 and following), ways of becoming otherwise, “not as the becoming of some subject, but a becoming towards others, a becoming towards difference, and a becoming through new questions” (Colebrook, 2000a, p. 12). Investigating particular behaviours of identity might then reveal hitherto obscured patterns of political and social subjugation, constructing new knowledge and legitimating ways of thinking different to the phallogocentric complicities of the paternal metaphor. This implies the development of new, Deleuzian desiring subjects, where desire is felt as not just libidinal, but also enacted as ontology and epistemology.

The strategy of repositioning women’s material being in specific meshes of spatial and temporal connectivity rejects the solipsistic “objective” individual as defined by patriarchy at the same time as it affirms the threaded interrelatedness of the women with their environments, at the same time as the term “mesh” connotes the embeddedness inherent in the weaving, knitting and tangles of their lives, with Möbian background and foreground, indistinct edges and centres, and permeable public and personal boundaries. In a biological sense, the collectivity evinced in the women’s becomings suggests an extended phenotype reminiscent of Dawkins’ (2014) proposal.

Defining postmodernist subjectivities emphasises the material embodiment of female subjects

in female bodies<sup>22</sup> though not at the expense of physical foundations, political imperatives, or social embeddedness, the last of which is highly significant in order that social factors and processes can get under the skin, affecting health, development and gene expression (Barr & Kolb, 2007; Cleaver, 2002; Granovetter, 1983; Hertzman & Boyce, 2010; Meaney, 2001). In our age, multiple and rhizomatic feminine “machinic” subjectivities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 71), exist in varying subject positions, under differing political regimes, provoking the formidable task of realising an inclusionary collectivity that privileges – and connects – flexibility and adaptability with a nomadic motion and complexity. The self, according to Deleuze, is never autonomous, but always-already entwined with others; indeed, any concept of self is due to an individual’s acknowledgement of others’ recognition of that self, its recognition of connection to multiple others. Accordingly, the ontological challenge for the individual is two-fold: She must accept the recognition which bestows on her a tenuous identity which is simultaneously a reductive and objectified subjectivity – an insubstantial molar identification, and at the same time as adopting it to assemble a fragile and temporary foundation, she must struggle against and slip through its limitations, must flow through “becoming-woman” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 276) toward transformation, other becomings, “to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo” (p. 277), in order to contaminate society’s givens and become self-directing.

Interpersonal relationships, conducted outside rights-based conventions or customary ethical practices, define trajectories of personal living. If the (womanly) self is never completely autonomous, if the activation, mobilisation, and challenge of a thousand tiny desires can continually develop the ceaseless fluid organisation of subjectivities, then the ultimate goal of a reconfigured identity can not be confined by ideals of ubiquitous improvement for all, nor compressed by cosmopolitan notions of contemporary human rights. Rather, the pleasures that inhere in membership of the group – identification with family, community, friends – are always under threat of being undermined, even removed, by actions that oppose the organisation of these enjoyments, and therefore must be jealously defended, zealously protected (McGowan, 2013, pp. 236, 249, 262, and elsewhere; Sartre, 1956, p. 343; Žižek, 1993, pp. 201-203). Nevertheless, one speaks and acts as a woman, understanding that

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<sup>22</sup> “Female” may be used as a term for the embodiment also of those who identify as men, whereas “woman” may be used as an identification for those individuals who are not embodied as “female”.

constructed sexed and gendered embodiment and embeddedness are the sites of valenced desires and values and the overlapping of multiple, frequently contradictory experiences and affects, proceeding to alternative social assemblages<sup>23</sup> and personal transformations.

The emergent theory here presents the idea of the subject in terms of Deleuze's philosophy of difference and becoming, offering not only a psychology of existence but also an ethic of acceptance and affirmation, rather than one of repression and a Lacanian negative sense of desire as lack, instead capturing the richness of lived experience that Deleuze believes has been denied in modern modes of life. This claims, as Jean-Luc Nancy says, "to point to the necessity, not of a "return to the Subject" (stated by those who would like to think that nothing has happened and that there is nothing new to be thought except perhaps variations or modifications of the subject), but on the contrary, of a move forward toward someone – *some one* else in its place" (Nancy, in Cadava, Connor & Nancy, 1991, p. 5), parodying the make-up and play-acting of women in patriarchal society. In this way, desire is recast as an ontological quest of piratical becoming which captures new concepts and affects as it cuts loose – "gender treachery" (Atwood, 2011, p. 37) – from dominant presentations, and traces lines of flight that retrieve distant palimpsests from future perfects: "archives of leftover sensations and . . . afterthoughts, flashbacks, and mnemonic traces" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 97). Desire is not something which is caused by repression, as Deleuze and Guattari argue forcibly in *Anti-Œdipus*: "Œdipal desires are the bait . . . by means of which repression catches desire in the trap. If desire is repressed, this is not because it is desire for the mother and for the death of the father; desire becomes that only because it is repressed . . ." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 116). Desire, on the contrary, "is revolutionary in its essence . . . and no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised" (p. 116).

This is not to claim that Deleuze (and Guattari) are anti-humanist in any significant way (a

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<sup>23</sup> "Assemblages" (*agencements* in French), in Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, are the continuing activities and processes of the mind, equivalent to Freud's association (*Bingung*). Tamsin Lorraine (2011, p. 12), elaborates assemblage thus: "Deleuze and Guattari use the term assemblage to emphasize the coming together of forces into relatively stable configurations with particular capacities to affect and be affected that have specific durations."

An assemblage is a gathering of heterogeneous elements brought together in particular relations, together with the affects and efficacies of their characters, their speeds and slownesses, signs, practices and habits, the functions and spaces they claim, including an awareness of future assemblages (of desire), and their continual territorialisations and deterritorialisations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 83), provoking new organ-isations, novel behaviours, and new connections under particular attractions of forces.

charge made by critics such as Rodowick, 1997). True, Deleuze conceives of the subject initially as a structure erected by dominant ideas and prevailing modes of existence, but in his later collaboration with Guattari, particularly in the mature work of *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), the subject is never fixed but is allowed to flow in freer forms of agency and resistance. In *Difference and Repetition* (1994) and *The Logic of Sense* (2004b), there are few indications of this acknowledgement of subjectivity, but Deleuze's accounts of haecceity, the event, difference, and becoming, all reveal the implications for the human dynamic in its continuous becoming-other. Hence Merleau-Ponty's assertion that, "like the unity of the world, the unity of the I is invoked rather than experienced each time I perform an act of perception, each time I reach some evidentness, and the universal I is the background against which these brilliant figures stand out; *it is through a present thought that I create the unity of my thoughts . . . I am a field, an experience*" (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 636, my emphasis).

The study, then, may help to express what it is for us to be the authors of our lives in a postmodern world that questions the very possibility of authentic and genuinely meliorative agency, despite or perhaps because of the contemporary ontological priority accorded individual identity over collective inclusion. This is arduous, yet essential, because of the modern imperative to sacrifice genuine individuality for that which Lukács (1972, p. 83), calls "a phantom objectivity". Being a "normal" individual means being subsumed into the project of capitalist society in such fashion as to efface all traces of a person's own becoming and her own fundamental nature. This normality presents as a stable and non-changing identity rather than a work in progress requiring continual attention. Lukács identifies this process as one of reification, which, because of the alienating tendency of the private appropriation of social goods, advances labour power's appearing as the power of capital. For Lukács, it is necessary for the subject embedded in capitalist society to reconceive herself as subject rather than object by becoming aware of the totalising effect of capitalism, and thereby identifying her placement within the system through the performance of conventional roles and behaviours. Though Lukács believed that, for the proletariat, this class consciousness was unlikely without "an acute crisis in the economy" (1972, p. 40), his thesis has considerable explanatory credibility for this study, whose women abruptly changed their courses, roles and identities after a set of extreme events.

Continuing this theme, the domination of the individual through the hegemony of capitalism lies in technological rationalism, according to Marcuse and Kellner. In their *One-Dimensional Man* (2006), they elaborate why the possibility of radical change in the post-war era was unthinkable due to the seemingly constantly rising standards of living and the ready availability of consumer goods, increasingly capable of satisfying the needs of the individual. Under such largesse, why would anyone want to criticise or question society or its institutions and values? Freedom of thought, autonomy of belief and action, “non-conformity with the system itself” (Marcuse & Kellner, 2006, p. 4), appear to be socially pointless, particularly where dissension or disruption threatened the smooth operation of the entire functioning apparatus.

The same technological apparatuses exert their peculiar economic and social demands on the individual’s work habits and leisure time, on her intellectual and social life. Whether or not possibilities exist for possessing or rejecting things, for quitting or building enterprises, or for developing new ways of being or for remaining within customary modes of living, all demand society’s approval as desirable or necessary for the institutions’ survival and flourishing. To the extent that society demands conformity to meet these requirements, so must the correlative repression of the individual’s real needs be enforced. False needs are “superimposed upon the individual by particular social interests” (Marcuse & Kellner, 2006, p. 7), encouraging “aggressiveness, misery and injustice” (p. 7). Genuine desire is supplanted by a specious pleasure or *jouissance*, masquerading as happiness, constructing inequality and resentment, insisting on *Schadenfreude*, and compelling individuals to behave and consume in accordance with the tenets of a rigid programmatic strategy: to want what everyone else wants, to consume as everyone else does, to love and hate and work and play in ways that managers, advertisers and marketers enjoin, to enact an unquestioned servitude that is accepted as one’s own desiring. Reason, volition, and liberation in such a society become scandalous and improbable notions, especially when authentic rebellion requires the rejection of the usual customs of society and the forsaking of (false) needs and satisfactions, which are accepted as the individual’s own.

Such normality works to stabilise society, Badiou believes. On his (2005) account, an “event” (Badiou’s term for an encounter between disparate and opposing conditions), emerges in the normal “situation” when, for any number of political reasons, a rupture occurs and individuals,



recognising themselves as alienated objects, struggle to become subjects. These potential subjects fight against the symbolic identities which ideology has bestowed upon them via the signifier's acquiescent and pacifying subjection because they are false identities, denying freedom and autonomous action. Symbolic identities are Sartre's "bad faith", (1956, p. 87), whereby the subject accepts as accurate the labels that society casts upon her – good wife and mother, exemplary housekeeper, efficient administrator, etc., without awareness of her lack of choice in the matter. Such affirmations are articles of bad faith, "whose social reality is uniquely that of the No, who will live and die, having forever been only a No upon the earth" (Sartre, 1956, p. 87).

Nevertheless, such affirmations of identity, made in bad faith, cannot be fully achieved because any symbolic identity can never be identical to the subjectivity that persons actually live. Women (and men), often play at these identities, "by which they attempt to persuade themselves and others that they are only the roles they perform, the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer" (Sartre, 1956, p. 102), acting out behaviours that provide a sense of stability, yet never achieving full identification. This is shown by the falsehoods that accompany claims of identity: deceiving oneself presupposes a certain possession of the truth, and this is logically impossible. And yet, self-deception is necessary for change. For the potential subject to move into an open future, she must believe that facticity is transcendence and transcendence is facticity (ibid, p. 98). As soon as an individual posits herself as just a housewife, only a shop attendant, by that very claim, she surpasses that static mode of being and opens a path towards a different destiny.

At the base of the subject-to-be's self-deception, then, is a performance of mirror and reflection, of recognition and miscognition, of truth and sincerity, falsehood and deception, from the being which is not, toward the being which is, and from the being which is to the being which is not (Sartre, 1956, p. 110), manifesting the Deleuzian capacity of times present, past, and future, to interact and impact one another. Good faith must intermix with bad faith. Necessarily this is so in the socius, because, under capitalism, the failure of complete symbolic identification is essential for capitalism's part in maintaining subjects' orientation towards a subordinate and unsatisfied, continual seeking. The subject's failure to coincide perfectly with its performed and imaged self-identity is precisely reflected and magnified in capitalism's

unachievable promise of an achievable telos. No matter how strongly a subject attempts to merge with a symbolic identity, this can't happen because the symbolic identity is an object that is non-existent. It's difficult to identify with something that doesn't exist. Every symbolic identification is always a failure.

While symbolic identity marks the putative subject's entry into ideology, ideology requires this identity to fail in order to construct subjects focused on completing this identification. Were this identification to be successful and subjects to obtain full identification with their symbolic identity, this would actually subvert the work that ideology seeks to maintain. It is, as Žižek (1993, p. 40), says: "... here that we ... encounter the Lacanian distinction between the subject of enunciation and the subject of the enunciated: everything that I positively am, every enunciated content I can point at and say, "that's me," is not "I"; I am only the void that remains, the empty distance toward every content". The subject's inability to coincide with its identity is the very condition that ties it to convention.

As I explore the narratives of women who have embarked upon new becomings, my study raises the questions of how much freedom people have in constructing meaning and how women might escape the constraints of dominating social, political and economic forces. If conventional societal practice – so-called normality; Lacan's Discourse of the Master subsumed into the Discourse of the Capitalist – requires some difference or deviation or break in order to function, how then might it be possible to escape from the expectations that surround women's roles? How can women create and manipulate an effective subversion that resists the hegemonic force of society? If capitalist society requires repression to operate successfully, then capitalist ideology needs what Marcuse (1998, p. 37), calls "surplus repression".

When desire, as opposed to satisfaction, is confined to the pathways that society dictates, there is no opportunity for real contentment. Desire focused upon commodities is repressed desire and emptiness; satisfaction inheres in moving away from the logic of commodification and seeking new ways of being. In an age where the nurturing of the aspirational, privatised self through retail therapy and the quest for ever-new things, compromised by the desire for inclusivity and social acceptance, the construction of an original, authentic identity becomes an improbable task. Increasing (self)surveillance, the denigration and suppression of dissent, the constitution of a range of approved experiences, meanings and representations, all underpin

expressions of neoliberalism as a cultural project intent on enabling the conditions for marketisation, monetisation, and the regulation of political subjectivities.

But power is a relational concept that has productive as well as negative capacities and consequences. Power produces desire as well as represses it, as Foucault claims (1978, *The History of Sexuality, Vol 1*). Capitalism inhibits the real satisfaction of which life is capable, yet at the same time, it sustains subjects in a vertiginous condition of desire (the *petit objet a*). Where capitalism and patriarchy are working together, subjects are maintained in states of suspended expectation, on the edge of having desire fulfilled, never quite realised. The pleasure experienced by subjects in this condition is never totally satisfying, which keeps them endeavouring to achieve that complete satisfaction just around the corner, obtainable through the purchase of the latest consumer durable. In this way, subjects are produced who hold fast to their dissatisfaction and to the ever-receding promise of some nebulous attainment or achievement. The promise of a better future with just a little more engagement sustains subjects in their commitment to the present and to the rules of the game in their occupations and in their relationships. To be content with present conditions would paradoxically undermine and collapse the basic tenets of capitalism. However, inverting the power-desire nexus by changing direction and linking the two together as “possest” (Deleuze, *Cours Vincennes*, 09/12/1980), in order to designate the “identity of possibility (qua power or possibility [*posse*]) and being [*esse*]” (de Beistegui, 2010, p. 106), always characterised by specific affects, is to determine a subject’s essence as emanating from its power.

All modes of existence, then, are defined by this triad (of potential, affection, and essence), and only through experience, only through striving to actualise, only through persisting in *realising* their beings, their “conatus”<sup>24</sup> are individuals’ capacities and essences revealed. What one is is just what one does. What individuals desire is this ontological possibility of actualising their potential and the sense of fulfilment accompanying this actualisation.

Accordingly, pain and suffering might be productively transformed by engaging with the past, thereby changing the deterministic influence of an unchangeable history, and, reciprocally, retranscribing that past in terms of present and future desires, on Deleuze’s emphasis in how

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<sup>24</sup> “Conatus” is described by Spinoza (*E III*, P. 6, 7, & 8), as a being’s “relentless endeavor” (Damasio, 2003, p. 44), to persevere in its preservation.

the future informs the past as much as the past compels the present. And with desire, the process of the journey might be more satisfying than the destination, because the recasting of expectations from the axis of impossibility (because the experientially-connected object is continually altering, relative to the simultaneous and differing transformations of the subjective singularity mediating organism), means that no event is ever the same again. Whether human subjects can be considered as self-determining entities or as objects cast hither and thither by erratic forces beyond our knowledge or control has vital implications for our beliefs and identities.

Whether or not it is possible to be authentically creative in our forms of expression, whether or not we can claim responsibility for our actions and their effects, and whether or not we can achieve genuine self-actualisation are extraordinarily important questions for humans because they shape the trajectories that give our lives value and significance. Our age generally agrees that we are both partly agentially empowered and partly constructed by external forces. Language, social and cultural conventions, geographical situation, age, sex, gender, sexual preference and degree of connectivity spark our becomings and the wish for the return of the same forms of (imagined) security that our infantile ignorance of death provided. I think, in the main, that the women in this study have moved beyond this last, forlorn quest.

Deleuze's (and Guattari's) response would be to claim that the individuals involved in various situations are the very ones who possess the power either to acquiesce in and endure under, or change or sever their connections – assemblages – to transform their conditions and become otherwise. This is to suppose that the individual has the capacity to conceptualise different, more satisfying, ways of living and to enact a different, perhaps more revolutionary, identity. Women in oppressive relationships, routinely denied opportunities to explore their potential or even to consider what might be a better future, often appear as victims, helpless towards their fate. The women in this study are different.

We are therefore made of three lines, but each kind of line has its dangers. Not only the segmented lines that cleave us, and impose upon us the striations of a homogeneous space, but also the molecular lines, already ferrying their micro-black holes,<sup>25</sup> and finally the lines of flight themselves, which always

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<sup>25</sup> In the realm of the social, investigation of womanly subjectivity and subjugation can benefit from a theorisation of that which Deleuze and Guattari term a "system of faciality" (1987, p. 323). This requires a black hole/white wall arrangement whereby the signifiers of cultural meaning are assigned to/selected by the individual in order to mobilise social visibility and group identity. The "white wall"

risk abandoning their creative potentialities and turning into a line of death, being turned into a line of destruction pure and simple (fascism) (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 506).

. . . the line of flight crossing the wall [of signification], getting out of the black holes [of subjectivity], but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition. Like Kleist's line of flight, and the strange war he wages; like suicide, double suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight into a line of death (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 229).

A simple event, typically syntactically described as involving a subject, verb and object, is not, then, as simple as it appears. Under DeleuzoGuattarian theorisation, a statement such as "Mary ate a peach" is deeply problematic. Where does the peach begin and end, spatially and temporally? At the macro (molar) level, it ends at the skin. But the skin is permeable, other entities as well as Mary are eating it, chemical reactions are being triggered, Mary's hand is precipitating heat transfer, saliva and other digestive fluids are interacting with the peach, and the whole process is infused with a wide range of cultural and social conventions ordering her interactions. And these interactions, together with "the forms one has, the subject one is, the organs one has, or the functions one fulfils" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 272), combine with, entangle, complicate, render, and rearrange boundary markers and the material elements of given powers and degrees of potential so as to provoke a cascade of rhizomatic extensions through time and space.

It's clear why demarcation-defining techniques are employed for peaches and mouths, but rather more dodgy for concepts like "woman" or "marriage", especially when the regions so enclosed are a means of creating a tenuous and ephemeral stability out of oscillating and continuously changing material. Customary modes of thought often confuse the map for the territory,<sup>26</sup> and while such mappings are not necessarily harmful, they may encourage

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(Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 167-191), offering a seemingly impenetrable surface, is Deleuze and Guattari's name for the system of representations available to individuals. It presents an environment of completeness, "its luminous codes telling them constantly what to desire, where to go, and who they are" (Saldanha, 2017, p. 140). The "black hole" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 167-189), is a locus of subjectivity, but at the level of the unconscious. It is where the individual resides/resiles, a site earnestly sought, yet drastically constricting through its relation to the mediation of the collective. At its extreme intensities, black holes fix subjectivity in inescapable addiction or psychosis, the body's organs constricted and overcoded to reproduce the faciality system, starting with, and dominated by the eyes and vision, privileged over other parts of the body. At its least levels, the capacities, possibilities thoughts, actions, and desires are delimited by faciality's capture by the black holes' organisation of bodies and behaviours in hierarchical structures of power.

<sup>26</sup> Only a one-to-one mapping, as described in Borges' (1998) short story, "On Exactitude in Science", would accurately convey the territory it purports to depict. But then, the map needs to include itself, and then *that* map would have to include itself . . .

performative enactments over the arrangements to enforce particular subsumptions and circumscribed feedback loops. Language, as a special kind of mapping, already performs alterations upon the territories it colonises. Peaches have no motivation to become larger and juicier,<sup>27</sup> but a cartographic insistence throughout the history of agriculture has made them so.

### Changing Identities

A national solution to intimate partner violence requires a multi-dimensional response and a radical change in economic behaviours and government policies. There is no indication that these actions will occur any time soon; hence my investigation focuses on identifying what qualities and attributes some women possess whereby they are empowered to leave abusive relationships and flourish independently away from them. However, the intention in this thesis is not to extend psychological or reductive discourse-analytical approaches to the issue of intimate partner violence and its sequelae, nor to provide definitive explanantia for what may be reciprocally determinative correlations and/or various causal provocations of behaviour.<sup>28</sup>

Instead, following Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophical writings, my aim is to investigate the nature of oppressed women's changing identities through attentive listening to their expressions, examined from non-œdipal psychoanalytical, hermeneutic, idiographic, contextual and lexical (e.g., the use of the future perfect tense)<sup>29</sup> perspectives and to identify common features of their cognitive and emotional processing which have led to successful or negative outcomes – while acknowledging the situatedness of personal identity and appreciating the confines of material and agential realism (Barad, 2007, p. 132). The work does not propose to reproduce what Deleuze and Guattari say about the three syntheses of time, although it does attempt to use their method of discovery, as well as Marx's and other theorists' ideas. In the third decade of this second millennium, it is timely to acknowledge the multiplicity and shifting nature of women's identities and desires (Moi, 2001), and women's rising outrage against sexual harassment (e.g., #metoo), and other forms of abuse and subordination; accordingly, this study attends to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of becoming;

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<sup>27</sup> Or do they? If all bodies strive to endure and flourish, then perhaps its taste is a peach's way of sustaining and developing its existence.

<sup>28</sup> The strength and credibility of an explanatory sensibility is in understanding the many ways in which character is formed by experience, and in turn forms experience.

<sup>29</sup> An example of the future perfect tense is heard in Neil Finn's feminist lyric, "She will have her way": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEcoIV6NI-U>.

e.g., “becoming-woman” (1987), where woman is not defined as not-man (Colebrook, 2000a; Braidotti, 1998), but is described rather as a complex and ever-becoming site of experience enacted by varying mobilities of selfhood: of materiality, sociality and desire.

Attempts to define subjectification in terms of resistance, rebellion, resignification, and subversion, while laudable in their theoretical aspirations (and, where they are effectuated, their practical achievements), do not always do justice to that which is described in these pages as a more productive and sensitive subject formation. The various ways in which women in this study select and transform social conventions and resources according to their particular motivations and their individual desires requires a detailed and more greatly nuanced account of agency than the reactive determinism of models of revolutionary change. The “becoming” of Deleuze and Guattari, then, is not the humanistic notion of movement progressing in linear fashion to the actualisation of a transcendental essence, nor the clash of opposing forces, “but [is] essential, Deleuze would argue, for an affirmative existence” (“Becoming” entry, as cited in Young, Genosko, & Watson, 2013, p. 40). Negative paradigms tend to an unquestioning acceptance of the sedimented retention of power on bodies and social formations. This unconscious validation of dominant modes of living, like capitalism and patriarchy, diminishes or ignores the capacity of beings living within temporal “protention”,<sup>30</sup> which capacity involves the development of agency, aspiration, and the unfolding of greater autonomy through immanent and anticipatory volition.

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<sup>30</sup> A key aspect of Husserl's phenomenology of temporality, “protention” is the anticipation of the next moment to be perceived. Using the example of a netball, a perceiver's focus shifts from the ball-passer to the expected trajectory the ball will take. According to Husserl, perception has three temporal aspects: retention, the immediate present, and protention and a flow through which each moment of protention becomes the retention of the next. Merleau-Ponty comments:

“Husserl calls the intentionalities that anchor me to my surroundings “protentions” and “retentions.” These do not emanate from a central I, but somehow from my perceptual field itself, which drags along behind itself its horizon of retentions and eats into the future through its protentions. I do not pass through a series of nows whose images I would preserve and that, placed end to end, would form a line. For every moment that arrives, the previous moment suffers a modification: I still hold it in hand, it is still there, and yet it already sinks back, it descends beneath the line of presents. In order to keep hold of it, I must reach across a thin layer of time. It is still clearly the same one, and I have the power of meeting up with it such as it just was, I am not cut off from it; but then again it would not be past if nothing had changed, it begins to appear perspectively against or to project itself upon my present, whereas just a moment ago it in fact was my present. When a third moment takes place, the second one suffers a new modification; having been a retention, it becomes the retention of a retention, and the layer of time between it and myself becomes thicker” (2012, p. 649, 50).

Contemporary neuroscience supports Husserl's (and Merleau-Ponty's, and Deleuze's) view: “Memory is not a literal reproduction of the past, but instead an ongoing constructive process. Memory is not only about the past, but is also about the future . . . Indeed, while memory serves as the ability to recall previous experiences, recall itself is not solely directed toward the past, but is guided by the present for the service of the future” (Ofengenden, 2014, pp. 34, 42); see too, Alberini, 2011; Dudai, 2002, 2004, 2009, 2012; Nadel, 2007; Nader, 2003; Nader, et al, 2000; Silva, 2007; Suddendorf & Corballis, 2007).

Features of negative subjectification emerging from recent psychoanalytical thought are seen in the work of Lacan and Foucault, particularly the former, whose account of sexual identity is based on an elevated structural linguistics over a diminution of biological essentialism (Lacan, 1998, 2006; Ragland-Sullivan, 1986). Lacan's analysis finds that identity on the unstable and shifting nature of language, on lack, disappearance, and aphanisis: "the *fading* of the subject" (Lacan, 1998, p. 208, emphasis in original). But the trouble with Lacan's interpretation is that his definition of woman is negatively instaurated through the triple lack of shifting signification, biological incompleteness, and Symbolic submission.

While it is true that the play of the unconscious has a destabilising influence on the Symbolic Order and so presents a way by which the Order's domination might be resisted, Lacan's account of subject formation as resulting from the introjection of the repressive Law of the Father implies a depressing foreclosure of any consciously agentic movement out of an unalterable subjugation operating through all historical and social events. A more comprehensive account of agency beyond pre-reflexion, dispensing with the primacy of sexual difference, and resisting the unwilling acceptance of societal norms, yet also taking account of the forces that combine to construct the transient "dividual" (Deleuze, 1992a, p. 5), is needed.

A different account is given by Foucault in the last of his works, *The Use of Pleasure* (1990b). In his description of the "technologies of the self" (1990, p. 13), he sketches from antiquity an idealised "aesthetics of existence" (p. 71), that, when followed, leads such self-mastery to "an active freedom, a freedom that [is] indissociable from a structural, instrumental, and ontological relation to truth" (p. 73). However, a self-fashioning elegance of behaviour miming autonomy and a certain creativity (McNay, 2000, p. 9), while indeed suggestive of independent identity-formation running counter to external constraints, implies a solipsistic voluntarism as well as a limited selection from the sanctioned choices already available in the cultural market. The "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1995, p. 138) thus produced seem to offer only slight resistance against the power/knowledge regime<sup>31</sup> offered in this inconsistent philosophy. There is little space for a genuinely agentic break from dualistic thought.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> "The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus . . . a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals" (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

<sup>32</sup> The self-creating activities presuppose the prior existence of that which they purport to engender as a consequence: a self-determining



Perhaps in ways that lessen or transform the sex-gender norms of subjectivity, the experiences of embodied existence might replace the rule of dualistic thought and reactionary categorisation. Perhaps women might not remain subjected to the confinements of derogated domesticity and motherhood,<sup>33</sup> and perhaps the very idea of fixed and immutable identity roles might be revised through the daily practices of the lives of ordinary men and women. Habermas<sup>34</sup> attempts an expansion of androcentric Marxist orthodoxy which offers only one significant form of enterprise: “production”. However, in his division of production into “social labour” (i.e., that activity which serves the purpose of materially reproducing society), and “symbolic reproduction”, only that which pre-exists is modified. Little that is new emerges.

Becoming somehow different “is a free play of lines or flows whose intersections define unstable points of transitory identity . . . Becoming has “itself” no fixed identity or being, is always becoming-other” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 186, n. 8), is always “ “between” or “among” ” (Deleuze, 1997, p. 2), a being-discarded self and an emerging other, “radically open to its surroundings [which] can be composed, recomposed and decomposed by other bodies” (Gatens, 1997, p. 165), a “multiple and constant process of transformation” (Braidotti, 1993, p. 44).

In life, theoretically, but also within particular lives, a transformation is to be judged on whether it affirms life or whether it is motivated by resentment – Nietzsche’s (1968, pp. 400-402), that self-righteous indignation which posits the need to justify and redeem, explain and educate, and deprecate, diminish and discipline, all those forces and forms of being that would celebrate life’s innocence and natural vitality. Even the “categories of thought . . . of reasonable thought – identity, causality, finality – themselves presuppose an interpretation of force which is that of *ressentiment*” (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 34, emphasis in original). This instinct of revenge permeates human history, leading to a politics of rejection and nihilism,<sup>35</sup> and a religion of

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agent. Liberating desire from identity runs the risk of precipitating the loss of the self and a consequent full-blown schizophrenia.

<sup>33</sup> And men might respond positively to modes of being that encourage their nurturing desires (see *Stiffed* by Susan Faludi, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Habermas, 1984, 1987, 1992. See also Thompson & Held (Eds.), 1982.

<sup>35</sup> I.e., the loss of the sense of any meaning, purpose, or value in life. Nihilism is a direct outcome of the progression through Platonism, Socratism, and Christianity, always already existing wherever a meaning or goal is attributed to the world. The historical experience indicates there is no providential order or meaning; accordingly, no meaning or value inheres in life and so there exists no ontological grounding for human endeavour above or beyond the deed itself. Nihilism is not merely a profile of contemporary civilisation but also a description of individual psychology, marked by a neoliberal mode of living: “Immersed in the relentless flow of things, with faith in a providential order lost, mankind lives its psychic life at a tempo equivalent to a *prestissimo* in music. Hypersensitive, it is incapable of

repression, denial, blame and guilt. What would it be to live life without these encumbrances? wonder Nietzsche and Deleuze. Would this open a path for the overhuman?

Moreover, in their quest to define subjectivity as an affective elevation of life's potentialities, Deleuze and Guattari regard the body – any body – as an intersecting play of social and symbolic affects. The embodied human subject, as a term for a process of the interplay of forces, is characterised by its protean “nature”, its mobility and transience, and especially, its multiplicity:

Proliferations of little motifs, accumulations of little notes that proceed kinematically and affectively, sweeping away a simple form by adding indications of speed to it; this allows one to produce exceedingly complex dynamic relations on the basis of intrinsically simple formal relations. It is as though an immense plane of consistency of variable speed were forever sweeping up forms and functions, forms and subjects, extracting from them particles and affects (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 271).

Multiplicity, thus described, initiates from, creates and reproduces a superabundance of differences, including, most importantly, variations on and of majoritarian or molar thought, termed minoritarian or molecular. On this view, ideas are events, active states that provoke innovative ways of living. The force of affect is important in this scheme, because as well as the propositional content of thought, affect and its varying levels of intensity convey the conviction of value. The logic of affect immanent to agency yields an imaginative basis for action and explains how, when faced with stress and breakdown, individuals can respond in unanticipated and creative ways to promote their interests. Deleuze urges a becoming-minoritarian or becoming-nomadic, as these lines of flight<sup>36</sup> mark a threshold, a liminal space that opens up the potentiality of becomings.

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not reacting immediately, which is a sign not of strength but of weakness, since it means that at bottom, action is never initiated by the agent; it is only a response to an external stimulus that guides and conditions it” (Vattimo, 2000, p.13). According to Nietzsche, this “slave morality” gives rise to the only creative value, that of denying everything that is outside the individual (Nietzsche, 1967, 1.10, pp. 36-39). On Deleuze and Guattari’s view, nihilism is both the cause and the result of ressentiment, the latter a response that “*ceases to be acted in order to become something felt*” (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 111, emphasis in original). “[C]onversely, active forces produce a burst of creativity” (p. 111). The person of ressentiment cannot forget, and consequently is incapable of positive action in and on the world. As a global phenomenon, nihilism, ressentiment, and the voluntary servitude of the great mass of humanity have been well elaborated by Brown (1995), Sennett (2002), and Sloterdijk (2010).

<sup>36</sup> The French “fuite” (“flight”) may be translated equally well as “escape” or “breakthrough”, as well as “fleeing”, “leaking” or “liberating Movement”. “But getting out never happens like that. Movement always happens behind the thinker’s back, or in the moment when he blinks. Getting out is already achieved, or else it never will be” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 1). Importantly, “getting out” does not necessarily mean physical departure, nor does it suggest that (different ways of) future distancing cannot happen.

Yes, all becomings are molecular: the animal, flower, or stone one becomes are molecular collectivities, hæcceities, not molar subjects, objects, or form that we know from the outside and recognize from experience, through science, or by habit. If this is true, then we must say the same thing of things human: there is a becoming-woman, a becoming-child, that do not resemble the woman or the child as clearly distinct molar entities (although it is possible – only possible – for the woman or child to occupy privileged positions in relation to these becomings). What we term a molar entity is, for example, the woman as defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject. Becoming-woman is not imitating this entity or even transforming oneself into it . . . these indissociable aspects of becoming-woman must first be understood as a function of something else: not imitating or assuming the female form, but emitting the particles that enter the relation of movement and rest, or the zone of proximity, of a microfemininity, in other words, that produce in us a molecular woman . . . (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 297).

It takes more than one to construct a human. Combination and mutual implication (Braidotti, 2010, p. 151), are key features of the positive affirmation of human actualisation. Self and world are by-products of desiring-machines'<sup>37</sup> working through a series of unconscious syntheses toward consciousness as a most recent effect and “always [as] collectives” (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, p. 150). “We must thus make connections, ever more connections” comments Rajchman (2000, p. 7), despite the seemingly paradoxical suggestion of a transcendent autonomous, praxeological, and innovative agency arising from arbitrary social sanctions and naturalising phallogocentric gender-role significations. That one has a sense of self as a hexis is a production, “a product whose main functions are to express a certain state of affairs and perhaps of even more importance, to provide elements for further experimentation” (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, p. 151).

There is a profusion of ways that Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalytic project might align with women’s concerns and offer opportunities for productive movement for not just women in oppressive situations, but also for broader contemporary feminist thought and praxis. A schizoanalytic thematic approach, first proposed in the life-changing *Anti-Œdipus* (1983), and enlarged and elaborated in later works, notably Guattari’s *Schizoanalytic Cartographies* (2013), constitutes a novel and nuanced critique and re-evaluation of thought and behaviour, and

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<sup>37</sup> Todd May (2005, p. 122), helpfully explains that “a “machine” is a versatile concept that “can be situated at the level of the individual, the society, the state, the pre-individual, among groups and between people, and across these various realms”.

Claire Colebrook (2002a, pp. 55, 56, emphasis in original), comments that “[b]ecause a machine has no subjectivity or organising centre it is nothing more than the connections and productions it makes; it is what it does. It therefore has no home or ground; it is a constant process or deterritorialisation, or becoming other than itself”.

invites different engagements within the ethical, political, personal, and aesthetic domains of feminist imaginaries to create new ideas, new trajectories, and new desires. Introducing and foregrounding concepts such as becoming-woman, de- and re-territorialisation, majoritarian and minoritarian standpoints and lines-of-flight invoke the transformative appeal of desiring-production to offer new ideas of subjectivity and social assemblage, (over)determined by the transgressing the limits laid down by traditional definitions of the self. From the profusion of possible alignments between Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualisations, and feminist rhizomatic approach to women's flourishing after escaping intimate partner violence, the concepts that enable the alignments of the current research are introduced in the following chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Conceptual Underpinning

#### Problems of Identity I

As feminist imaginaries engage differently to create new ideas, trajectories and desires, the difficulties of addressing the immanent concerns of embodied female subjects of a particular time and place arise, along with the conception of human beings as “evolving creatures struggling to unfold their capacities to live in always novel circumstances in response to life conceived as becoming” (Lorraine, 2011, p. viii). Then too, the contradictions of living at this time on such a terrain produce new problems, chief among them, the paradoxically-explanatory declaration, from an Archimedean standpoint, of the legitimacy of a female essential principle as a unity that can be known, as well as the contradiction of a call for a radical and innovative programme that involves the inclusion of the past together with a break from it. Yet the very idea of existence implies a variety of existences of different types (Whitehead, 1968, p. 9), the notion of other connected existences with and beyond it, of multifariousness and multiplicity. It’s nice to be known as someone, to have a fixed identity. Here, where I live in Taradale, I’m known as Millie’s mum,<sup>38</sup> Hugo’s granny, the manager of a brain injury rehabilitation centre, but these identities are unstable and generated externally through my relations with others, hardly the source of an internal essence. These kinds of identity are irrelevant to the study, and serve only to make the point that the problem of identity is problematic. By definition, what the women *did*, *do*, and *will do*, is their identity and this is what I am concerned with.

Contemporary living emphasises a sense that the Western subject, rational, autonomous and authoritative, is no longer fit for purpose for any future politics concerning women. Writing within the limits of that position, a conventional psychoanalytical investigation all-unwittingly locates a phallographic separation and a static solidity of masculine and feminine identity, perpetuating the comparative fullness of the first and subordinating the second through its construction of desire as negativity and need; chaotic<sup>39</sup> and disorderly. Against this

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<sup>38</sup> Millie is my Bullmastiff pup.

<sup>39</sup> Eruptions of chaos – experienced as *crises* – are uncommon in everyday life, but when they do emerge, everything changes. In Deleuze and Guattari’s (1994, p. 118) formulation, “chaos” “is defined not so much by its disorder as by the infinite speed with which every form taking shape in it vanishes. It is a void that is not a nothingness but a *virtual*, containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible

standardised monocular view, a DeleuzoGuattarian perspective identifies not stable individual entities but spaces and movements of multiple and complex becomings, of permeable boundaries without fixed anchorings, of processes of liminality, marginality and relationality, change and process, “monstrosity” too, and coloured shade, texture and contrast, co-fusion, mobility and lichen-like spread and interference. Demonaical lines of flight are expressed, leaps across rails and boundaries in acts of treachery: “[w]e betray the fixed powers which try to hold us back, the established powers of the earth” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 40).

## Difference

Different configurations and projections of subjects-in-becoming provoke transgressions as well as transformations of conventional representation, linked to here-and-now co-options of future and past yearnings, and implicative of new authorisations, new perceptions and different behaviours, investigated under a new *Wissenschaft*, enacted through deliberate *Selbstkreation*, scored onto *Fleisch* and into the sensory-motor apparatus – and written into narrative factical (Heidegger, 2010), environmental present-ations. “What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present,” proclaimed T. S. Eliot (“Burnt Norton”), and “Most people are other people,” said Oscar Wilde (2000, p. 147),<sup>40</sup> and those women who have made successful breaks away from violence and who did pursue their convictions seem to have obeyed an almost visionary imperative, not an hypothesis or an invitation, but an apprehension through their actions of the creation of new, authentic agencies from the virtualities to which they responded. They did not appropriate these virtualities so much as pour their vitality into them. Not least difficult, acting as they did within structures of unknown terror and immersed in topographies of conscious horror, was the emergence of the interviewees’ mischievous ludicity after the su(rre)ndering and disabling of the commitment to law-and-order’s lucidity.

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forms, which spring up only to disappear immediately, without consistency or reference, without consequences. Chaos is an infinite speed of birth and disappearance” (emphasis in original). Crises, emerging from chaos, offer a multiplicity of virtualities, departures from territorialisation, that open up new ways of life. Receptivity to such events means moving away from the taken-for-granted grooves of common sense into uncharted territory. These tangential lines of flight lead to exuberant freedom, or collapse. For a filmic depiction of deterritorialisation (albeit an ultimately unsatisfying one due to Hollywood’s relentless punishing of “bad” girls), see Ridley Scott’s (1991) *Thelma and Louise*.

<sup>40</sup> The fuller passage reads: “Most people are other people. Their thoughts are someone else’s opinions, their life a mimicry, their passions a quotation.” Wilde goes on to say: “In [Christ’s] view of life he is one with the artist who knows that by the inevitable law of self-perfection the poet must sing, and the sculptor think in bronze, and the painter make the world a mirror for his moods, as surely and as certainly as the hawthorn must blossom in Spring, and the corn burn to gold at harvest-time . . .” (Wilde, 2000, p. 148).

Rather than insisting on fixedness and structure, presence, and identity, “. . . we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed . . . ” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 4), Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise difference, change, openness and becoming in ways that liberate thought – and hence living – in its power to develop increasingly intricate problems into a plurality of forms and acts, and transform life. The understanding they bring to ontology is a new conceptualisation of being: becoming. There is no stable “Mary” or “peach”, though these are useful fictions for indicating transitory states of relative immobility. Better to privilege verbs: “peacheating”, and draw a line of best fit around Mary and around peach, describing the reasons and methods for doing so. Emphasising process in this way focuses attention on “peaching” and “eating”, distancing captivations from constricting definitions and opening connotation to continuous evolution: “A body is not defined by the form that determines it nor as a determinate substance or subject nor by the organs it possesses or the function it fulfills” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 260).

“On the “plane of consistency”, say Deleuze & Guattari (1987, p. 260), “*a body is defined only by a longitude and a latitude*: in other words the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or degree of potential (latitude)” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 260, emphasis in original). But who and what is delineating these edges and for what reason? Mary outlines the edges of the peach for the obvious reason that she doesn't want to bite her hand but rather to coordinate her actions in order to acquire sustenance. She has a practical interest in treating the fruit in a certain way in a given context. Viewed in this light, the peach has more in common with oil for a motor engine than it does with a buxus plant. But what forces and lines of intensity are meeting in the Mary/peach encounter, given form in the expression of behaviour?

Well, as Dewey pointed out some 75 years ago, “Association in the sense of connection and combination is a “law” of everything known to exist. Singular things act, but they act together. Nothing has been discovered which acts in entire isolation. The action of everything is along with the action of other things” (Dewey, 1946, p. 22). So life and behaviour can not be satisfactorily explained through the use of traditional Saussurean semiotics and their postmodern derivatives. Unshackling becoming – pure difference – from the postmodern

conjunction of signs and signifiers, and from relational positionings within a chain of signifiers, debunking “the false representations of identity, analogy, opposition and resemblance” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 29), is required. Signs, no longer connected to linguistic entities that relate somehow to the natural world, can no longer be seen as relevantly referencing other signifiers, but rather derive “meaning” according to the degree of probability to which they elicit a material process.

## Women and Ontology

How then is womankind to be conceptualised? What do we suppose as the “essence” of womankind? How is agency developed? What is the role of gender in the development of agency? When we investigate our own lives, it becomes obvious that we are aware only of a bewildering, fluctuating, effervescent and fleeting present. We may be able to recognise the intruding influence of the past into this present and the imagined circumstances of the future, but these are viewed from the continuously moving “stream of consciousness” (James, 1890, p. 180), which appears as a “blooming, buzzing confusion” (p. 488). Yet the present, and our behaviours, together with our ability to perceive ourselves as subjects of seemingly independent volition, offer moments and spaces of transition, boundaries and borders where the real action occurs.<sup>41</sup> A disparate temporal logic confronts us: we are aware of our burgeoning sensations and at the same time we register the coming into awareness of events which affect us and which we can alter, simultaneously registering that these engagements may change us in the most profound ways. Analysis of these matters reveals that immanent processes, the fluidity of continual mobility together with the recognition of self only in relation to other people (and other objects), by them and with them (Marx, 1976, p. 144), implies a rejection of Darwinian teleology or necessary historical development.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Deleuze approves of Bergson’s (1944) ideas of transition and difference. It would take us too far afield to elaborate these ideas, though it is useful to note Deleuze’s claim that “. . . Bergson will show throughout his works that the tendency is not only primary in relation to its product but in relation to the causes of these products in time, causes always being obtained retroactively starting from the product itself: *a thing in itself and in its true nature is the expression of a tendency before being the effect of a cause*” (Deleuze as cited in Mullarkey (Ed.), 1999, p. 45, my emphasis).

<sup>42</sup> But in his *Grundrisse* (1993, p. 105), Marx suggests that it is only through examining higher forms of life that we can know about previous generations: “Bourgeois society is the most developed and the most complex historic organisation of production. The categories which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure, thereby also allows insights into the structure and relations of production of all the vanished social formations out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up, whose partly still unconquered remnants are carried along with it . . . Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape. The intimations of higher development among the subordinate animal species, however, can be understood only after the higher development is known.”

This narrative, typical of Marx’s approach for deriving conceptual explanations, supports a plausible case for Darwinian evolution. However, there are alternative suggestions that expose the implicit “just so” nature of this reasoning, e.g., might not so-called “natural selection” choose not the fittest and strongest, but the so-called weakest, i.e., those prone to hiding and fleeing? Nature favours those



## Individuation

Not only can we not step into the same river twice; we are quite unable to step into it even once, because, except for that infinitesimally minute unpindownable point called the present, neither we nor the river are static. Opposed to legitimation and justification, ever at the service of elites, there is little reason then, to accept the conventional ordering norms or adopt the disciplining values of contemporary society. Participating in new activities, adopting new vocabularies (e.g., “cisgender”, “cheugy”, “woke”), challenge us to examine our customary modes of thought and ways of behaving, and, understanding the flux of experience as nothing beyond the concept of ephemeral simulacra supports the constitution of an ontology of pure difference, as different from the Hegelian notions of negation, contradiction, and dialectical movement as is possible for the theory of vitalist dynamism that Deleuze and Guattari propose. Rejecting the doctrines of both “substantialism” (the idea that individuality inheres in a being as its essence, based on itself and self-originating), and “hylomorphism” (the idea that views the individual as having been created by the conjunction of form and matter; see Simondon, 1992), because both doctrines assume a principle of individuation exercising influence before individuation has actually happened, the only privileged unity of being there can be, neologised by Simondon in his felicitously deictic term, *ecceité*, (as cited in Scott, 2014, p. 33), is that of a “relative reality”:

Occupying only a certain phase of the whole being in question – a phase that therefore carries the implication of a preceding preindividual state, and that, even after individuation, does not exist in isolation, since individuation does not exhaust in the single act of its appearance all the potentials embedded in the preindividual state. Individuation, moreover, not only brings the individual to light but also the individual-milieu dyad. In this way, the individual possesses only a relative existence in two senses: because it does not represent the totality of the being, and because it is merely the result of a phase in the being’s development during which it existed neither in the form of an individual nor as the principle of individuation (Simondon, 1992, p. 300).

If a so-called individual cannot be located definitely at any start point or end position, if she never exists in isolation, if she can be described (fleeting) only in the process of becoming, described as something that precedes her coming and identified as partly determined by her

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elements that best allow the continuance of divergence, a compelling reason for seeking and accepting change.

future iterations, and possessing only a “relative reality” (Simondon, 1992, p. 300), then, according to Simondon, the singularity of her impurity is the seed of preformation that anticipates her amorphous and interminable structuring becoming, causing changes in energy potentials.<sup>43</sup> When in-formation moves between the two entwined items which constitute a system – the singularity and her environment – then an organism’s homogeneity, internally resonating, “*falling out of step with [herself]*” (p. 300, my emphasis), transforms the structure through transduction into previously unrealised potentialities as stages or dimensions: together, trait, singularity and event (emissions of “singularities”, Deleuze: 2005, p. 329), not only adapt (to) the organism’s environment, but the organism also volitionally modifies herself through her intercalation into the (social) axiomatic of organic problems.

### **Body without Organs**

The DeleuzoGuattarian Body without Organs (BwO), the vast set of potentials for bodily organisation, is organised over time and experience (testimony to the *Bildungsroman*, and to the riotous rivalry of “conflicting agents” (Eagleman, 2011, p. 241)), that we build and enact in our development. Organ-ised by assigning free-floating affects described in the machine imagery of *Anti-Œdipus*, (e.g., mouth – breast), and œdipally privileged, the body acts as organ to persons, teaching us what our desire is (“So that’s what I want! It was Mummy/Daddy after all!”). We all have a “body politic” although different social machines organise bodies differently. This is the move from the molecular to the molar; the molarisation of the body produces a person, a conforming citizen. Pragmatically, women are treated as they are in our society because there is a dominating interest in demarcating them in a particular context – mapping – reflected in the language used to subordinate and confine.

Organisms, though captured by ensnaring techniques, are not entirely delimited, however, by those mappings. Can a sociological account of a mother adequately describe her emotional place in the family? Just how is a mother of five children different from a mother of two? How is a mother of boys different from a mother of girls? Of an autistic child? Can the family’s beliefs about their mother explain her fascination with gardening? How is the mothering of a woman

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<sup>43</sup> In the same vein, Simondon continues, “*The preindividual being is the being in which there are no steps [phases]. The being in which individuation comes to fruition is that in which a resolution appears by its division in stages, which implies becoming: becoming is not a framework in which the being exists; it is one of the dimensions of the being, a mode of resolving an initial incompatibility that was rife with potentials. Individuation corresponds to the appearance of stages in the being, which are the stages of the being*” Simondon, 1992, p. 301, emphases in original).

married to a lawyer different from the mothering of a woman married to a teacher? Nevertheless, the maps tend to become performative on that which they envelop. Zooming in or out provides different perspectives and reveals other references: economic, social, political, biological; citizenship, spending power, playfulness. And, at the same time, these entanglements bleed into other semi-stable entities.<sup>44</sup>

### **Altered States**

Obscured by the map are transforming processes of becoming, different speeds and forces, observed by humans at critical junctures as disruptions (see Kuhn, below). Different states of being are best denoted by verbs: eating is a happening thing for a peach until a critical threshold is attained and it converts to sugar and various minerals. The peach is *becoming* soluble carbohydrates and various minerals. Mapping procedures make it seem as if there are two separate objects but there is an affinity between the two that connects the processes.

Accordingly, the erroneous mapping of the existence of an a priori form of individuality derives from the existence of a prior set of necessary conditions whose dimensions are greater than that of the developing individual, while those possibilities of the a posteriori are rather lesser. With human development, the psyche provokes the being towards resolving its problematic stages/phases/states by establishing lines of communication between that which is larger – the transindividual collective and that which is smaller, through an a præsenti organisation of information into formulae for action. New information provides the occasion for a change in phase, according to the demands of the emergent organism, breaking with its own relation to itself.

### **A paradigm shift**

Deleuze, contra Simondon's theorisations, proposes a different concept of potential. Rather than site it in matter, Deleuze considers potential as instantiated in a structure that is at one and the same time virtual and immaterial. Thus, individuation is characterised by its insubstantial openness and multiplicity where being is sought only in processual motion, always already more than itself, always potentially capable of blurring its boundaries and

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<sup>44</sup> All these identities, based on performance, are "real" under specific description. So, while it is correct to say that Deleuze was both a good tennis player and an horrific driver, these details are unimportant, except in context, politely to decline an invitation to join him in either activity.

reinventing novel responses. How then, and could, indeed, should, this Deleuzian conceptualisation advance thought for such feminist concerns as domestic violence? The philosopher of science, Thomas Kuhn, offers an interesting description of the movement from one paradigm (a set of concepts, hypotheses, categorisations, relations, and ways of engaging, generally accepted by a community of researchers) to another. In so-called “normal science” (Kuhn, 1996, p. 10, and following), “anomalies” (p. 11, and following) arise which cannot be explained usefully by the existing theory or theories. This state of tension increases until the discipline falls into a crisis wherein problems are no longer satisfactorily addressed by the prevailing thinking. Eventually there emerges a new set of more cohesive concepts and relationships which afford better solutions to the anomalies, at the same time as they retain the valuable parts of the old paradigm.

Kuhn’s schema can be criticised on many levels (there is no explanation of how anomalies occur and how they generate crises rather than simply be ignored; nor is there any consideration of how new paradigms come to find general acceptance), but the pragmatic issues of feminist engagement in the frustrating and threatening circumstances of domestic abuse call for a new paradigmatic formulation that addresses the continuing large number of cases,<sup>45</sup> and offers a convincing explanation of the nature of women’s concerns, together with a set of prescriptions for action based on that formulation. Alternative redescriptions, and therefore alternative possibilities, seeing the world as a flux of potentialities, might destabilise, and suspend the common-sense order of positions and objects so that new conditions might apply. Following Spinoza, Deleuze states:

. . . we will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and its functions, nor as a substance or a subject. Borrowing terms from the Middle Ages, or from geography, we will define it by *longitude* and *latitude*. A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. We call longitude of a body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between *unformed elements*. We call latitude the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is, the

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<sup>45</sup> Results from the 2018 New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS, 2020), show that only 79 000 adults suffered domestic violence, as opposed to the 229 000 victims reported in the New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey (NZCASS, 2013). But the more recent survey uses a different methodology, including different coding procedures, different data collection methods, and fewer data imputations, making it difficult to extract valid comparisons.

intensive states of an *anonymous force* (force for existing, capacity for being affected) (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 127, 128, emphasis in original).

A precondition for change then is a certain formlessness, a provisional chaos: no-where/nowhere. Were there form, or essence, there would be no need for change; the prototype would already exist, and in an unvarying culture, that's the way things are, that's the way they work. But if the world could be reconceptualised as a profusion of unformed elements acted upon by unpredictable forces, these Guattaro-Deleuzian, previously unknown virtualities might be expressed as actualities. On reflecting that "think[ing] themselves free on account of this alone, that they are conscious of their actions, and ignorant of the causes of them; and moreover, that the decisions of the mind are nothing save their desires, which are accordingly various according to various dispositions" (Spinoza, 1910, Pt III, P. 2, pp. 88-89), subjects might first appreciate the dormant micro-forces underpinning their urges and needs, and then understand the negative origins of patriarchal power that these "microphysics of power" (Guattari, in Genosko, (Ed.), 1996, p. 177), animate in the social and political realms. Glossing Spinoza, Deleuze writes: "In despotic statecraft, the supreme and essential mystery is to hoodwink the subjects, and to mask the fear, which keeps them down, with the specious garb of religion" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 25). "There is no longer even a need for a transcendent center of power; power is instead immanent and melds with the real" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 130). Understanding such matters, women might shift from their hefts.

### **Freedom Now**

At this point, it is timely to indicate the sense, purpose and scope of this endeavour as well as the extensive use I make of Deleuze's theorisations. The thesis elaborates those areas of Deleuze's (and Guattari's) thought that are germane to the study of the accounts of domestic violence of a group of women in Aotearoa/New Zealand. As such, it does not intend to replicate or to challenge their concepts, but instead, to use their, and others' ideas to explore the various issues that women living in abusive environments face, and to examine the lines of flight that can be harvested from the potentialities of the concepts themselves. In so doing, I decentre Deleuze and Guattari's thoughts in favour of extending their ideas toward the opportunity of taking up new meanings when combined with other thinkers' understandings and applied to different situations. Here, I am following the precepts of Deleuze and Marx who both undertook similar approaches in their work. This approach spotlights "problems" and unpacks

the concepts used to describe them, both to understand and to explain women's responses and their active resistances against exploitation and exclusion. This could mean turning theory against itself, and the vexed question of "becoming-woman" (i.e., their instability and "flightiness").

A comprehensive theory might first examine how existing theories of women's subordination tie in with contemporary social relationships. As such, of course, the ideas are the product of the very phenomena they seek to describe and are (often unconsciously) subject to the dominant philosophical and political thinking of present and previous eras. And certainly, all ideas are complicated by the expectation that linguistic descriptions convey accounts that are "true to experience", i.e., that tally with appearances and reflect to a high degree of accuracy the way language is "unproblematically" used by native speakers. Linguistic facility comes with different abilities and functions. We live in different ways and in different classes, modified by varying educational achievements and intellectual abilities. At the individual level, this knowledge suggests a need for a sincere examination of my own competence in language in the interview process. Particularly, I have to be wary of mistaking my own village for the linguistic city, and I need to be alert to the salient varieties and complexities of experience that might enlarge my understanding by attending to seemingly innocuous features of respondents' narratives.

So, just as Marx's realisation of the theory of surplus labour was grounded in the perspective of those not in control of the means of production, it is my conviction that the emergence of a deeper understanding and enactment of more truly meaningful human relationships is the effect of women themselves actively working out the trajectories of their lives in ways that depart from ordinary practices, made dull from unquestioning repetition. Replacing manipulation and subjugation with the realisation of women's potential might provide the platform for the development and acceptance of a new paradigm.

Yet this should not become a new universalist paradigm, since Deleuze and Guattari reject the "molar politics" (Colebrook, 2000a, p. 1), that either Marxist or phenomenological positions imply, because to accept one or the other suggests a "specifically female subjectivity" (p. 1). To consider the female subject as ground for collective action is to resort to resentment and to the submission of some transcendent ideal of womanhood. It makes the error of mistaking

cause for effect, map for territory, and of confusing a transient position for a stable entity. Signs and signifiers are not bound to any one course of action because they are pluriform and available to multiple processes. Creation develops that which is expressed in the sign(s) of potential and which may be interpreted as use-value, exchange value or cultural object. This interpretation is determined by an infinite play of interactions, subsumed within the profusion of historical, biological, and social striations, and realising women's potential, multiply, perpetually.

### **Lines of Forces**

That is to say, that an agent's "free-will" is defined by the countless preceding, present and future forces influencing any kind of action. Meaning derives from the encounter of lines of force, each of which is a collocation of other, countless lines of force; it might be described as "a network of enveloped material processes" (Massumi, 1992, p. 10), where both agent and object-worked-upon are mutually determining, are as so much raw material brought together by circumstance. The duality of encounter of enveloped material processes indicates the potential interchangeability of content and expression. Two parties at different times are content and expression, dominator and subjugated: the woman preparing a meal in a kitchen is an agent of expression where she embodies the stronger forces in her application in dominating the raw ingredients of the meal, compared with the weaker forces of the food, and she is also the content of historical conditions, of patriarchy and capitalist forms of being. Meaning is evoked where two force fields, or a form of content (here, an order and organisation of such qualities as the raw qualities of the food, its texture, degree of malleability, its capacity to be transformed through heating, etc.), and a form of expression (an order and organisation of functions such as being a cook, a wife, a person situated in a certain stage and position of capitalist and patriarchal production circumstances). And because there is no causal link between content and expression, no "conformity, common form, nor even correspondence" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 64), meaning is located in the in-between of content and expression, a becoming other, but for just an instant (Deleuze's word for it is "event"), the "impersonal instant . . . divided into still-future and already-past" (2004b, p. 172).

## Making New

At the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's project lies the belief in new ways of human relating and the possibility of new subjectivities, societies and thinking. "Think we must", writes Virginia Woolf (1938, p. 60), not as in "the heroic story of the privileged signifier moving over the matrix space to bring back the prize and die . . ." (Haraway, 2014, p. 4), but in ways that emphasise "nothing more than to think what we are doing" (Arendt, 1998, p. 5), ways that go beyond limiting thinking to functionality, "destabiliz[ing] worlds of thinking with other worlds of thinking" (Haraway, 2014, p. 3). Suspicions concerning an "apparently phallic drive to plug things" (Grosz, 1994b, p. 187, emphasis in original), are excluded in favour of a free-wheeling dealing with the situations at hand, viewing virtualities that might be actualised, so that despite that the women were surrounded by the pervasive givenness of "forehavings", they were/are nevertheless distinguished by existential "foreconceptions": approaching future existence with determining "strange-making" attitudes towards their worlds and what they want(ed) from them. Women's ability to receive (receptivity is a trigger of potentiality), and process information and act upon their worlds indicate that they are something more than whatever it was/is they were/are doing in the past/present: they are/were themselves and their circumstances.

Given the ongoing oppression of women, any thought or action that problematises, renders anachronistic, or otherwise undermines the traditional phallogocentric view of women's "position" in favour of more active and affirmative expressions, is worthy of more than casual inspection.<sup>46</sup> DeleuzoGuattarian conceptions of human existence, beyond linearity and binaries, elaborated through their notions of rhizomatics, "becoming-woman", multiplicities, deterritorialisations and lines of flight, provoke "change(s) in nature and connections with other multiplicities" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), opening up a profusion of novel opportunities for women's expansion of their worldhoods. Even the concept of "multiplicity" changes its identity as collectivities are gathered into its assemblages and its developing connections, flows, intensities, durations and energies. Following Spinoza<sup>47</sup>, Deleuze (1987, p. 60) asks: What can a

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<sup>46</sup> The relatively recent emergence of the "transformation" framework (Crawford & Gentry, 1989, p. 147), is one such expression. See also Crawford & Marecek, 1989b; Hare-Mustin & Maracek, 1990; Lorber & Farrell, 1991; Stacey & Thorne, 1985; Tavis, 1993; Tiefer, 1987).

<sup>47</sup> *Ethics* (Spinoza, 2018a, p. 97, III/P2. Schol.): "For no one has yet determined what actions the body can do, i.e., experience has not yet taught anyone what actions the body can and cannot do without being determined by the mind simply on the basis of the laws of nature insofar as nature is viewed solely as corporeal. For no one has yet achieved such an accurate knowledge of the body's structure



body do? and so this thesis thereby analyses and assesses the actions and events in which the women engage, how they perform womanhood, the links they construct, the disruptions and transformations they enact and the proliferations of capacity and affect their actions engender.

## Values

Implicitly challenged in the women's stories are theories of value. Such stances are always subjective because one woman's needs, proclivities, and desires are subtly different from another's, and because the sociality of womanly "values" (usually aneconomic), is set against the patriarchal individuality of "value" (typically economic). Moreover, it is difficult if not impossible to decide upon a formula that reliably quantifies the "real" value of the myriad factors – sentimental, cultural, aesthetic or utilitarian, and indeed, emergent<sup>48</sup> – of any behaviour, attitude, or belief compared to any other. In fact, it could be argued that the values espoused by the women in this study cannot be meaningfully compared with the value of commodities that are capable of being measured, because the women themselves, as the "objects" at stake, are enthymemic engagements of resolute aesthetic performance, as close as can be consciously compared to the Kantian *Ding an sich*, in movement toward the *für sich*. What is clear is a very Deleuzian desire for more – more life, more relation, more opportunity, more freedom.

## Desire<sup>49</sup>

Desire, a major focus of Deleuze and Guattari's attention in *Anti-Œdipus* (1983), *Kafka* (1986), and *Dialogues* (with Claire Parnet, 1987, 2007), particularly as it is linked with sexuality, is not judged to be appropriative or personal. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari consider desire to be a dimension of everyday experience, molecular rather than molar, expressed in the encounterings of belief and daily practice, shown in trust, connection and creativity. It is the

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that he could explain all its functions . . ."

<sup>48</sup> Emergence occurs where new properties, not apparent in smaller arrangements and not predictable because not preceded in human experience, come into being when things are connected in different collocations. Thus, it has been noted that "three boys together are already a gang" (Harman, 2017, p. 30), whereas three girls together are not. As a by-product of subjective engagement, entirely new understandings, emanating from the recursive nature of the discourse may emerge outside the sum of the individual contributions of its members. Beyond the scope of this investigation but significant for a fuller exploration of their mobility is the emergent group support of women's networks in such studies.

<sup>49</sup> The word *desire* can be traced back to the Latin, *sīder-*, or *sīdus*: "heavenly body", which also has an older meaning of "mark" or "goal". *Dēsīderāre*, meaning "to long for" was born when the Latin *de-* was prefixed to *sīder*. *Dēsīderāre* begat the French *desirer*, which produced the English *desire*, desirous, and desirable in the 13th and 14th centuries. An altogether nebulous term.

emergence of communication between, within and across interstices; moments such as the care with which an arborist prunes a raspberry bush, or the work one sees among well-practised medical staff in a surgical theatre, or the look in a child's eyes when she masters a bowline tie, or the sensitivity that boughs and roots of neighbouring trees extend to each another. "[D]esire as libido is everywhere already present, sexuality runs through the entire social field and embraces it, coinciding with the flows that pass under the objects, persons and symbols of a group, and it is on desire that these same objects, persons and symbols depend for their distribution and very constitution" (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 195).

Desire is the unconscious, unmediated force field that combines, intervenes, transgresses and disjoins arrangements between "subject" and "object". Crucial, then, in examining the motivations and trajectories of the women is developing a connoisseurial approach to the subtly shaded backgrounds of their desiring situations as well as to their more highly nuanced foregrounds. Genuine engagement with, and articulation of fidelity to a truth, brings desire into existence and "induces" (Badiou, 2001, p. 43), a person's singular subjectivity. "I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object. What is realised in my history is neither the past definite as what was, since it is no more, nor even the [present] perfect of what has been in what I am, but the future anterior of what I will have been, given what I am in the process of becoming" (Lacan, 2006, p. 247).

The women's desire is of paramount concern, because it acts as a propulsion toward the expression of something which is simultaneously internally originating yet ostensibly externally motivated. Traditionally conceived as negative, as pre-given absence and loss, desire has been presented psychoanalytically as lack, as something missing that the human<sup>50</sup> organism strives to fill through the attainment of some sought-after but currently unobtainable object. On this Freudian interpretation, the force of life is taken to be the negative engine of external-seeking toward the fulfilment of consumption/consummation. To the contrary, argue Deleuze and Guattari, lack is produced by the forces of desire due to the historical processes endemic to capitalist society.<sup>51</sup> The forces and relations of production that create *agencements* of desire

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<sup>50</sup> It is dubious as to whether or not animals have "desires". Certainly, they have wishes and wants, needs and preferences, instincts and habits, but desire seems also to involve language, including an imaginative ability to retroject a "self" into the past as well as to consider (alternative) futures (often expressed in the future perfect tense).

<sup>51</sup> The "technologies of power" (Foucault, 1995, p. 131) that repress desire are peculiar to capitalism and Freudian psychoanalysis. Other regimes produce other repressions and differently structured bodies.

through their investments develop *dispositifs* of power and knowledge as paradoxically-reinforcing epiphenomena or Marxian superstructure. Unlike conventional Marxist analyses, however, *Anti-Œdipus* locates production below the subject, below the body's organs, at the microlevel of molecules and flows of energy. Visioning all activity in the human and natural worlds as one huge, dependent-interdependent cat's-cradle ceaselessly moving, then all connectivity – machines – comprising flows of blood, saliva, semen, mucus, shit, money, electricity, etc., is characterised by its ability to sever, divide, share, combine, arrange, break, consume, or sell such flows. Because of this, it is not language emanating from a supposed centre of coherence that produces meaning, but rather the motion and connection of these mobile assemblages that produce subjective sense. Thus, the organisational stratification called “human” is only the molar effect of a more primary mix of processual desires that obtain at the molecular and even at the inorganic level.

Desire is then a set of desiring machines, continually connected, uncoupled and recoupled with other desiring machines, and for Deleuze and Guattari, “[i]t is not possible to attribute a special form of existence to desire, a mental or psychic reality that is presumably different from the material reality of social production” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 30). And so the *für sich*, the movement that a person believes to reside within herself as a unitary rationality and through which she expresses her for-herselfness is taken to be those anxieties that operate to annul the dread of nothingness, of needs and lack, which thrust the castrated subject into a never-ending search for the healing Lacanian *petit objet a*.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's exposition posits desire as machinic, productive, processual, compounded of vitality and intensity, becoming, not being. Significantly, the body that is disciplined by prevailing social and cultural forces, is always biological and always in excess of the incompleteness of capitalism's system, despite the latter's claims to equivalence.

### **Life. Explained.**

But even were the desired object or goal to be achieved, there would remain a sense of dissatisfaction because life's aspiration is to maintain desire itself.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, though it

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<sup>52</sup> Observable in contemporary society where the vast majority of humanity daily labours to numbness to meet its “needs”, and where marketing and advertising continually create more “needs”.

<sup>53</sup> Which is why Lacan's notion of desire, derived from Kojève's (1969, p. 20, and following) reading of Hegel: “Man's desire is the desire of the Other” (*Seminar VII*, 1997, p. 129; *Seminar XI*, 1998, p. 235), is inadequate. The imputation there is that desire – or at least man's

undoubtedly requires energy and determination, desire is never a quest for an object that is necessary for life, though it surely presupposes an ability to hold an end-goal in mind, a feat that requires an adaptable I and a linguistic familiarity with the verbs, *was*, *is*, and *will be*. The vitality of life is not to be found in the itch and scratch of superficial needs and wants, which in moments of fictitious self-awareness, erupt the ego as “the cramp knotted over” these negativities (Lingis, 1998, p. 16). Those needs and wants in fact are partial, the “mind” consisting of innumerable fragments: mouths, gestures, beatings, postures, smells, decorations, tattoos, music, genitals, symbols, humiliations, penetrations, anxieties, fears, masquerades, foolishness, disgust, hopes. Different drives seek to satisfy – “activate, exercise, invigorate, discharge” (Nietzsche, 1995, p. 90), themselves, ascribing “causes” according to these drives’ needs. Following this approach, incorrectly identified by Levinas (1979, pp. 110-42), as pleasure, human life is claimed to be at its most content when it conforms to the sustaining ephemeral abundance of sensual delight and its accompanying pleasure in enjoyment. Life itself, on this view, becomes a deluge of calescent sensoria, pivotal points which widen into pathways where appetitive invitations become imperative obligations and a complex savouring of multiple sensuous delights.<sup>54</sup>

But drives, subsequently articulated as symbolically structured desires (misidentified by Freud as pulsation toward Thanatos), are not hunger or lack, nor a Buddhistic negation of will, nor a Heideggerian thrownness into passivity, nor wholly that expressed in Proposition VI of Spinoza’s *Ethics* (2018a, P. 3, p. 101): “Every single thing, endeavours as far as it lies in itself to persevere in its own being”, but a joyous engagement that extends capacities, even beyond the continuance of individual existence. The mystery of human ipseity is explained by an unconsciously aware participation in the Deleuzian creation of evermore actualisation of virtualities, *a creativity which feeds off events in order to remain open to the future*. A masculine view of the corporality of the embodied conscious self and the elevation of the same as the

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desire – can be attained on some level. Lacan is relatively incurious about woman’s desire.

<sup>54</sup> Considering drives’ often conflictual expressions, the researcher may well wish to go beyond Deleuze/Guattari in asking how drives are governed and ordered in the human organism. Are the restraints on excessive destructiveness, for instance, imposed from outside or do they emerge from within the body? What inhibits or suppresses the trajectory and intensity of a particular drive – an antagonistic or competing drive, the rule of reason or societal compulsion, or “the subjective authority of an ego carrying out the categorical imperatives of a superego?” (Bernet, 2020: 3)? Might a drive regulate its own fate by channelling and vitalising its personal energy? Might it seek the attainment of goals beyond the maintenance and extension of its own power and hegemony? These concerns lead inexorably to the question of free will, on which Deleuze and Guattari would surely agree with the existentialist claim of there being no avoidance of the choice of choosing or not choosing, together with some variety of compatibilist stance over determinism and free will, i.e.,  $\diamond (D \bullet F)$ .

self-representing centre of interpretation advances an essentialist nature of human “being” at the same time as it assigns to itself the power to name and hierarchise, to decide what is plenitude and what is lack. As a consequence, stability and fixed identity are valorised over mutation and co-(m)otion, colour and shade, and the significance of self-transmutation, the struggle to give an account, to offer co-fusion within a ripples-blending perfusion of discrete movements: a synthetic disjunction. Deterritorialisation is dismissed or denigrated. Focusing, however, on an ethics of affirmation and the positive connecting force of the desiring subject, a DeleuzoGuattarian approach opens up the conceptual possibilities of re-articulating the developing over-human project orthogonally between the constrictions of a Derridean/Lacanian emphasis on linguistic construction and a reductionist Marxian insistence on economic determinativeness. The Enlightenment notion of liberation by way of the adequation of reason is challenged by the field of concepts interfering with other concepts (Deleuze, 2000, p. 280). Deleuzian desire is seen not as Lacanian lack, founded on the incest taboo, occasionally breaking through as rebellion against the Law of the Father (and thereby confirming the latter’s hegemony), but as a productive and affirmative endeavour. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (2006, pp. x, 10, 28, 81-83), Deleuze laments the “slave morality” that typifies the religio-capitalist set of prohibitions that emphasises an inward-focused sense of loss and insecurity at the expense of fluidly desiring subjects, and in *Anti-Œdipus* (1983, p. 28), he and Guattari directly state:

We know very well where lack – and its subjective correlative – come from. Lack (manque) is created, planned, and organized in and through social production.

The deliberate creation of lack as a function of market economy is the act of a dominant class. This involves deliberately organizing want and needs (manque) amid an abundance of production; making all of desire teeter and fall victim to the great fear of not having one’s needs satisfied; and making the object dependent upon a real production that is supposedly exterior to desire (the demands of rationality), while at the same time the production of desire is categorized as fantasy and nothing but fantasy.

Deleuze and Guattari thereby reject the previously accepted personal nature of desire for their claim of the dominating effects of capitalist hegemony and its necessary repressive material deprivation.

So, broadly speaking, the trajectories of the women in the study, moving against society's conventional structurings, history's determinations and the "prisonhouse of language" (Jameson, 1972), reveal the possibilities for radical innovation and the transfiguration of how people *might* live rather than how they should live, where ruptures enact a sharp division between the daily rhythms of established routines, beliefs and consolidated identities, and the rejection of, and rebellion from quotidian nominations and dominations, and where "the main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning" (Foucault, 1982, p. 9). Advancing to a different realm of truth suggests a departure from this rule of law towards new concepts of truth, where, as "militants of their cause" (Hallward, as cited in Badiou, 2001, p. viii), the women in this study subtract themselves from the old order, in the process becoming *subject* in an engagement with that which Badiou terms an "event" (Badiou, 2005, p. xii, and following). Recalling the "event" as an encounter between disparate and opposing conditions, the women's militant cause and departure from the rule of law becomes a connecting line of force with the discourse of the current research.

### **Discourse and participating**

According to Heidegger, there are at least four significant features of human discourse – which is not always or essentially verbal – necessary for intelligible expression: what the discourse is about; what is said in the discourse, the actual communication, and the "making-known" or "manifestation" (Heidegger, 2010, p. 244; 1992, p. 374). The first two features are obvious and require no elaboration. Within the interviewer/interviewee nexus, however, communication is revealed as somewhat more than a simple exchange of information. It is a participation in a shared project of illuminating the experience of one subjectivity in relation to the other('s):

The understanding of communication is the *participation in what is manifest*. All subsequent understanding and co-understanding is a being-with a *taking-part*. Communication must be understood in terms of the structure of Dasein as being with the other. It is not a matter of transporting information and experiences from the interior of one subject to the interior of the other one. It is rather a matter of being-with-one-another becoming manifest in the world, specifically by way of the discovered world, which itself becomes manifest in speaking with one another. [. . .] And it is only by way of this subject matter, in the particular context of always already being-with in the world, that mutual understanding develops (Heidegger, 1992, p. 263, emphasis in original).

This “*participation in what is manifest*” provides an insight into how new knowledge can be produced. Together with the “making-known”, “Dasein itself and its disposition are co-discovered. Discoursing with others about something as a speaking-about is always a *self-articulating*” (Heidegger, 1992, p. 263, emphasis in original). In plainer words, the *manner* and *form* of subjectivities’ expressions articulate and disclose their understandings of themselves *vis-à-vis* others.<sup>55, 56</sup> Inquiry “begins with a question or problem which the researcher seeks to illuminate or answer. . . in the search to understand one’s self and the world in which one lives,” writes Moustaka (1990, p. 15), “. . . yet with vitually every question that matters personally, there is also a social and perhaps universal significance”. And so, as *sujets supposé savoir*, our experiences incorporate all the interplay of gender, sex, sexuality, education, understanding, occupation, ethnicity, nationality, age, culture, economic status, location, group and association membership, state of health, power and control, and all (the choice of the words of) the multiplicity of the narratives we use (and which use us), including internal dialogisation, as they influence (and are influenced by) our interactions, somewhere within Brownian turbulence and laminar fluidity, relatively speaking, and by and through the interindividualising de- and re-territorialisations in, and of, our discussions.

Different, novel, explanations and interpretations were conveyed in the interviews that might not have been possible had the discourse not occurred, and a greater range of possibilities were made available than hitherto existed. Ultimately, I suppose, we are those stories we tell ourselves about ourselves (Sarup, 1996, p. 38), as well as those stories told about us. For varying reasons, those stories alter through time; nevertheless, “[t]hey are important bases from which people create new activities, new worlds, and new ways of being” (Holland, et al, 1998, p. 5); ultimately, “identity is not to do with being but with becoming” (p. 6).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Sometimes in ways that are unexpectedly revealing, despite being metaphorically unobvious or linguistically vague. Calling a driver an “arsehole”, for instance, for braking his car abruptly in front of mine, is at once a recuperating response to a frightening social encounter, and a righteous enactment of superior moral worth via a restructuring of the vehicles in conformity with the body. Further action such as extending a stiff middle finger express a reciprocal violation of *his* body: “Up yours!” (Katz, 1999, pp. 18-86).

<sup>56</sup> Concerning language and thought, William Paulson asks, “which one depends on the other? Do speakers strive to put prelinguistic ideas in words, or do ideas arise out of words in the mind?” (Writing That Matters, *SubStance* (1997), 83, p. 32).

<sup>57</sup> A description of transformation, in biological terms, is the generation of, and response to the electrochemical signals that are transmitted through what might be called “social synapses” activated in discourse, cause millions of rearrangements within and between neurons as they combine and reorganise to transform emotions, cognitions, and perceptions as experiences.

And presentations of self for/to others, seen as mirror reflections, are as much unconsciously-selected, fragmentary, prismatic refractions as they are representations of that “self”, contradictions as well as confirmations in the fluctuating movements from active agency to passive reflection, always-already embedded (always-already changing), within social engagement, evoking valuable insights. Extended interactions in the interview situation have the capacity to develop new subjectivities, new subject positions, and new directions in a non-profit, surplus-value of closer relationships, supportive of and prompting cooperation, attachment, creativity, and emotional health, to and for both participants. One thing: perhaps because of the women’s volatile experiences and the seeming continual occurrence of oppression in their relationships, the conversion of events into unified and completed products was never posited – they were all too aware of the competing formations of a kind of stability from the past and an insecure independence ahead.

Eschewing both the logocentric fixations of fear and consumerist enclosure and the superficially plural fluidities of valorised mobility, e.g., environmental tourism, fusion cuisine, “ethnic” fashion, bourgeois pastimes, etc. (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 6), the women in this study enact a “nomadic subjectivity” (p. 7) in creating an “alternative space of becoming” (p. 7) that alters “the very structure of subjectivity [and] the social relations and social imaginary that support it” (p. 8), while rejecting the stolid hierarchical development of a singular identity. And the interview situation offered a “chance to feel worthwhile, [a] chance to be a person wanted, respected, accepted as a human being worthy of dignity” (Axline, 1964, p. 216).

Many things are available to change when people realise that the institutions to which they submit and the practices which they follow are arbitrary, submerged in temporary, historical determined circumstances and social conformity, including the privileging of (heterosexual) sexual desire as the major motivational mode of desire. The general conformity to these concepts promotes a subservient social conformity that converges with the requirements of capitalism and a liberal-democratic way of life. Many things that appear natural and rational are, as Foucault has said, “the result of some very precise historical changes . . . show[ing] the arbitrariness of institutions and . . . the space of freedom we can still enjoy” (Foucault, 1982, p. 11). Beyond these constrictions, the words and concepts that people use elevate particular themes and modes of being so that other notions are marginalised or even rendered non-



existent. Concepts in Western society privilege the masculine over the feminine, presence over absence, the literal over the metaphorical, identity over diffusion, stability over flexibility and affect over emotion (Derrida, 2001, pp. 351-370). Paradoxically, the second term in these concepts is necessarily constitutive of the valorised part, where the complementary portion invisibly merges or intersects with the major determination.

### **Problems of Identity II**

The significance of binary structuring is to call into question the certainty of contemporary philosophical thought. The very concepts we are accustomed to considering inviolable are undercut by anything more than a cursory examination of the words (including the grammatical structure, vocabulary and phraseology), used to convey them. Because the imagined centre of the structure is evasive (Derrida, 2001, pp. 351-370), because words can never halt and fix the meaning of an idea once and forever, the entire project of philosophical surety is shown to be arrogant and vague.

Yet, historically, the philosophical enquiry of ontological foundation: the study of being or the study of what exists, is no less and no more than the task of pinning down the ultimate and single sense of discrete signifiers. The quest is analogous to the division between analytic and continental thought, paralleling the chasm between science and the humanities, between quantitative demarcation and qualitative difference, and between neuroscience and psychoanalysis. The holy grail for these endeavours is the magic space where a perception marks out a sign inscribed in the neural circuits that might be identified with the Freudian concept of the trace of perception (Freud, 1887-1902, p. 174), in an absolute heterogeneity. No brain region, however, is isolable as the region where a particular perception, emotion or function can be located (Barrett, 2017). There is, according to Deleuze, no reference to a primary identity, no essence of humanity, save that which among all the senses available is the one that gives it the force with which it has the most affinity (Deleuze, 2006, p. 4). What masquerades as ontological necessity is instead seen to be matters of social and political exigency and a multitude of multiplicities. Yet, “[y]ou cannot repeat Deleuze and if you do . . . it is poor Deleuzian philosophy” (Braidotti & Regan, 2017, p. 175). What is considered to be essential to the nature of persons is now understood to be permeated with, and underpinned by, the production of competing differences dependent upon the affirmation of creative forces

and conforming to the mode of existence of the person, insofar as these forces are expressed by signs and symptoms. “There is no event, no phenomenon, word or thought which does not have a multiple sense” (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 4).

If ontological investigations are to effect more than comforting re-articulations of unexceptionable conformity or contradictory statements about how one should act, then clearly, the very question of what ontology proposes must be examined. Deleuze maintains that the project is one not of discovery but rather of creation. On his account, the reduction of possibilities to essentials that accompanies discovery must yield to the open-ended expansion of concepts that creation offers. Proscribed patterns of behaviour, proscribed modes of thought and relational being sternly separated one from another lead only to constricted ways of life. Deleuze proposes instead to invert the traditional approach which seeks answers to how to live from what is (apparently) given, towards the opportunities for an expanded vision of possibilities from living in different ways.

DeleuzoGuattarian efforts toward this goal centre on questioning the unexamined belief that there are limits to thought that circumscribe extension beyond the “legitimate” perimeters of consideration. They seek “not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. vii); so that things which do not currently exist might be brought into being. Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* criticises formulaic representational thinking which does not identify difference as such nor encourage divergent thinking. Instead, that work valorises identity as an expression of “only the conservation of the whole, all the forms and all the moments, in a gigantic Memory. Infinite representation is a memory which conserves” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 53). Deleuze challenges the aim of thought as representation, not as being an erroneous connection with “real” objects, but as being inadequate for conceptualisation. Representation “mediates<sup>58</sup> everything but mobilises and moves nothing” (p. 55). The more one renounces Deleuzian directives, the more Deleuzian one paradoxically becomes, as Braidotti states (Braidotti & Regan, 2017, p. 175). For Deleuze, any whole is variable because the relations between its parts are capable of infinite change, and the power of creation resides, not in the discovery of

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<sup>58</sup> Interestingly, up to the twentieth century, the term ‘mediatise’ meant to remove agency from an individual.

identity, analogy and/or negation, but in the capacity to produce constantly new relations and connections between singularities. Variation and the creation of new forms of life are just the model of life employed by neuroscientific models, and Deleuze acknowledges this borrowing, guarding against accusations of employing one approach from one discipline to inform another, by stating that “[o]f course, we realize the dangers of citing scientific propositions outside their own sphere . . . . But perhaps these dangers are averted if we restrict ourselves to taking from scientific operators a particular conceptualisable character which itself refers to non-scientific areas and converges with science without applying it or making it a metaphor” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 129).

## Thinking

“What does it mean to think? Who gets to think?” asks Stark (2017, p. 7). Is it possible for new thought to occur? “And yet”, says Braidotti, “women do think” (1991, p. 275). “Thinking is about change and transformation” (Braidotti, 1994, p. 165).<sup>59</sup> So, how might Deleuze’s thought provoke feminist theory toward adopting different, and creating new and sustainable ways of thinking and living “in the world and for the world”? (Braidotti & Regan, 2017, p. 176). The problematic gendering of thought in *The Second Sex* proposes man as transcendent and woman as “not a completed reality but rather a becoming” (de Beauvoir, 1956, p. 62), but by the time “third wave” feminism appears, as elaborated by Butler (1993, 2012), the notion of a female essential essence or universal identity had been rejected. The term “woman” is now temporarily located in an unstable site of shifting signifiers, an alienating xenofeminist impetus to (en)gendering new connections and repurposing. Movement is necessary to the forming of new ideas, as it deploys the emotional shifting and breaking away from old behaviours and as it stimulates connecting to new assemblages, fostering growth, progress, and innovative thought. Emotional changes are wrought in the tethering of motivations to action and the adjustment of the links between sensation, perception, and evaluation. “It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge”, says Foucault (1980, p. 52), “it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power”, where power is interwoven in relational contexts such

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<sup>59</sup> Braidotti continues: “For Deleuze, thought is made of sense and value: it is the force, or level of intensity, that fixes the value of an idea . . . . It is as if beyond/behind the propositional content of an idea there lay another category – the affective force, level of intensity, desire, or affirmation – that conveys the idea and ultimately governs its truth-value. Thinking, in other words, is to a very large extent unconscious, in that it expresses the desire to know, and this desire is that which cannot be adequately expressed in language, simply because it is that which sustains language” (Braidotti, 1994, p. 165).

that it exerts particular effects in people's lives. This power begins because, for individual people as for all living organisms, life, and hence volition, starts not with the discrete organism itself but with, and within, the system – the organism and its environment in its process of continual exchange with its surroundings, on many levels of complexity occurring simultaneously, paradoxically demanding both ongoing continuity and perpetual change. That which seems to possess the stability and separateness of the structure of the human body is subject to continual flows of change, such that the molecules making up its ensemble cease to be the same as those of its construction some weeks before. These flows of change, however, paradoxically maintain the organised wholeness of the body, while its component parts ever-moving through disorganisation, disassembly, rupture and replacement, input and output, at the same time guarding that essential coherence of the organism necessary for its continued development and living. What, in conventional science, is regarded as “structure” is therefore to be considered now as “process”, while allowing that process itself might be viewed as a kind of structure should its movement be perceived as linear and forwardly progressing. If the individual organism is thought of as constantly engaged with, and interactive in its ecology in a complex hierarchy of levels, then its operations must be regarded as parts of the functioning of a system, where life is not the property of the singular organism and where the more-or-less regular interactions, interdependencies and re-actions assemble to operate as an integral whole.

In much post-modern theory, especially social constructionism, human bodies are viewed as constructs, as effects of language. In this scenario, persons both *are* bodies, and *have* bodies, the social is embodied, and the body is socialised. In this staging, life, never still, is always moving toward something; at a minimum, toward self-maintenance, and most probably in conjunction with a continual evolving complexity. Allied to the principle of interconnection, sketched above, Weiss (1949), proposed “the device of specificity” of the connectedness of all living systems operating at all levels of complexity, from the molecular to the social as a general explanatory organising principle. The emergence of self-representation required for this development is formed in the interactions of the infant with her carer where reciprocal inferences and consequent coordinations between the adult and the child about the latter's intentions lead to the child's increasing recognition of her sensual and perceptual experience

as her own, together with her developing awareness of the other's response to these experiences (Sander, 1965, 1984).

Necessary changes in life involve a continuous process of self-regulation and (e)co-regulation between the human system and its ecology, though it is important to understand that changes ultimately depend on the choices made by the human system because the external environment does not determine but only influences decision-making. Humans are not passively dependent on external forces but rather, interact with outside perturbations, particularly where these forces can be actively recruited to shape progress.

### Concluding Remarks

In "The Prelude" (Book 6, ll. 538-42), that ur-Deleuzian, Wordsworth, wrote:

Our destiny, our nature and our home,  
Is with infinitude, and only there  
With hope it is, hope that can never die,  
Effort, and expectation, and desire,  
And something evermore about to be.

Desire, Lacan says, is constitutive of the "subject". To accept subordination without resistance is to accept the identity of a victim, but a stubborn determination to become other than a victim is to affirm, to the limits of the possible, the humanity of which subjects-to-be are capable. New ways of being and acting emerge from what in retrospect is a radically deposing break, clearing a path through the débris of unquestioned opinion, and opening these new ways by connecting the thrust of the past to the tug of the future. The person is born anew and is inscribed "from within time, in an instant of eternity" (Badiou, 2001, p. 45).

Every insight inevitably displaces previously cemented knowledge and new truths alter the meanings, and hence the language of the new subject-in-becoming. To accept what amounts to a revelation is to understand the decision to act as not just germane to a person's particular situation but generalisable everywhere; to ignore it as just the "endeavour wherewith a thing endeavours to persist in its being" (Spinoza, 1910, Pt. III, P. VII, p. 91), in what Lacan terms "the service of goods" (*service des biens*, *Seminar VII*, 1997, p. 303), is at one and the same time to conform to the prevailing (capitalist) Imaginary and to betray that person's destiny; on the

other hand, to be faithful to the realisation (in both senses of the word) of subjective consistency induces the real person, recognised in an ongoing process of *nachträglichkeit*, and exceeds a person's being. Persisting in that being just is the actual "essence" of that being.

So, on a minor scale concerning a few women, this thesis examines how affect, cognition and action interact to produce different results, notwithstanding the difficulty of a lack of a common vocabulary between those disciplines: philosophy, psychology, psychoanalysis and biology, which explore the volitional self. Kuhn (1996) called this stage of inquiry the pre-paradigmatic period, where the consistency of the event – Lacan's "encounter" – provokes an ethic of truth which commands new practice and thought, "in an instant of eternity" (Badiou, 2001, p. 45), as it produces multiplicities of being and a "consilience" (Wilson, 1998) that supports the notion that life operates to produce and reward perseverance, courage and will: that which Badiou (2001, p. 51), labels "the immortal [we are] capable of being", and that which Deleuze and Guattari call desire. Former judgements are no longer defensible, and a new, exultant order is available.

This is not to separate a life from all philosophical, legal, and political constraints, which this study locates in many of the women's stories as a paradoxical impetus to action, acting as a source of creativity, innovation and personal change. In all spheres of activity, humans seek freedom, but what is not generally recognised is that the structural function of limits and prescriptions, i.e., the Symbolic Order, is an *enabling* process, facilitating subjective independence and supporting the development of freedom – from authority, normative proscription, and even contemporary mores and values.

Deleuze's "multiplicity" draws on Nietzsche's will to power as a notion that produces *differences*, one that lacks a substratum of primary identity. In Nietzsche's idea of eternal return, Deleuze finds the immortal, rejecting Hegel's dialectical thinking, which is incapable of recognising difference or consequent multiplicities, ever seeking a non-reconcilable unity. Nietzsche's processual affirmation expels dialectical negation and negativity by linking affirmatory practices to a life of creation and joy, as opposed to one of *ressentiment* and "bad conscience" ("*Schlechtes Gewissen*", Nietzsche, 1967, p. 57, and following). Our times compel a new transgressive, minoritarian approach which is equally contrary. Deleuze's (and Guattari's)

thought offers different ways of regarding “becoming”, anticipating Mary Daly’s commentary on “be-ing”:

The word *Be-ing* refers to “the constantly unfolding Verb of Verbs which is intransitive, having no object that limits its dynamism. It is “the Final Cause, the Good who is Self-communicating, who is the Verb from whom, in whom, and with whom all true movements move” (*Wickedary*). When be-ing is not capitalized, it refers to “actual participation in the Ultimate/Intimate Reality – Be-ing, the Verb” (Daly, 2017: footnote, p. 419).

In this quest, the possibilities of more intense relationships are explored, and, as a consequence, what inevitably follows is an unfolding of wider potentialities for Be-ing and human flourishing. Equally inevitably, as Philip Goodchild points out (1996, p. 2), is the accompanying interventional obstacle of a third party or force, thwarting the development of the relationship and shunting its intensities onto customary, and therefore *controlled*, trajectories of alternative valuations. These hindrances, under late capitalism, proclaim the desirability, even necessity, of conventional groupings, structurations, morality and behaviour. The burden connected with such illegitimate couplings casts a shadow of guilt, shame and resentment (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 36) for failing to live a genuine existence, one where the individual is free to travel along an alternative tangled web of possibilities leading away from centres of control. It is beyond these obstacles that a fuller life could lead, not by denying or resisting social realities, but by becoming aware of, and enlarging the possibilities that actually exist. New paths can be added to the old ways, and a step in a different direction can activate the opening out from impossibility toward the invitation of change and potentially liberating discoveries.

New spaces, thus revealed, provide opportunities for “immanent relations” (Goodchild, 1996, p. 3), emerging from their connections within an immanent transcendent terrain of differences (Nietzsche’s “eternal recurrence”). Freed from the centres of control and the constrictions of being always subservient to the other, whether these be the demands of work, the obligations of family, or the machinations of generalised capitalism, wandering along and among tangled webs of divergence and perhaps goal-less digression, the individual develops new and deeper opportunities for self-expression. These acts of de-terr(it)or-ialisation, according to Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987), act to connect disparate items, events and combinations, into unstable

sets of new arrangements, forming associations comprising transgressive machinic operations, productive of different forces, products and directions, and recursively feeding back into the machinic individual it – and her – self, altering her and developing unique virtualities of use and value.



## Chapter 4 Prereflections

### Methodology

#### Research Questions

The overarching research questions in the study are:

- What events and decisions enabled the women to leave intolerable situations
- and
- What behaviours did they employ that led to their subsequent flourishing?

Specifically, the research considers:

- the actions the women undertook that led to positive outcomes,
- the affective movements that enabled their transitions,
- critical factors at various junctures,
- those elements of the women's behaviours that might be replicated as early interventions in troubled partnerships,
- elements of the women's behaviours that were not so successful.

Often, methodology discussions for research projects present an illusory narrative linearity, as if the research has not been conducted when the explanation of its design is composed. In this chapter, my reflections back on the design of my research do not repeat this illusion. The intent of the project, and design decisions to enact the intent, are presented as reflections on the experience of conducting the research. The chapter is explicitly written to include memories of both design choices and research practices, which become reflections embedded within the DeleuzoGuattarian theory applying to the women's stories. The privileged place of theory in the project sets the scene for reflections on the usual components of a methodology chapter: research ethics, research design, interviewing (women), and analysing data (stories), as well as consideration of some of the (limitless) limitations of the study. Within each of the components, however, boundaries between *then* (planned, conducted), and *now* (written, read), *ideal* (design), and *actual* (encounter), *decision* (to act), and *choice* (of action), are more

permeable, privileging the process of engaging theory with women's narratives over the usual fields of research methodology (see section on Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis, pp. 83-84).

Theory provides a model of reality that offers a space within a context as it organises and arranges perceptions and intuitions and selects appropriate metaphors to communicate discoveries and ideas. With theory, the development of ideas is provided with an anchor, a vessel, a rudder and a sail, whereby confusion might find relief at those times when the intensity of emotion or the vagaries of contradictory understandings threaten to swamp or collapse rational thought. My initial aim was to examine the difficulties, as the women in the study saw them, and their influence on meaningful action; this to be tested by investigating the impasses and overcomings in and through which the protagonists had found – in both senses – themselves. I was willing to hold (temporary) potential theoretical inconsistencies over a preference for uncontested dogma, and, if necessary, to change my views. I expected a necessary conflict between lived experience and academic theory to challenge my theoretical allegiances and my belief in personal solutions. Inevitably, the ideas developed in this framework illustrate a system of meanings, beliefs and values with which I approached, organised, and elaborated the complexities of behaviour in the women's recalled relationships and my efforts to develop coherent understandings, at the same time as I attempted to evaluate the influence I brought to my efforts to appreciate their stories. Understanding of DeleuzoGuattarian theory obliged me to make the most complete statement as was consistent with, and appropriate to the trajectories of the women's experiences together, however idiosyncratic my treatment might seem to be. An important objective in selecting Deleuze and Guattari's ideas was fundamentally humanistic, despite these writers' noted antipathy to anthropocentric analysis – to weave the following narratives into terms accessible to human configuration and reconstruction and hence available to heuristic notions of coherence, intentionality and purpose.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Of course, the choice is *my* choice, and it is true to say that this choice was governed by my wish to use those theorists whose ideas I considered most compatible with the project. Less defensively, I believe Deleuze and Guattari's ideas give the research the shape and conformation that I claim as my own. Beyond writers' initial designs are the unpredictable uses that future writers make of their earlier forays: these later additions add to and change the import and value of their original intentions in ways that could not have been foreseen. This study is one of these events.

Theory is both universal and personal; to an important degree, researchers choose their theories because they resonate with their experience of sense-making in the world and because they offer important truths in ways that can be adapted and utilised in ongoing process. But it is true, too, to say that theory picks the person – for me, the more I explored the ideas of recent psychoanalytical theorists, particularly Lacan, the more the puissant thought of Deleuze and Guattari urged itself as importantly significant to the study.<sup>61</sup> Deleuze and Guattari’s emphasis on humans’ integration within social, political and technical systems, and their (sometimes unconscious) assimilations by and into the variable rhythms of contemporary milieux, develops a complex dynamic that includes an interdependent and productive flux of changing perceptions, movements, connections and formations in novel aggregates of action and aesthetic, desire and consumption, not reducible to individual subjecthood, yet nonetheless insisting on the constructive “affirmation of critical and creative functions in human endeavour” (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, p. xii).

Systems of organisation move away from hierarchical, arborescent structures to rhizomatic networks, demanding new descriptions and “line[s] of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9) Most vividly, Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas of de- and re-territorialisation, nomadic meanderings, difference, memory and repetition, strongly commended themselves to the inquiry. This is not to confuse or mingle the message with the messenger, the journey with the voyager; rather, it is to accord equal respect to theory, participants, and researcher. At times this triad came together in a harmony felt as right: a union of learning, understanding and sensibility. These epiphanies, the “instinct for truth” (to paraphrase Bion, 1965, pp. 37, 38), were opportunities to be open, to be fully in the moment, without consideration of how or what I should be, and to conduct the investigations with as much integrity and respect as I could assemble. To use Bion’s imagery again (1965, p. 141; 1962, p. 90), “container” and “contained” complected and re-emerged in recursive connections where each of us shared our stories, not so much by taking in each other’s washing as by sorting through our dirty laundry together. In this way, communicating about significant and troubling events, we developed a common language, and to some extent, a shared history, constructing a narrative

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<sup>61</sup> An uncritical acceptance of all that Deleuze and Guattari say is unwise; at times, especially in *Anti-Œdipus*, where their panegyric to unrestricted desire sometimes reads as if a vague revolutionary desire can transcend all troubles and overcome all obstructions in ways akin to those of rampant market forces: just adopt the latest new idea and your worries will be over. The women in this study strongly opposed this ethic in belief and action.

model of adaptive and efficacious possibilities, at the same time as building a greater understanding of participant's difficulties and their habitual ways of behaving in their relationships. Perhaps the dialogical relationship itself became a model of possible futures. The space for venturing beyond the present, informed by Deleuze and Guattari's theory of time, necessarily relies on the incompleteness of the moment and on its permeability to that which exceeds it.

## Research Ethics

The research incorporates the values and principles of *Te Rito – New Zealand Family Violence Prevention Strategy* (Ministry of Social Development, 2002). Ethics approval for the research was granted by Massey University's Research and Ethics Approval Committee prior to the commencement of the study (Ethics No. SOB 15/76).

Beyond these principles though, lies the understanding of a forceful DeleuzoGuattarian ethics, permeable to the kind of morality which adduces arbitrary prohibitions to justify itself:

The difference is that morality presents us with a set of constraining rules of a special sort, ones that judge actions and intentions by considering them in relation to transcendent values. This is good, that's bad . . . ethics is a set of optional rules that assess what we do, what we say, in relation to the ways of existing involved. We say this, do that: what way of existing does it involve? There are things one can only do or say through mean-spiritedness, a life based on hatred, or bitterness toward life (Deleuze, 1995, p. 100).<sup>62</sup>

This attack on normative ethics was initiated most clearly by Spinoza and Nietzsche, both declaring an end to transcendence. Deleuze insists that Spinoza's *Ethics*:

judges feelings, conduct and intentions by relating them, not to transcendent values, but to modes of existence they presuppose or imply: there are things one cannot do or even say, believe, feel, think, unless one is weak, enslaved, impotent; and other things one cannot do, feel and so on, unless one is free or strong. *A method of explanation by immanent modes of existence* thus replaces the recourse to transcendent values. The question is in each case: Does, say, this feeling, increase our power of action or not? Does it help us come into full possession of that power? (Deleuze, 2005, p. 269, emphasis in original).

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<sup>62</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1994, p. 74), add to this: "There is not the slightest reason for thinking that modes of existence need transcendent values by which they could be compared, selected, and judged relative to one another. On the contrary, there are only immanent criteria. A possibility of life is evaluated through itself in the movements it lays out and the intensities it creates on a plane of immanence: what is not laid out or created is rejected. A mode of existence is good or bad, noble or vulgar, complete or empty, independently of Good and Evil or any transcendent value: there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life."

And Deleuze's Nietzsche asks, "What is the mode of existence of the person who utters any given proposition, what mode of existence is needed in order to be able to utter it?" (Tomlinson, in Deleuze, 2006, p. xvi). For both these early thinkers, universal values are replaced by an evaluation of the type of life that underpins them as their principle. For Nietzsche, it is the difference between noble and base modes of existence. For Spinoza, it is the difference between active and passive affections. On Spinoza's view, an individual is judged "bad", weak, foolish or slavish, if she is cut off from her power of acting; conversely, an individual is judged "good", noble, free and brave, if she acts in ways that enhance her power of acting. In this sense, for Deleuze, at this junction is where Spinoza and Nietzsche converge. The two abjure any notion of transcendence; accordingly, ethical actions are evaluated not by their nearness to, or distance from an external set of values, but instead, are assessed by the increase or diminution of the powers of acting.

Against the charge of Deleuzian ethics embedded in, and mirroring the expectations and requirements of a neoliberal and individualistic age, similar or greater reproaches might be levelled against utilitarian or deontological universalisations as unconsciously reflecting the demands of capitalist society. Utilitarianism fails to identify agreed definitions of "pleasure" and "pain", and shifting cultural values, while the categorical imperative presupposes a universal subject, autonomous, unchanging, and nondeliberative across any circumstance. Both theories depend on a determinative link between action and consequence, ignoring the continuous changes in capacities resulting from action. Both theories misplace the *consequences* of action as antecedent to action, subsuming results under prior rules to be followed. But it's just when things go wrong, precisely when the machinery of human (and other) connection breaks down, *crisis* situations where the old dispensation fails to hold, that we glimpse the virtual that is poised to become actual, and thought needs to be given to amending structures and/or processes, or encouraging the emergence of entirely new settlements and assemblages. "Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to us", proclaims Deleuze (2004b, p. 169), but this is not to be understood as passive resignation to what befalls us, nor as judgement, blame, resentment, or responsibility for any transcendent "good" and "evil". No. Deleuzian ethics is his understanding of Nietzsche's *amor fati*, his affirmation of past events as shaping the present, yet in ways that orient towards the future:

How do individuals enter into composition with one another in order to form a higher individual, ad infinitum? How can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other's own relations and world? (Deleuze, 1988, p. 126).

Deleuze's ethics concerns itself with the "affective relations among bodies in a composite or collective, and those assemblages that fit together in such a way so as to enhance the power of acting among the elements of the collective and those that are unable to fit together" (Bryant, 2011, p. 33). By being aware of, and caring for the other through openness to affirmative social interaction, "a symphony of nature" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 126), is created, not stable, but in processes of development, engaged in connections and assemblages<sup>63</sup> that enhance people's capacities for affecting and being affected. And in these interactions, in "an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 126), "events" (which are actors in their own right), occur; elements are changed, new potentialities are revealed, and transformations emerge. If there is a definitive outcome to a given problematic ethical event, it is to be found *in medias res*, by accurately identifying the different intensities and relationships pertaining to the situation, working with these to engender creative solutions, exploring new ways of living, undertaking novel thinking, arranging different collectivities, acting out strange actualisations through unfolding self-differentiating virtualities, going to the limits of what's possible. For the time being, becoming.

Women must construct novel ways of becoming, despite and because of their minoritarian status. A Deleuzian ethics, with its de- and re-territorialising movements describes the process in musical terms in "Of the Refrain" in *A Thousand Plateaus*: first, there is "a rough sketch" of what could be (p. 311), in the heart of disturbance; next comes the organisation of a safe space marking the boundaries of a territory; finally, "one opens the circle a crack, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself, launches forth . . . This time, it is in order to join with the forces of the future, cosmic forces" (p. 311). Participants in this thesis negotiated their transformations in just this manner.

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<sup>63</sup> "On a first, horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorial sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 88, emphasis in original).

I approached ten participants through my networks and through word-of-mouth, recruiting seven women (two declined and one withdrew before participating). Safeguarding the intimate disclosures of women in the study was crucial. All necessary steps were taken to follow best practice in relation to informed consent, privacy and confidentiality. The nature of the study was fully discussed with potential participants, both before the study was begun and at regular intervals throughout the process. This provided the opportunity for questions to be asked and for the deeper implications of the participation to be considered. Names and other identifying details were replaced by pseudonyms, Leila, Marie, Della, Julie, Mel, Sally, and Kim. Recorded data were transcribed into electronic files on my password-protected computer, locked in my home office drawer and accessed only by me. After the transcriptions, participants signed declarations agreeing that the transcriptions were true, full, and accurate accounts of the interviews, and could be used for the purposes of the study (See Appendices A-C, pp. 259-264: Information sheets, consent forms, and transcript release forms). Unravelling the majoritarian discourse of impartial, scientific objectivity, we negotiated the accounts with each other. Personal encounters, meetings, visiting, talking, sharing and interviewing, all became crucial to organising a safe space together, enabling us to move in our own way to new styles of becoming.

### **Research Design**

Using Deleuze and Guattari's programmatic concept of potentiality as the agent of change allowed the research to better recognise and identify the effects of various actions in the context of specific interpersonal abusive events. The definition of "success" was a pivotal consideration in the study design; after considerable discussion with the women, we agreed that the enlarged number of options from which to select, and the increased ability to choose – happily in accord with Deleuze and Guattari's programme – was the key factor for the women's decision to end their relationships. A time requirement of separation was important in order to assess the success of the separations: at the time of interviewing, the length of separation ranged from five to sixty years, so the women had had plenty of time to establish purpose and alternative meanings in their new lives. Ages ranged from 30 to 86; all identified as Pākehā, three had re-partnered (one remarried), and four were single.

The women's stories were gathered over four-five sessions, at participants' homes at convenient times, each session consisting of over 60 minutes. Participants consented to the interviews being recorded, and I detailed the provision for complaints and the right of withdrawal from the process at any stage. (There were no issues raised by participants and, after interviews were consented, none withdrew.) I explained, and we discussed, the general theoretical understanding of the undertaking as well as the purpose of the research, the interviews aiming to capture the content and reflections each interviewee brought to her narrative. A small *koha* (a gift token) was given to each respondent at the end of the process as acknowledgement of their time and generous sharing.

### **Feminist Narrative Research**

The narratives were collected from participants in order to gain insight into the process of personal change from their perspective of suffering abusive treatment at the hands of their previous partners. The purpose of these stories was to examine themes and actions in the transformative journeys the women undertook to move out of violent situations. This included identifying critical turning points on their paths, and allowed participants to tell their stories in ways they felt most comfortable.

Dialogical enquiry is a valuable way of understanding the actions of others as well as one's own actions, of arranging events into a meaningful and coherent whole, and identifying the concatenation of actions and events. Women's recounting of their experience is necessarily a feminist encounter, as Gluck (1979) maintains, because it creates new ways of looking at events, it validates women's experience, enhances women's communication, and because it develops a sense of meaningfulness. Furthermore, interaction and exchange with others helps to develop a relational self (Bertau, et al, 2012; Hermans, 2001, 2002). Wetherell, Taylor & Yates (2001, 2003) draw attention to the assumptions participants in discussion make, notably in terms of roles people assume in occasions that vary from context to context and from speaker to speaker; often, the interviewer is included in participants' autobiographies. They provide a salutary reminder of how members of a shared culture possess "theories" about how the world works, including how people talk about such matters as self, emotion, and social relations (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2003, p. 240; see also Ehrlich & King, 1994).



Social rules are inseparable from the norms and expectations of society and are firmly connected to ideological patterns of power, obligation and accountability. Fairclough (1995, 2003), discusses “interdiscursive analysis” (2003, p. 3, and following), in terms of the different styles and genres social agents draw on; in many ways social entities are effects of talk. Speer (2005), reminds us that our identities are multifaceted; she argues for the value that “a *strongly CA-aligned* discursive approach” (p. xi, emphasis in original), can bring to feminism. Her approach is repeated by Fairclough and Wodak (2004). Lexical choice, sequence organisation, turn design, and interactional asymmetry is usefully outlined by Wood & Kroger (2000); they note the significance of “grammar” to social life and that “social meanings are grammatically encoded” (p. 23). Hekman (2010), calls for a third, feminist, position, following the linguistic turn, that respects and includes material reality, one that builds on the intimate interaction between language and reality, one that accepts both molar and molecular becomings. In the research process, this focus assists in the empowerment of women because it respects and validates the narrators’ stories. Personal narratives are rich sources of information for understanding the experiences of those who have suffered intimate partner violence because they convey the sense of real-life experience (Bruner, 1986), that may be occluded by other information-gathering methods.

Participants were selected on their willingness to share their stories of transformation; common themes illustrate the importance they gave to the support they received from friends and family. The narratives were fully transcribed and returned to their narrators for corroboration, confirmation, and review, and for agreement to publish in this thesis.

### **Interview Design**

The interviews used a semi-structured approach with open-ended questions providing the opportunity for personal and representative pictures of the women’s situations and the events leading to separation, and their subsequent lives. Elements such as significant emotions, past relationships, children, previous abuse and potential for further abuse, and particularly, coping factors, were discussed.

Interviewing to aid the enabling of a mobile schizoanalysis of women’s creating novel ways of becoming after intimate partner violence involved setting the stage for respondents, one at a time, and required attending to structure, space and relationship (Holmes & Lindley, 1998). So,

interviewees and I agreed to meet at a regular time and place, in an atmosphere of trust and confidence, as well as a Coleridgean suspension of disbelief of conventional facts so as to intensify the memory of past actions and encourage the exploration of past emotions (and serving to remind that transformation in life, as in art, occurs as a result of disorientation, fragmentation and accompanying openness to new ways of being).

In the interview situation, the interviewee is assumed by the researcher to share certain meanings, has accurate knowledge about past events and actions, emotions and relationships which can be shared, can access this knowledge through her imagination, and is motivated to tell her story. Notwithstanding these assumptions, participants may not interpret the researcher's words through the same meaning-frame as that of the interviewer. The participant may be invested in a particular defensive position to protect vulnerable areas of her self or she may be unable or unconsciously unwilling to express her feelings and thoughts, perhaps due to a perceived power imbalance in the interview.

Listening with an "evenly suspended attention" (Freud, 1912/2001, p. 111), with the "third ear" (Lothane, 2006; Nietzsche, 1983, p. 159; Reik, 1975, p. 17), hearing what has not been said, as an instrument in analysis seemingly ambiguously refers to the kind of attention – *gleichschwebend* – or "free-floating attention", that does not follow any particular strategy, aim or expectation, but is at one and the same time poised to "take note" (*sich merken*), in temporal rhythmic and emotional concordance with a participant through conscious, immediate and aware selection, focus and limitation, of significant items and the multiple determinants in the speech, while involuntarily placing much of what is said into (preconscious) memory for later retrieval, deeper comprehension and response – affect in action. Such latter impressions are too strong and too immediate to be mastered at the time and require time and reworking to be comprehended. The reworking includes homophonies, pronunciations and orthographies, jokes, witticisms and puns, parapraxes and "slubs", associations, connotations and allusions, particular uses of irony and sarcasm, absurdities, spaces and contradictions, condensations, prosopoeiae, displacements and projections, inconsistencies, idiosyncratic usage, hesitations, pauses, catachreses, suppressions, omissions and prevarications, the development of forgotten contexts and relationships, pre- and post-knowledges, sometimes "competing voices" (Mazzei, 2009, p. 46), and the opening up of

earlier inhibitions. In addition, the third ear refers to the interviewer's inspection of her interpretations, investigating why it is she thought that way: a self-regarding consideration of her *vu à travers un tempérament*, a sense of responding to faint impressions with the intuitive naturalness of procedural memory – and the ability of the listener to put herself in a similar frame of mind to that of the speaker.

Interviewing people during research also carries important implications for ethical behaviour towards participants and corresponding concerns for methodology as well as the problems of how these axiological issues and diffractive approaches affect the theoretical structure and practical progress of the study. The ways in which speech between participant and interlocutor is constrained, limited, fictionalised, amplified, and multiplied by such factors as sex, experience, culture, and personal and societal inhibition raise significant import for the reality of a stable, self-reflective, and currently accessible sense of self as contoured by the “authenticity” of speech. Moreover, the implications of the content of such discourse can go beyond the factual recounting of stories told about relationships within the family situation to include the quality of the interviewer's understanding and her encouragement of further expansion towards the potential development of dialogic meaning inviting truths more abiding and useful than historical recollection.<sup>64</sup>

Each semi-structured interview with participants accorded with the principles of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), focusing on the subjective experience, intentions and sense-making behaviour of each participant over her move out of an unsatisfactory relationship. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis encourages detailed investigations of personal experience and is an especially useful methodology for researching complex, ambiguous and emotionally sensitive narratives, particularly in areas not fully articulated or understood by ordinary empirical methods or those prescribed by theoretical preconceptions and representations. It offers insights more directly connected with the historical, cultural and familial context of participants' practices of embodied, intentional engagement and lived

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<sup>64</sup> Recent research (Bates & Taylor, 2019; Lammers, Ritchie, & Robertson, 2005), as well as older investigations (Sexton, 1982), suggest that semi-structured interviews are a most useful standpoint by which significant stories can be expressed in active engagement, because they encourage discovery and rich description (Glaser & Strauss, 2006; Raymond, 1979), and because they listen to what the women have to say in their own words (Belenky et al, 1997). Nonetheless, there are limitations to semi-structured interviewing, even of a feminist kind, since a simple representation (in this case) belies the homogenising assumption of the woman subject as a starting place for collecting stories, and then produces separations among women like those which characterise early, predominantly western, modes of feminist engagement in interviewing research: separations of class, race, ethnicity, education, etc. (Devault, 1990).

experience. It is an interpretive undertaking because people are sense-making organisms, and this thesis illustrates the researcher attempting to make sense of people's making-sense.

Such an undertaking requires a strong empathic engagement in order to elicit sensitive details, for instance, where participants were asked to provide a detailed account of the reasons they left the relationship, how they ended the relationship, what factors led them to decide to undertake the shift, how their lives changed because of the movement, and what sense they made of the change. The interviews were recorded and transcribed *verbatim*, with no identifying information, and mapped according to convergences and divergences.

All interviews were initially analysed according to the rationale and practices detailed by Braun and Clarke (2006), and Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009); that is to say, the approach examined how the women made sense of a major life experience. A double hermeneutic process was employed insofar as I attempted to understand the women's understanding of their experiences. Using the precepts of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which are concerned with qualitatively exploring experience on its own terms, the women's narratives turned from the engaged life of interactive first- and second-person dialogue to more distant third-person reflective monologues. Representing their experiences through narrative telling offered both a distancing of their previous acutely felt emotions and raw sensations and prompted a structuring whereby their imaginations could assemble those memories into more manageable identifications. As Merleau-Ponty (2002, p. 49), writes, a distance always exists between "the self which analyses perception and the self which perceives". The major principle of phenomenological investigation is that experience is examined through the words and concepts of the experiencer. When people articulate events in their own language and voice, they may come to know these experiences in such ways as to be able to identify key qualities by reflexively examining their perceptions of the events.

Beyond mere descriptions, however, were the women's reflections of their experiences due to the enormous significance of breakups in their lives, and so I combined a first-stage IPA engagement with this higher-level engagement, together with a DeleuzoGuattarian position in the process of re-creating the women's stories theoretically.

Our talk, typically a conversation, was, I believe, a special experience for participants because of the proscription of silence generally throughout women's histories; no less so for these women and their narratives. It was a special time for me too, feeling privileged to listen to stories of intimacy that had lain unspoken for years, "wandering about among the weeds, plucking the wild and beautiful flowers" (Bion, 1997, p. 37), but needing regularly to remind myself of the "sleeping beauty" (p.37), that was the real quest: "The reason why we concern ourselves with things that are remembered, with our past history, is not because of what it was – although that might be quite important in its own right – but because of the mark it has left on you or us now" (p. 38). The notion of our encounters being grounded in sense-based proximal connection gave a necessary element to my sometimes over-rationalising and analytical thinking, and assisted in our developing an aesthetic and ethical viewpoint expressed in a justifiable yet individual set of values. This may be an echo of a distant nostalgia for the imagined original goodness of the world, of Deleuzian pre-individual assemblages: wasp-to-orchid, infant-at-breast, as connecting, developing object. And our talk, perhaps, went some way to affirming the women's paths of recovery, or re-shaping areas of misalignment or thwarted progress. Sexed, gendered, and subordinated identities under capitalism can be contested, as the women showed, by the kinds of schizoanalytic actions that provide intriguing possibilities for people's futures, foregrounding living as a flow of always-changing interconnected becomings with humanity, challenging binary oedipal configurations. Similar in this respect to postmodern ideas of the female subject, Deleuze posits woman, *découpage* as she is by shifting groupings and combinations and tied to particular locations within specific social arrangements, as an individual constructed by social and psychic collectivities that might better be explained by descriptions of minoritarian gender practice imbricated with (embalmed by?) majoritarian practices of social identity.

Reflecting was an integral part of the interview process. The advantages of active reflection (Daudelin, 1996; Dewey, 1933; Mann, 2016; Mortari, 2012, 2015; Schön, 1983; Steier, 1991), were critically important throughout the process of analysis in the study. Dewey's seminal text (1933, p. 9), describes reflection as an "[a]ctive, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends". More recently, Daudelin (1996, p. 39), claims that, for the person undertaking reflection, ". . . she takes an experience from the outside world, brings it

inside the mind, turns it over, makes connections to other experiences, and filters it through personal biases. If this process results in learning, the individual then develops inferences to approach the external world in a way that is different from the approach that would have been used, had reflection not occurred”.

On these accounts, reflection is an active, conscious process that involves both etic and emic<sup>65</sup> perspectives, the researcher’s standing in a liminal, in-between zone that emphasises her shifting perspective as participant and observer. However, as Steier (1991, p. 1), points out: there should always be the understanding that “what I describe in my research is in no way existent apart from my involvement in it”. So, reflection requires investigating how, and to what degree, the researcher’s own values, experiences, biases and hegemonic subsumptions, social arrangements and political commitments, her relation to interviewees and her sense of self influence the situation. To deny that research is a narrative constituting a story about oneself: (“we always see the world through our own self-understandings”; Schwandt, 2007, p. 93), told through others, is a naïve notion; “tautologically non-self-reflexive” (p. 4). “Nothing speaks for itself; there is only interpretation”, as Denzin & Lincoln (1998, p. 313), put it, and “the social world is an interpreted one” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 593). Accordingly, reflection requires two capacities: familiarity with the phenomena under investigation together with a measure of analytic distance from it, and an ability to examine one’s beliefs and values and how the construction of identity is formed from these experiences. Being consciously and intentionally aware invites the recognition of difference and the recognition of “difference that makes a difference” (Bateson, 1972, p. 453).

I distinguished among levels of analysis and the procedures of analysis for eliciting and organising interpretations of data and the development of meaning in constructing knowledge. Initially, focusing on participants’ accounts was the beginning of emic knowledge of events in the study. Then, moving from the emic to the etic, I attempted to identify themes and patterns.

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<sup>65</sup> Konrad, 2017, p. 47, and throughout. An **etic** view point of view is from the perspective of an outsider looking in. The etic perspective is data gathering by outsiders that yield questions posed by outsiders. A problems with this approach is where people act differently when they are being observed; it is also difficult for outsiders to gain access to certain private behaviours. An **emic** view is a view of the behaviours that are meaningful to the members of a group from an insider’s perspective. Studies undertaken from an emic perspective often include more detailed and richer information than studies done from an etic point of view because the observer places herself within the group of study. But studies undertaken from an emic perspective can create bias on the part of the participants and observer, especially if the researcher is a member of the group she is studying.

The third level was directed to incorporating the knowledge derived from the previous levels within the context of theory and reflection. Identified contradictions, might, in this fashion, be integrated, à la Hegel, at a deeper level of synthesis: the *Auflösung*. The assumption here was that discrepancies and oppositions uncovered at earlier levels of investigation might be reconciled at another, more inclusive level. This proved correct, as I became aware of the emergence of new knowledge, the “bringing-forth” (p. 23), “opening-up” (p. 52), “revealing” (p. 21), and “presencing” (14) (Heidegger, 1977), occasioned by our mutual interaction.

This emergence was motivated by moving between “figure” and “ground”, a conceptual strategy described by Thompson, Locander and Pollio (1989), allowing the researcher to focus on a particular aspect of the study while backgrounding all others, then reversing the process, enabling new aspects with new information to come to the fore. Experience is first conceptualised as a process in which events central to the individual's life-world are explored while other events retire into the background. However, the figure that stands out is always enmeshed in its ground. Neither the foreground nor the background causes the other in linear fashion (McTaggart, 1927); rather, both are entangled. The figure/ground image means that experience emerges in a contextual setting (Rog, 2012), and therefore can't be located within the person as a complete subjectivity or outside the person as objective truth. Experience is thus understood in the context of a movement from an initial individual viewpoint to another's with a contrasting perspective, both perhaps having different beliefs and expectations, while at the same time the interaction was undergoing modulation through the expression of the interrelationship arising from the event.

Following a postmodern shift of focus from the self's interior to patterns of discourse, it is inevitable perhaps, that the creation of meaning is now seen through the lens of the “Law of the Father”, *Che Vuoi?*, and post-structuralist theory in general, and in our time, narratives of personal voyage have supplanted tales of metaphoric depth (e.g., White & Epston, 1990). No narrative is to be privileged over any other, it seems, but significantly, the women's narrative reconstructions occur as tentative solutions, establishing enduring forms of subjectivity, by facilitating renewed (and different forms of) contact. Simply saying, “I'd like to hear what you want to say”, prompted relatively new social situations for some of the women and offered an opportunity, extravagant though it may sound, tantamount to a breakthrough from depressive

thinking. Open questions provided a scaffolding reassurance of consistency and concern, and the space (of safety) offered a sense of being more aware of – and consequently, less threatened by – previous experiences and feelings.

The relationships thereby engendered were constructed on an alert but not dominating attention. I felt it was important, moreover, to take social and material contexts into account in order to avoid the reduction of the women's narratives to an undemanding psychologism. Resisting essentialist interpretations that imply that all women experience the same situations in the same way was as important as identifying the shared experiences, at the same time avoiding acting as a member of the regime of truth that defines what that subjectivity must be. I strove at all times to behave like "ordinary people" (Guattari, 1984), while being aware that I was "still a member of *that* caste" (Guattari, 1984, p. 69, my emphasis).

All interviewers necessarily are engaged in their own programmes and often have strong beliefs about how people should live and act, me no less than others. However, I believe that what happened in the interviews was a personally empathic and non-judgemental attitude, notwithstanding that my views are often political in nature and frequently, no doubt, driven from my unconscious. An inevitable part of my interviewing style is the belief that people should be healthy and well-adjusted, should choose their sexuality, should follow their own wisdom – in whatever ways they view as acceptable and well-advised. Equally significant are my convictions concerning the nature of the organisation of society. Too, it is important to me to understand the women's experiences as not wholly determined by the social and economic forces in their lives. Both elements, and surely many others, are at play. The choices the women made were of necessity embedded within complex family structures and behaviours that are the result of generations of formative responses. Like sheep, we are hefted.

As an example of the reflective process, I provide a brief account of the first visit between Della and myself on Saturday, 14 April, 2017. At this stage of the analysis, I focused on those aspects of immediate experience that engaged my attention with the phenomena under investigation. As such, my observations were geared to the broad context as I began attending to tendencies, repeated motifs and style(s) of talk for later consideration. Rather than working with predetermined ideas and questions, I found it useful to identify patterns and links without questioning any discrepancy as we worked together. This flexibility would prompt fresh insights



into behaviours, I believed, emphasising different selections and provoking new inferences while, at the time, I allowed a free-floating consciousness to select whatever seemed worthy of notice, based on my personal reference points and values, e.g.:

**Observation Field Notes**

Della's rental house overlooks a small section with an attractive garden, well-tended and with masses of pink and white roses. The front porch had a small child's pram. The hallway was bare of furnishings and the carpet extended through to the dining area and the lounge, which had a large wood-burner on the left side.

**First Reflection Notes**

Conducting a first interview with my youngest participant, I saw that while suspicion was evident in Della's guarded movements and sideways glances, she also presented as sharp, reflective, and engaged in life, and charmingly likeable. I looked forward to getting to know her better.

As well as these tactics, my awareness of the discrepancies between my expectations and the actual reality generated in the visit with Della prompted me to examine the source of my expectations and to analyse their socially constructed assumptions, for example, reflecting on housing in general, and rental accommodation for solo parents in particular. I tried to balance my expectations about what such housing *should* look like against what such housing *might* look like. I tried also to explore the rationale behind Della's choice of her current house in order to understand the message conveyed by the reality briefly described above. Was her dwelling typical of women in her situation or was it different? How? What adjustments had she made? What factors, personal and public, might have operated to provide a comfortable home for Della and her children? How was her situation different from that of her previous life? How was her situation different from those of the other women in the study? What similarities were evident? All these thoughts converged in the process of making sense of my observations rather than my being limited by my acceptance of what I observed, had I not engaged in reflection. Differences between the women were often marked, often stark, and, encouraged by Deleuze's view that genuine choice "is not between terms but between the modes of existence of the one who chooses" (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 114),<sup>66</sup> I was constantly reminded of the affirming, confident, and joyous lives of those, like Della, who chose a life of continual choosing.

The dissonance between my observations and my pre-existing expectations created an awareness of contradiction as an important part of the research. I found that encountering

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<sup>66</sup> Deleuze refers here to Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Sartre. One mode of existence is that of the true believer, for whom there is no choice because the answer is already given (see the John Brown character in Showtime's 2020 serialisation, *The Good Lord Bird*). A second mode of existence is that of the vacillator who never gets round to choosing. A third mode is that of the person who chooses one course of action and is implacably committed to follow it to the end (e.g., Captain Ahab). Deleuze's approval is not for a leap of faith or a leap into the unknown, but rather for the mode of life in which the agent continues, like Nietzsche's dancer, to "choose to choose" (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 114).

situations that are unique offered many degrees of difference to which pre-existing theory could not be readily applied; listening to the participants' accounts and attempting to derive meaning from their perspectives as they talked was an altogether different experience from my initial acceptance of discrepancy and inconsistency, conflict, or irresolution. Then, as I reviewed the scripts, I looked for implicit, absent or understated parts of the accounts, uses of particular words, and potential themes or emergent patterns, should any exist. This process of reconstruction positioned me in what was in effect, a double-bind position: I was dependent on each participant's goodwill and cooperation; therefore, it would have been impertinent to venture any suggestion to alternative action that might have been construed as minimising what surely had been a traumatising set of events. Yet, at the same time, I was concerned with issues of truth and exaggeration as revealed by participants – and with my own capacity to examine just how truthful I was able to be in examining my own experiences and prejudices, and my analysis of emergent themes.

Sensitivity in these matters encouraged my curiosity and the motivation for genuine understanding. I expected nothing to be revealed as “given” or self-explanatory, because new knowledge does not commonly emerge in that manner. The human experience of the effects of change is generally reduced to some ordering principle – “*the illusion of transcendence*” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 49, emphasis in original), as illusory intellectual control, with a dominating order – God, the State, Œdipus, evolution, capital, that acts as both originary locus and explanans. Deleuze and Guattari insist that difference and desire, as they conceive them, are full, positive and productive. There is “no ontological dualism” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 20), because life itself is full, primary and singular, and in a continuous flow of becoming with no resting state that can be considered stable or static. Life is more like an infinite modulation of “curves” and “inflections” (Deleuze, 1993, pp. 14-15, 37, and throughout), where lines momentarily meet, and where transcendence is maintained in the infinity of immanent differentiation.

So, for participants' narratives and my interpretation of them, a meeting point was achieved by integrating the related events produced at earlier parts of the study with elements of a wider context. This involved identifying connections and integrating perspectives to create a “conceptual canopy” (Ben-Ari & Enosh, 2010, p. 166), that provided a kind of temporary

reconciliation of contradictions and impasses at a higher level as well as a realisation of Deleuze's notion of unrepresentable being, because always "on the edge" (Burchill, 2010, p. ix). Contextualising, re-examining, and reconstructing the stories under the greater context of the Deleuzian theoretic brought the totality of the women's experiences into the foreground, eliciting an emerging perspective which encompassed the relationships between participants and society, and between participants and myself.

Accuracy of information operates on the procedures of truth. Manifesting the ways the SocioSymbolic produces subjectivity and meaning (it's a short step from assigning "man" as a standard of judgement to accepting "male" and "masculine" and then "human" as the "universalised format of humanity" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 166)), leads to the awareness of discriminatory and exclusionist practices that might then be resisted through rhizomatic displacements and transformations. I argue that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy provides a new strategy for thinking about intimate relationships by reconciling apparent contradictions at a higher level of interpretation, and, more controversially, offering new tactics for resisting the placement of women in abusive situations as reactively subordinate, defensive and defeated. Violated bodies *can* be reconfigured, says Deleuze (2006a, pp. 41, 42), because bodies are always "the fruit of chance . . . the relation of force with force" (p. 40), and it is the selection and engagement of superior over inferior forces that leads to liberation. As in art, a kind of tenuous harmony is produced, "*a bloc of sensations . . . a compound of percepts and affects*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 164, emphasis in original), where a temporary balance is established between consonance and dissonance (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994), where vulnerability – and everyone is equally vulnerable to affecting and being affected – is seen as openness to becomings, the forces that strengthen (or weaken) desire by enhancing (or limiting) the power to act (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, 2007).

Given that desire is a set of immanent symptoms and beliefs (Smith, 2007), ever accessible to being affected, it is always possible to divert flows of desiring production from their previous channels to create different, mobile flows and relations counter to those ordained by authoritative capitalism and repressive oedipalisation. That late-stage capitalism recodes all intensities, all social objects and all goods into a single unifying signifier of "the quantifiable medium of capital and exchange" (Colebrook, 2002b, p. 50), that it declares everything be made

equivalent, that it reduces all individual differences to a single axiomatic humanity (Adorno, 2005; Marcuse, 1998, 2006); nevertheless, because of its deterritorialising qualities, so capitalism also creates myriad spaces where different immanent relations can be produced, where the hidden transcendence in immanence is revealed, where general equivalence can be exposed to show that everything isn't reducible (McGowan, 2016, p. 12), and where deterritorialisation, nomadic thought, "additions to the script" (Goodchild, 1996, p. 15), and alternative machinic assemblages can be co-opted to intensify, enhance and reconstruct social relations, and reconstruct subjectivity along the multiple pathways of communal connection and mutual support, power and deep engagement. Such relations, in turn, might shape, challenge and change pre-existing factors in retrospective ways at the same time as they produce their own process. Desire(s), arising spontaneously in this process, becomes generative of new kinds of relationships in a multiplicity of creative endeavours that could potentially transform the political and social unconscious; after all, the social formations under which people currently live prescribe all manner of things of which they are scarcely conscious. The consequence of the existing regime is the weakening of all genuine protest and the absorption of opposition into the established system. Were people able to transform this social unconscious, society would be radically transformed away from being and towards becoming. This requires resisting the systemic repression of values, aspirations and hopes which aren't validated in the activities and attitudes promulgated by prevailing forms of authoritarian, patriarchal rationality. Desire, thinking otherwise and in one's own interests, emerging from the opening of potentiality, then becomes the engine of multiplicity and pluralism, and, theorised, becomes the active agent in developing the best – i.e., the most useful set of behaviours, in a Markovian, fractal manner,<sup>67</sup> unmediated by conventional meanings of language, with which to direct one's life and encounters and gain power, knowledge and efficacy. Subjectivity is a process, constantly shifting and rearranging among different levels and speeds of power, and desire just is the desire to speak, to act, to learn and to become. The women breathed life into their narratives, and in the tellings and retellings, subjective actualities came into existence that could not have been present(ed) before, actualities that

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<sup>67</sup> (Karlin & Taylor, 1975, pp. 29, 30, and throughout). "A Markov chain is a stochastic model describing a sequence of possible events in which the probability of each event depends . . . on the state attained in the previous event" (Source: Wikipedia). The first set of possibilities produces a second set, and so on, with each set in the chain being affected, and partially determined by the set before, though each set possesses the potential for differentiation. Consequently, the relationship between events (sets) is at once arbitrary and necessary, compelled and unpredictable, exceeding all identity. It is difference differing from itself.

distilled the past, and filtered, fined and decanted their future becomings. Their faith in the world and their energetic conviction of living positively, affirmed their courage and their readiness towards the unforeseen and the unpredictable. “Affects are becomings” say Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 256), and affects are the powers of affecting and of being affected. In the interviews, between us, both happened.

## **Limitations**

The limitations of the present study are limitless, potentially multiplying by theory, standpoint, affection, and depending on how they are conceptualised. Within DeleuzoGuattarian theory, some limitations lead to productive understandings of research design and conduct; for instance, the shapes of movements towards particular practical goals and the containments and paradoxes of subjective actualities. Prereflexing on (some) productive limitations, the enabling limits discussed below are organised around the immanence of the women’s modes of existence, the conditions of our connectivity and creative actualisation of the research.

### **The limits of scope enabling horizons of new becomings**

The women’s stories convey a snapshot of particular women at one set of points in historical time. Time moves on, and so it is likely that the domestic situations of some of the women have changed.<sup>68</sup> Their levels of competence and life-satisfaction will have changed. Most of the women were known to me or were a friend of a friend, and so the selection is not a representative sample of women who leave abusive relationships at any time. It’s fair to say that the women considered themselves as middle class and two had received post-secondary education. Their generosity and earnest good will, together with their wish to tell a story that made sense (and wasn’t “wasting my time”), to both participant and inquirer, doubtless coloured the process, while the women’s orientation to accounts of authenticity and factuality (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995; Wodak & Meyer, 2009), must, inevitably, be partial, evolving and to some extent, one-sided. The scope of the project is limited, then, by particularities and partialities, some situational, some specific to the women’s lives, and some specific to mine, though woven together in the design and conduct of the research. As a limit, the kind of generalisation idealised by majoritarian scientific discourse is out of reach of this project.

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<sup>68</sup> One participant has died since the interviews were concluded.

However, surveying a nimety of statistics and cataloguing generalisations of narrative disclosure furnishes little real understanding of the lives of women who lead their days in intimate partner violence. Here, Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the majoritarian subject as described in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), offers a corresponding determinedly "fixed" notion of sexed, gendered, and capitalist captivation that might be resisted by the kind of mobile schizoanalysis<sup>69</sup> that promotes the emergence of the new subjectivities these women imagined: subjects who travel beyond oppressive self-other entanglements towards lives that welcome difference as a basis for forging new ways of being at the same time as recognising the forceful powers of the differentiating feature of life itself.

### **The limits of choice enabling transient subjects**

Could resistance to oppressive structures inspire feminist solutions to the restrictions of abused women in late capitalism? After all, capitalism's own deterritorialisation from previous modes of existence provoked the psychic structures of contemporary oedipalised subjectivity, obliging subjects to internalise a sense of guilt and desire their own oppression as deserved punishment. It must be possible to embark upon new lines of flight, even if transitory, that enable women to pursue greater opportunities for living and for revolutionising the status quo. Choices can be made, says Deleuze (unless a person in full knowledge of the facts chooses evil):

. . . between the modes of existence of the one who chooses. There are choices that can only be made on condition that one persuades oneself that one has no choice, sometimes by virtue of a moral necessity (good, right), sometimes by virtue of a physical necessity (the state of things, the situation), sometimes by virtue of a psychological necessity (the desire that one has for something). The spiritual choice is made between the mode of existence of him [sic]<sup>70</sup> who chooses on the condition of not knowing it, and the mode of existence of him who knows it is a matter of choosing (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 114).

"[I]nfinite resignation" (Kierkegaard, 1983, p. 58) is the choice of those who lack the ability, through weakness or indifference, to choose; there is also the choice of the true believer, for whom there is but one choice – which is no choice – and there is the choice of those who select

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<sup>69</sup> "There is no straightforward way to say what schizoanalysis is" claims Buchanan (2013, p.163). However, schizoanalysis rejects the notion, deriving from capitalist society, of the Oedipus complex's relay of "social oppression into the heart of the nuclear family" (Holland, 2012, p. 239), while Guattari defines it as a "pragmatics of the unconscious" (2011, p. 27). Basically, the idea is the liberation of repressed and constructed affects into consciousness, thereby activating the production of novel and authentic assemblages and connections.

<sup>70</sup> Readers will recognise that the use of masculine pronouns to indicate humans in the writings of cited authors is not ameliorated by the vexatious use of [sic] to draw attention to them. Please excuse these solecisms as signifiers of an unreconstructed past.

the path of evil that commits them inevitably “to a situation which already no longer allows [them] to choose” (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 115). Against these false choices “of denying that there is a choice (or that there is still choice)” (p. 115), there is a fourth: the mode of being that “choose[s] to choose” (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 114), “not defined by what it chooses, but by the power that it possesses to be able to start afresh each time” (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 115). In so doing, the chooser affirms the realm of the possible. The women in this study, in a “qualitative transition of the leap from unbeliever to believer” (Kierkegaard, 1992, p. 11), advance beyond customary rationality and the certainties of their quotidian existences into new associations and unmapped territories, in a series of Deleuzian filmic dissolves (and dolly shots), that reject regular combinations of (conventional, predictable, habitual, linear) images in favour of more productive images and juxtapositions, opening new interstices, contingent (but not random) connections, in moves that are “not any whatever, but in such a way that a difference in potential is established between the two, which will be productive of a third or of something new” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 180).

Could this kind of wild schizoanalytic movement be conceived as a series of practices that encourage new forms of subjectivity? That inspires the development of alternative women subjects that move away from oppressive self-other relationships toward difference as a fundamental force of life? That rejects nearly three millennia and four tsunamis of domination: the Socratic, the Christian, the Dialectic and the Freudian movements of authoritarian control? That engages in forms of non-œdipalised desiring production that disrupt, dismantle, or destroy prevailing attitudes and combinatories? Contesting the conception of the stable capitalist subject of modernity, Deleuze and Guattari describe the “volitional” subject of phallocracy as inevitably transitory and constantly disrupted by pluriform flows, speeds and shifting configurations in particular locations, in varying assemblages, as better examined and more fully explicated in its arrangements with other areas of social imbrication. Under capitalism, their notion, too, of the nomadic subject dramatises possible lines of flight for women away from dominating nominations of sexed, gendered and heterosexual subjectivity, away from already-œdipalised subjects, and towards social change and multiple social flows. As the women in the study enact, self-identity is a *non sequitur*: only interaction liberates into

a different form of existence; outside accidents, incidents and attributes, essence has no substance. *Beings are entirely equated to their events.*<sup>71</sup>

A central paradox is, that, under capitalism, the markers of discipline and subordination which operate in despotic or pre-capitalist societies to maintain control and stability are redundant and inhibitory. Under capitalism, cultural, political, economic and social flows require a flexibility of association and a set of practical skills – and new ways of desiring – that take precedence over traditionally stable ethnic, religious, and sexed identities. Capitalism’s unruly deterritorialisations have produced a new kind of desiring subject, one that no longer fits the hegemonic and autocratic constructedness of inadequacy (and enforcing an adversarial position on one side or other of the sex divide). Family life and its oedipal composition is just one set of flows in contemporary society. Others include ethnic, religious, and androgynous structures. Identities are no longer fixed in ways they once were, and increasingly, human selves, transformed by commodification and consumerism, are compelled to enter into multifarious and eclectic arrangements not only with immediate others, but also with a dizzying superfluity of percepts and sensations, objects and events in their environments. So, in a sense, the fluidity of capitalism permitted Mel’s assertiveness, become habit, opening to a multitude of possibilities; Leila’s vacillation, awakened in the flax bushes, settling to a satisficing mode of existence, if not totalising, then at least her own; Marie’s developing attitude, of one who “outgrew herself”, seeking, and finding fulfilment and joy in divergence, decisiveness, mobility, and more. Like Reepicheep and Ratty, the women sought the culmination of all for which they had yearned. Ahead there was to be fear, pain and doubt. But excitement too.

The combinations unfixing stable identity are daily enacted by the connections people make with their worlds, and under different speeds in their varying capacities to impose and submit to diverse forces and to experience various affects and intensities. The subject’s belief in (pretence of) a unified whole yields to a congeries of distinct organs (the body without organs: BWO), with their own impulsions and specific desirings, in which combinations – “assemblages” in Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology, under oedipalisation, require certain

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<sup>71</sup> And as these accidents, incidents and attributes alter, so too, do identities change. None of the women were – or wanted to be – what they were before they separated. These differences configured into different qualities, presupposing different realities.



linkings unavailable in a non-œdipalised world. Under modernity, phallocracy demands that subjects internalise the prohibitions of patriarchal law, identify with the father's rule, and seek to gain a substitute for the prohibited mother (in œdipal culture, the source of the sense of all lack), or, alternatively become the object of desire; in this way, indirectly gaining access to phallic power. This produces a subject whose desire is premised on incompleteness, yet sustained by capitalism's promise of satisfaction. As Marcuse tells it: "In the "normal" development, the individual lives his repression "freely" as his own life: he desires what he is supposed to desire; his gratifications are profitable to him and others; he is reasonably and often exuberantly happy" (1998, p. 42). For so long as desire stays within the confines of Foucauldian *épistémès*, (Foucault, 1994, pp. 17, 51, 199), or the Lacanian Symbolic Order,<sup>72</sup> there can be no possibility of total satisfaction; it is always just around the corner, just out of reach, tantalisingly never quite attainable,<sup>73</sup> always fleeting, "green and dying" (Dylan Thomas, "Fern Hill"). In Freud's compelling words, "Transience value is scarcity value in time. Limitation in the possibility of an enjoyment raises the value of the enjoyment" (*S.E. XIV*, p. 305).

### **The limits of culture enabling critiques of customary Pākehā thinking**

There is a regular, composition of images in Pākehā circles in Aotearoa/New Zealand, about wahine Māori and their tikanga; e.g., that they regularly invite, deserve, and receive "the bash". To exclude unwelcome prurient interest in these matters, I chose Pākehā women for the study. It is a feature of western œdipalised women generally, of Pākehā nuclear familial groupings particularly, of late-capitalist emphasis on individuality, and of the channelling of maternal and spousal hopes and aspirations into narrow courseways of constricting conformity, that women's desire for inclusion in wider, fuller mains of expression, is dismissed, undermined and denied. Pākehā women get the bash too.

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<sup>72</sup> Desire in Lacan's view is always negative and always represented through language: it is only articulable as what is *not* governed by language, not encompassed by the system of signifiers of the Symbolic (Lacan, 1997).

<sup>73</sup> Obviously, hope for a 'better' future is the foundation of all aspiration. Complete contentment in one's present circumstances would annul any striving. But the wish for transcendent delight greater than that which inheres in the present, denies the satisfaction, nominated by Freud, that subjects derive from repeating painful experiences. On this account, it is absence that is satisfying, not presence (most clearly expressed in Freud's essay on Da Vinci (*S.E. XI*), and in "On Transience" (*S.E. XIV*), and it is the threat of loss that is intrinsic to desirability: all that is desired is finite and the most intense happiness is stained by the shadow of mortality. Life's finitude does not inhibit desire but rather provokes it; it is because our darlings must be lost that we seek to keep them, it is because experiences are forgotten that we strive to remember them, and it is because we have language that we mourn what lies outside language. At the heart of every experience then, is that whatever we affirm as "true" is constituted, and haunted, by the fact that it will be negated: the future imposes a painful nostalgia on the present.

### **The limits of discourse enabling productive desire**

In clear contrast to Freud and Lacan, yet in surprising accord with Hegel, Deleuze and Guattari, writing both as co-authors and separately, develop an ontology of becoming which opposes the unproblematised subjecthood of late capitalism and which offers liberatory promise for feminist thought and action. Their ideas, a mix of Spinozist and Nietzschean movement, flow, flux and mutation, contest binary and essentialist notions of men and women, and advance alternative lines of departure that celebrate difference and, in new forms of subjectivity, frame oppression and vulnerability as motivating contradiction rather than antagonistic opposition. Eschewing oedipalisation as the relic of a redundant social and historical epoch in favour of the schizo subject who embraces continuous change and ceaseless “desiring production” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 6, and throughout), this subject departs from:

binary power relations, from phallic relations . . . [promoting] a new kind of gentleness, a new kind of domestic relationship; the departure from this, one might say, elementary dimension of power that the conjugal unit represents, it's on the side of woman and on the side of the child such that, in some ways, the promotion of values, of a new semiotics of the body and sexuality passes necessarily through the woman, through “becoming-woman” (Guattari & Sivale, 1985, p. 24).

Most of the participants in this study favoured action, interaction, and experiment (Hacking, 1983, p. 131; Stengers, 1997, p. 57), over passivity and acceptance. Yet internalisation of patriarchal rule, as Tamsin Lorraine (2009) notes, suppresses women's active deterritorialisation, prohibiting their active creative engagement with the world, and sequestering them as oedipalised, sexed and gendered subjects within the capitalist nexus, dutifully trudging the well-worn grooves of passive patterns of personalised consumer largesse. In these conformations, desiring-production is diverted into the barren pursuit and possession of substitutes for that prohibited by the Father-Law over developing connections to what is immanently more satisfying (Lorraine, 2009).

What then is striking is the strong sense that the women evinced of there being little identity worthy of the name beneath becoming, that their lives were of greater import than submission to that which fate had ordained, and that their own efforts were immensely instrumental in effecting significant change. Yes, despite the linguistic turn, there is more to life than social constructionism: “Human activity contributes to the production of a new state of nature”,

declares Isabelle Stengers (1997, p. 57); many different kinds of bodies, human, machinic, plant, and animal, continuously interact in productive ways. And, “[t]he world . . . is what shows up in our practices, what resists or accommodates us, as we try to act upon it,” Rouse insists (1987, p. 25). Extrapolating from these ideas, people are situated knowers and agents, immersed and embedded in practices, signs, models, and images in practical interconnections that display the world in specific, local configurations, and which infuse their comprehension on each examination with subtle differences. In the re-remembering, new possibilities emerge, different affections express, points of recollection shift – beyond the perceiver-perceived or participant-interviewer relations. Because time is not a fixed point, because it is *intensive*, because it takes the form of divergent durations, because affects comprise *intensities*, understandings get “mangled”.<sup>74</sup> Giving birth, for instance, is not just a linguistic construct, nor is flight from an unbearable situation, and Rouse (1987) reminds us that overarching theories cannot be applied to all particular local actions. Specific *differences* should be thought, rather than generalities. Deleuze reminds us that we should allow ourselves to *become* in relation to what we seek to understand.

Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of desire is a central contribution to investigative theory. A Deleuzian perspective – as opposed to a Lacanian view of desire as lack – can be used to underpin the women’s sense of themselves against hierarchies of being and moving towards a coupling of difference with repetition so as to elicit constructive formation. As an overtly political programme, the nature of desire in *Anti-Œdipus* is not specifically psychical, because where desire is associated with the unconscious, a distinction between mind and body is implied, privileging the former as having ontological and causal priority, and suggesting a Lacanian “covert linguistic idealism” (Eyers, 2011, p. 163). Nor do Deleuze and Guattari consider the unconscious to be merely “the inverted reflection of our ideal consciousness” (Lawrence, 2004, p. 15). What is important for Deleuze and Guattari, and for this study, is the propædeutic illumination that a psychoanalytic/schizoanalytic approach offers into the investigation of human nature, as applied to the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of the participants (as re-remembered and narrativised in the live telling).

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<sup>74</sup> Andrew Pickering’s (1993, p. 567) memorable term, referring to the transformations wrought on what passes through an old-fashioned washing wringer. Things are crushed, squeezed, smoothed, sometimes irretrievably torn or dismembered. The metaphor might perhaps be wrung further to include the surprising emergence of something new from the process; aside from that, the image usefully describes the various understandings of what occurs in discussion.

Deleuze's account of power in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* provides an insight. In that book, the author describes Hobbes' and Schopenhauer's concepts of power as "the object of a *representation*" (Deleuze, 1983, p. 80, emphasis in original), a thing that a person might acquire. Then, in *Anti-Œdipus*, Deleuze and Guattari claim that "the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between *production* and *acquisition*. From the moment we place desire on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic (dialectical, nihilistic) conception, which causes us to look upon it as primarily a lack: a lack of an object, a lack of the real object" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 25, emphasis in original). Here, the writers instance Kant as "effecting a critical revolution as regards the theory of desire" (p. 25), by attributing to desire "*the faculty of becoming by means of its representations the cause of the actuality of the objects of these representations*" (Kant, 2007, p. 13, n. 1, emphasis in original). This is to say, that even if the desired object can be realised only by means of wishes or fantasies, "nonetheless this knowledge does not prevent us from believing in the intrinsic power of desire to create its own object . . . The reality of the object, insofar as it is produced by desire is thus a *psychic reality*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 25, emphasis in original).

What Deleuze and Guattari are saying here is that if desire occurs because of the lack of the real object, the nature of the object as a real thing *produces* the fantasy. "Desire thus conceived of as production, though merely the production of fantasies, has been explained perfectly by psychoanalysis. On the very lowest level of interpretation, this means that the real object that desire lacks is related to an extrinsic natural or social production . . ." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 25). The authors accordingly select writers who problematise the givenness of conventional ways of being and who offer critiques of customary thinking – writers like Kafka and Nietzsche, whose texts tear apart majoritarian forms of writing to expose those texts' dominating assumptions. Social resistance, an understanding of the other through becoming "other", the productive use of new concepts for, and differential relations beyond, (but not completely dismissive of) binary thinking, and the recognition of connectivities among (but not always hierarchising), the forces of intervention are Deleuze and Guattari's project. New assemblages – fluid, ex-changing, ever-changing and tentative – (here Deleuze & Guattari's 1987 image of the rhizome is paramount) – occur through de- and re-territorialisation, because "every thing always contains many truths" (Sutton & Martin-Jones, 2008, p. 5). "Lines of flight" (Deleuze &

Guattari, 1987, p. 9), self-creating on the borderlines of shifting territories, form new normativities and alter both entities in an amoebic-like, interactive double-becoming, as their example of wasp-becoming-orchid and orchid-becoming-wasp (p. 10), illustrates. Basically, machines arise when components in an assemblage form relatively stable configurations from which arise both the power to affect and to be affected. The lives agents, human and nonhuman, lead, unfold from these combinations, they occur as the result of connections that are fostered as well as those that are rejected, ignored or unnoticed. When assemblages are performed, new relationships emerge and “*incorporeal transformations*” (p. 504, emphasis in original), occur that were not present in the previously separate components, yet are attributed to the new body as existent properties. Moreover, each operation alters the processes and components in ever-changing differentiations. And the space between perception and action, where thought can actualise virtual realities, creates new intensities previously believed not possible.

For ordinary life, machinic assemblages of desire, together with “collective assemblages of enunciation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 7), comprise the daily routines, habits, and expected rules and practices in mutual support. Here, Deleuze and Guattari’s “abstract machines” (1987, p. 50, and following), are maps of (social) patterns, where zones of indiscernibility<sup>75</sup> determine the internal consistency of the concepts in the situation. Thus, a mealtime is a conceptual conventional arrangement of seats, a table, divisions of food according to custom, and so on. A more acceptably stable item, e.g., a peach, is conceptually defined by its component organic parts, its genetic make-up, colour, taste, appearance, its desirability as a fruit, etc., but a peach always exceeds descriptive limits. Its “qualities” can be assigned to other bodies with little or no loss of accuracy (e.g., white peaches, doughnut peaches, peacherines, nectarines . . .).

Where understandings are disarticulated, these recombined variations may actualise into other concepts, provoking unforeseen insights, different practices, new machinery, new desires. For Deleuze (and Guattari), every “thing” is a multiplicity which has an actual manifestation in any number of “diverse spatiotemporal relationships, at the same time as its elements are actually

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<sup>75</sup> “There is an area *ab* that belongs to both *a* and *b*, where *a* and *b* “become” indiscernible. These zones, thresholds, or becomings, this unseparability, define the internal consistency of the concept. But the concept also has an exoconsistency with other concepts, when their respective creation implies the construction of a bridge on the same plane. Zones and bridges are the joints of the concept” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 20).

incarnated in a variety of terms and forms” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 183). What a “thing” is, then, is the conditions of its unfolding through time, in which it “necessarily changes dimensions, and enters a becoming, every time it is affected by another multiplicity” (Smith, 2006, p. 56). The encounters any thing has introduces perturbations in how it is affected and how it affects other things in its subsequent trajectories, these already altered by previous encounters. If there is any such thing as “essence”, it is this power to evolve over time given the current, future and past events it experiences, or will experience.

Desire is this power, but “[d]esire only exists when assembled or machined” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 96, emphasis in original), as “flows of affective energy” (Jónasdóttir, 2018, p. 26), “venturing beyond the limits” (Bloch, 1995, p. 67, and throughout), as “form-processes” (Sohn-Rethel, 1978, p. 17), as constructing the paths we walk, as “liberat[ion] from certain molar constraints” (Sholtz & Carr, 2018, p. 454) as “*Vor-Schein*” (Plaice, Plaice, & Knight in Bloch, 1995, p. xxix, p. 67). Attacking “the function of Œdipus as dogma” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 51), Deleuze and Guattari criticise conventional psychoanalysis for its refusal to identify issues of desire as anything but a reductively œdipal triad (p. 51).

The goal of Deleuze and Guattari’s intention then, through a discussion of human relationships, is to reveal greater possibilities and harmonies for the formation of subjectivity and society. What makes their programme political is the understanding that that which impedes these harmonies from developing is the interests (usually economic), of other, dominant groups whose agendas compel subordinate participants to engage in scripts not of their choosing, funneled towards conventional societal expectations, economic duress, and political suasion. It is not sufficient for participants to dismiss these scripts and repeal the ordered roles that they feel obliged to perform, because then there would be no relationship whatsoever. Rather, argue Deleuze and Guattari, “revolution occurs through making additions to the script, bringing in unexpected amendments by borrowing strategies from elsewhere . . . offer[ing] a whole range of digressions and alternatives that carry thought elsewhere, shattering the coherence of hegemonic discourses. Liberation occurs through addition” (Goodchild, 1996, p. 2). “Woman”, for instance, appears as a stable concept in one conceptual arrangement, but at another moment, the relations between components of the concept are disrupted, rearranged, or even shattered by engaging in a zone of indiscernibility wherein a different singularity of

virtual relations of sense is constructed, one that invites new patterns of thought, effecting new perspectives on experience as well as different behaviour. The virtualities that are thereby expressed are replete with possibilities and with tendencies that voice what *that* woman might become. And what she might become changes the sense and content of the virtualities inherent in the original concept.

### **Gathering and analysing women's stories**

Some feminist writers have expressed reservations about using Deleuze and Guattari to elaborate and advance women's agendas. Is not "becoming-woman" simply another masculine appropriation of phallogocentric discourse? protests Irigaray (1985, pp. 140-143). Should it not be women themselves who investigate their own particular and "nongeneralisable, forms of becoming, desiring-production, and being?" (Grosz, 1994b, p. 189). Might not the co-option of woman as the ground for man's project be the starting point for the further subjugation and truckling of women, and their struggle for autonomy and self-determination? (ibid. p.189). Does not the Deleuzian notion of "becoming-woman" suppress "women's struggles for autonomy, identity, and self-determination"? (ibid. p.189). In response to these concerns, I submit that the rhizomatic programme of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy actually confronts and undermines the dualistic logic of Western, masculinist thought prevalent since at least Socrates. The dominance of "subjectivity", "presence" and binary opposition is problematised in their work, and their advocacy of the principles of connection, multiplicity and becoming in "semiotic chains of every nature [. . .] connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) [. . .] bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of different status" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 7). The connection of atopic rapport actualised in the women's interviews reflects Buber's (2002, p. 207), ethical and ontological understanding that people enter into relation with an other (*In-Beziehungtreten*), only when that other is set at a distance (*Urdistanz*). Speaking with, and listening to others "is based on the establishment and acknowledgement of the independent otherness of the other with whom one fosters relations, addressing and being addressed on this very basis" (p. 210). The rapport established in genuine connection occurs in the process of what Buber calls "making present" (*Vergegenwärtigung*, p. 211), where the capacity to imagine a reality that is not directly experienced is employed – not as some kind of empathic connection but as a sense of understanding the "wishing, feeling, perceiving, thinking" (p. 212), of the other, thereby

affirming her in genuine dialogue as a pre-existent self-becoming with her own existence, independent of that of her interlocutor. In this way the interviewee becomes a self for the interviewer and is understood as ontologically complete when the former knows she is “made present” by the latter in her self, and “when this knowledge induces the process of [her] inmost self-becoming” (p. 212): “. . . at each such time, the word arises in a substantial way between [wo]men who have been seized in their depths and opened out [*erschließt*] by the dynamic of an elemental togetherness. The interhuman opens out what otherwise remains unopened [*unterschlossen*]” (Buber, 2002, p. 215).

The independence of interlocutors from one another outlined above should not be mistaken for the facile freedom of the neoliberal subject who believes herself to be an ongoing, self-realising project. On that view, startlingly at odds with the women in this study, when a person fails, it is solely her fault and it is she who must bear the blame for the failure. Quite opposed to this view, the women in these interviews do not appear to me to suffer depression, a narcissistic affect deriving from overwrought self-reference, provoked by neoliberalism.<sup>76</sup> Nor, significantly, do they understand desire to be that lack in being that exists in order to maintain or satisfy a fleeting urge by way of attainment of a transient object – for men, presumably the possession of a woman, but for women, whose desire lacks that lack, desire is at one and the same time a rather more enigmatic and productive endeavour. Though some of the women missed the good times of remembered intimacy and sharing, they agreed that they were fuller, more contented, and more engaged with many more and more varied experiences than the isolating constraints they had rejected. Desire for more than being a wife and mother had, in practice, changed.

Following Spinoza and Nietzsche, a Deleuzian approach to desire invokes immanence, connectivity, and creative actualisation. “Desire in Deleuze and Guattari is, par excellence, a category of immanence, actualisation, effectuation. Desire is a question of practices. A desire is a practice. Desire is a relation of effectuation, not of satisfaction . . .” (Gordon, 1981, p. 32). Where the other is deprived of the distance required for sincere connection she is constructed

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<sup>76</sup> According to David Harvey, “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices.” (Harvey, 2007, p. 2).



as a reflection of the agent's image, analogous to images within a parlour of crazy mirrors, stretching to infinity and shadowing her narcissistic accomplishments in a Lacanian ideal-ego mirror stage. The logic of affirmation leads to a "success"-induced depression. Eros, by contrast, allows the other – by which is meant the experience of the other as otherness – to lead the person beyond an ego-enclosed prison, and through a willed self-renunciation, toward a paradoxically liberating strength. It is occasioned by a crisis (from *krisis*: "turning point in a disease"), where a negative situation becomes positive and healing. The events of violence and separation told in the women's narratives constitute just such a crisis, where experiences of the other as otherness in practice prompts novel ways of becoming positive and healing.

The trajectory of Deleuze and Guattari's criticism in *Anti-Œdipus* follows this train of thought. The conception of human nature revealed in that book places little value on traditional psychoanalysis, its emphasis on psychic sources, and the priority of the mind over the body. Many poststructuralist feminist theorists (e.g., Judith Butler, 1993, 2007, *inter alia*; Jane Gallop, 1982; Teresa de Lauretis, 2001), employ psychoanalysis to argue women's experience of oppression as emanating from the psychic structures of contemporary society. This is true enough, but the reasons they expound for women's liberation is necessarily undermined by their inclusion of the capitalist worldview, whose handmaiden is psychoanalysis.<sup>77</sup> Their deconstruction of biological essentialism and their attack on the ubiquity of the explanatory power of the Œdipal Complex does little to free women from their continued commodification and subjugation (see Grosz, 1994b). To perpetuate theorising woman as associated with her sexual identity is to repeat a logic which links that identity to that of the (m)other and maintains the social subjectification that fetishises and represses her.

Moreover, there is nothing essential about dividing sex – or gender – into binaries. "The traditional logic of desire . . . [makes] us choose between *production* and *acquisition*", Deleuze and Guattari write (1983, p. 25, emphasis in original). When desire is portrayed as a desire to dominate, as elucidated in Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Representation*, power becomes an object, a thing capable of representation (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 83, and following). Conceived this way, as an object of acquisition, desire becomes the quest for obtaining a something which

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<sup>77</sup> As Deleuze and Guattari make clear, the existence of the Œdipus Complex depends on the institution of the nuclear family, which in turn is an effect of capitalism (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 96).

will fill a lack. This search requires a psychical ideation to which traditional psychology has awarded ontological and causal explanation, where the “whole of desiring-*production* is crushed, subjected to the requirements of *representation*, and to the dreary games of what is representative and represented in representation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 54, emphasis in original).

On this account, “the reproduction of desire gives way to a simple representation . . . The productive unconscious makes way for an unconscious that knows only how to express itself – express itself in myth, in tragedy, in dream” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 54). But there is more desiring-*production* in the unconscious than just the family romance of the Œdipal story. Imagined this way, the purpose and animation of individuals and their communities run parallel with regard to goal-centred activity, the expression of itself, in the theoretical re-creations of the women’s narratives of becoming more than mother and wife in practice. The theoretical re-creation of women’s storied tragedies, dreams, and successes, produced in conversations, analysis, and writing, case by case, are provided in Chapter 7.

## Chapter 5

### Disruptions and Transitions

The following questions were addressed to the women's narratives:

- What are the psychosocial dynamics of the family situation? What are the interpersonal relationships like, generally?
- What was the partnerships' economic situation? Employment and work demands?
- What social identities, opportunities for idealisations, possible identifications and expression beyond the immediate family nexus were available?
- For the partners, what specific investments in the public and private spheres occurred and what existential choices in public and private life did each see as viable?
- What styles of life (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Gergen, 1991, 2001) were expressed and what other styles might have been chosen?
- For the women, what worlds of power were available as "lines of flight"? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).
- What situations, behaviours and speech were commonly seen as destabilising, rupturing, or acting as triggers for precipitating violent acts?
- What other contextual factors (e.g., family of origin, age, education, children, prior stress), influenced the family drama?
- How were conflicts and violence conceptualised?
- What different forms of physical and emotional violence were evident? Were events protracted and what ends did they serve?
- Was there evidence of repetitive behaviour? Reaction formation? Projective identification? Splitting? Repression or denial? (Klein, 1952, 1975).
- What discursive and other agential expressions of particular abusive events are in play in the women's narratives? What divergent connections had been explored/are possible? How do the women who experienced IPV account for periods of decompensation?
- What cultural equations, legacy memorialisations, psychodynamic positionings, settings, constructions, modes, and levels of performative representation were (claimed as being) operationalised in IPV settings?

- What family, or other support was available for these victims of IPV? Did the women access this support? How might it be augmented?
- Are abused women motivated by, invested in, sublimated within, or derive other particular satisfactions from living in situations of violence? What are these?
- What are women's desiring positions in violent partnerships? Does her desire act against a woman's own best interests? Are there multiple desiring positions? What are these? (May, 2005).
- What, according to the women, and researcher, counts as success?

The activation of new forms of subjectivation<sup>78</sup> is a powerful theme in the women's stories. What is observable in their accounts is their ability to frame their experiences in terms of Bergson's concept of "duration", the notion that lived experiences are double and occur simultaneously on two levels: quantifiable and qualitative. On the one hand is the objective, external, measurable aspect of experience, where humans "use clean-cut distinctions, to count, to abstract, and perhaps also to speak" (Bergson, 2001, p. 97). This is the construction of time as a homogeneous medium, where humans understand events as unfolding in linear progression, thereby unwittingly conceptualising states of consciousness in spatial (and exteriorising) terms.

But states of consciousness are enfolded in on one another. Freed from the spatial metaphor, which demands a Kantian causal determinism, time may be alternatively conceived as "pure duration" in which "our ego lets itself live, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states" (Bergson, 2001, p. 100). This view is the inner, subjective sense that provides the possibility of freedom and free will because the self is able to introspect free actions, apprehending itself, its choice-making ability, and its indeterminacy. "Though we generally live and act outside our own person, in space rather than duration, and though by this means we give a handle to the law of causality, which binds the same effects to the same causes, we can nevertheless always get back into pure duration, of which the moments are internal and heterogeneous to one another, and in which a cause cannot repeat its effect since it will never repeat itself" (p. 233).

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<sup>78</sup> Guattari's word for subjectivity, the process of becoming human, "subjectivation" involves historical, social, and personal dimensions of power.

Concerning intimate partner violence, the theory of interpersonal aggression that perhaps has attracted most attention over the last half century is social learning theory, which holds that people learn to be aggressive by witnessing aggressive behaviours, and through being on the receiving end of aggressive acts (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1990; Sugarman & Hotaling, 1997). However, the theoretical framework underpinning this study has a more psychoanalytical basis, delineating proximal events influenced, it is true, by social learning, but as equally informed by particular discursive constructions and their unconscious underpinnings, their implicit normativising structurations and characteristic modes of relating. Such theories instruct contemporary interactions among family members as well as directing the content and expression of emotional responses and ways of cognising painful facts. Commenting on the lack of social bonds shown by men in contemporary society, Declercq (2006), describes how the failure of intersubjectivity discourse organised around the subject leads inevitably to a loss of pleasure, an urge to antisocial behaviour, and a tendency to depression. Experiencing a failure of genuine subjectivity under the Lacanian Master Discourse, burdened, no doubt, by a generation of absent fathers (even when present), and consequently oppressed by the “relentless pressure to achieve” (Verhaeghe, 2014, p. 1), such men, I suggest, are driven to reconstitute themselves as instrumental only, rather than purposeful, in a somewhat contradictory attempt to become master in their own house. This subject, divided from the truth that prompts him, is simply no longer taken into account, and as such, ceases to experience lack. The absence of any signifiers of lack requires him to produce his own meaning, and to provide his own subjectivity, via the direct connection with surplus jouissance (see Faludi’s *Stiffed*). No longer split, he can now name himself. But his naming of action, self-apprehending, and choice-making lacks significance.

The same holds true for women, and since this is an investigation of women who have survived and moved beyond intimate partner violence, it is appropriate at the start of a new century to regard their programmatic future as a questioning of traditional intimate relationships in a crossing of time and space through acts of going beyond conventional ways of being to express “complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). The women’s departure from their constricted and fearful lives invokes encounters with novelty, a “third space” (Soja, 1996), that is not merely a dialectical transformation of past and present, but, as well, a very Deleuzian figuration of the future that

refreshes and innovates the present and reconstitutes the past. If the language of our time has any special significance in its rejection of prior modes of being: “post” referentiality – “postmodernism”, “postcolonialism”, “post-feminism”, etc., it is to be understood here as a discourse of terms that connotes the focused determination and visionary enactment of these women’s ethical aspirations constructing alternative assemblages of affective impulses and different strategies of determined behaving and energetic striking out in new directions.

Deleuze and Guattari characterise such behaviours as actualising the virtual. These new directions might be construed as dangerous border crossings from the known to the unknown, and as such, the power of transformation lies in their acts of both transgression and progress. Movement implies change and carries the traces of exciting, perilous, new, and demanding ideas, perspectives, and identities. Within the women’s mobility, which requires orchestrated action, deliberate strategy, self-awareness, different tempos, conscious purpose, the energy and will to enact them, and, yes, the fear and indecision that attends flexibility, there is always the seed of a Nietzschean aspiration<sup>79</sup> toward a more joyful self. The process requires a kind of Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* “which turns back on itself, opens onto itself, revealing until then unheard-of potentialities, entering into other connections, setting love adrift in the direction of other assemblages” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 349).<sup>80</sup> As well as an ethical disposition, it also requires an æsthetic perspective, a “method of dramatization”.<sup>81</sup>

People initiate their own natures, Heidegger (2010) tells us. We cannot, nevertheless, abandon our experiences any more than we can enact absolutely novel adventures. Furthermore, there are degrees or modalities of values, according to Scheler (2007), with the higher levels offering the greater satisfactions, and it is apparent that the women in this study subscribe, at least from a relativist perspective, to the higher, paradoxically-named “foundation” levels, where new ways of existing in the world may be produced (Barker, 2016, p. 100). When a meaningful moral life becomes confused, that life becomes imbrued with “the imprint of meaninglessness”

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<sup>79</sup> In *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, Nietzsche has Zarathustra say: “Verily, I may have done this and that . . . but always I seemed to have done better when I learned to feel better joys” (Nietzsche, 1996a, p. 200). Nietzsche here claims that actively taking joy in life promotes ethical engagement. And Deleuze says that ethics just is actively taking joy in life (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 21).

<sup>80</sup> The foundation of virtue, according to Spinoza (2018a, Pt. IV, P. 18, Sch.) is “the very endeavor to preserve [a person’s] own being, and joy consists in a person’s being able to preserve his own being.” The secondary basis of virtue is the recognition of the reality of the social world and individuals’ interdependence within it: those actions which advance individuals’ freedom and power of acting and elicit joy are also of benefit to others (2018a, Pt V, P. 10).

<sup>81</sup> See “The Method of Dramatization” in Deleuze, 2004a, pp. 94-116.

(Weber, in Gerth & Mills, 1946, p. 140); yet these women seem to have identified with that which Nietzsche refers to as the projection of purpose into the efficacy of practice. This is to reject the cultural narrative that has been imposed on them in favour of an imperative to “feel better joys” (Nietzsche, 1996a, p. 200.).

Stories are a major part of the human condition and the ability to transform the raw material of life into meaningful narrative – one in which psyche and facts are not dieremted by self-deception – is as basic a need to the psyche as is nutritious food to the body. It is essential, then, to hear and give value to those small voices which can say, like Antigone (and Josephine): “That is not the way things happened. This is my view of events and this is the way I choose to frame them.” Stories then will be different and will recuperate the narrator’s power, dignity and significance against the corrosive and destructive impacts of intimate partner violence. Such narratives matter deeply, yes, and it is important that they be recognised as processes of making resistance, resilience, and hope meaningful, as well as seeking to understand what makes people behave as they do to one another.

Knowledge is always accompanied by emotion and thought, and so it is necessary to consider the areas of both content and methodology. Many psychoanalytic positions offer a variation of Freud’s energy and drive formulation, popular not least because it seems the most homologous to that which adults’ affects and emotions are regulated according to the accepted hypostases of lived experience. That internal representations indicate dynamic processes that others may also experience does not, however, imply a coincidence of subjective functioning (Ogden, 1994, 2005), and the concepts of the Freudian analytic method do not provide sufficient explanatory power for meaning and intentionality. Indeed, the Freudian approach has been supported by so many specious underpinnings for its preservation (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983), as to cast serious reservations on its validity and applicability. Potential explanatory value, consistent with the burgeoning neurosciences (Churchland, 2002; Dennett, 1992; Northoff, 2011; Solms & Turnbull, 2002), might be derived from Kleinian object-relations theory, and Bion’s experiential learning might be translated into contemporary memory influences, but it is probable that scientific theories are inappropriate for a discipline that concerns private meanings rather than public symptoms and behaviours. Psychoanalysis is more properly envisaged as a hermeneutic and interpretative endeavour (Ricoeur, 1977), than a scientific one, despite that “[r]umour has

it that Eros is cheating on [Psyche], the world over, with Neuronal Man” (Davoine, 2016, p. xiii), and despite there being currently slim hope of a separate discourse that might eventually unite psychoanalysis with neuroscience in order to determine which patient will benefit from which psychotherapeutic or medical intervention.

Nevertheless, both approaches begin with the interview. The process of interviewing does not suppose that participants are ignorant of choices, knowledge or understanding, nor that the interviewer has any claim to a more adequate identification with knowledge, far less that the latter should use the process as a justification for the employment of the discursive field as a therapeutic device. The aim of the process, rather, is to encourage a reorganisation around the gaps and cracks of prior knowledge in order to assist in the building of a narrative which provides validation of the past, truth for the present, and motivation for the future. In an interview-based project, necessary assumptions are made about the subjects’ ability to know, recall and relate details about their experiences. In some ways, all recountings are “false” in that they rearrange, embellish, or minimise the facts of experience so to guard against fear and pain and to accord with the dominant narratives of a society that often views domestic trauma as more personal flaw than social malaise, more alienated privatised behaviour than impersonal public stereotype.

Resistance to one-dimensional interpretation is shown by subjects’ deployment of discourse as *techné* rather than Foucauldian *épistémè*,<sup>82</sup> the former carrying the potential to act upon the world and reclaim agency and character within it; accordingly, to transform experience, evoke affect and emotion, articulate identity and advance action without the mediation of official sanction or even conceptual thought. Storytelling, as a particular mode of discourse, is a praxis that may become a poesis, connecting the subject to others and to the prevailing interwoven subjectivities of the community and society. Discourse – referring to sets of organised meanings involving language, images, and behaviour – and storytelling – are forms of hermeneutic understanding which involve the making of meaning, a mediation of reality and the construction of seeming coherent narrative development which cannot be regularly organised or systematised, and so is often an exercise in “interpreting” what a person says.

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<sup>82</sup> In *The Order of Things* (2002, p. 183), Foucault elaborates “*épistémè*”: “In any given culture and at any given moment, there is always only one *épistémè* that defines the conditions of possibility of all knowledge, whether expressed in a theory or silently invested in a practice.”



Despite this, contemporary understanding of discourse as constructing unstable senses of belonging invites a move beyond the limits of language towards social connection and new conceptualisations.

“Becoming-minor” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 58), for instance, describes where the “minor” rebels and breaks away from the rigid control and positioning of the major, forming a DeleuzoGuattarian “line of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 9-10), manifesting “as something distinctly different, an “intensity” that defies representation and categorization” (Potts, 2004, p. 20), “along which a system breaks down, or becomes transformed into something else. It is the line of absolute deterritorialization” (Patton, 2001, p. 1153). Poised between the paranoid-machine which tries to fix, code, and block flows of intensities and a too-desirous process of schizophrenic self-destruction, the flight process is mapped in terms of assemblages of extensive and intensive capacities which depend on degrees of relations embracing things and contexts as well as people. This “field of transformative effects” (Braidotti, 2000, p. 159), becomes socially invested and these new materialisations, pass-words or figurations become necessarily politically located, reconnecting theory with the practices of daily resistance.

For the researcher, as Braidotti claims, “the challenge lies in thinking about processes, rather than concepts” (2002, p. 1). So, the project became, not so much an effort to achieve a final comprehension but to engage in a work of relation, an assemblage<sup>83</sup> in formation, a production of subjects, an encounter. The “field of reality” was the time and location of our interviews as well as the methods (recording device, notebook, theorisations); the “field of representation” was the production of new knowledge and relationship; and the “field of subjectivity” was our becoming-researcher-and-confidante. The narratives “plugged into” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 333) specific elements of theory and vice versa, created new relationships within the fields, constituting one another and thereby, temporarily creating something original, “something different from mere themes and patterns generated by coding” (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012, p. 6).

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<sup>83</sup> “[A]ll we know are assemblages. And the only assemblages are machinic assemblages of desire and collective assemblages of enunciation . . . An assemblage, in its multiplicity, necessarily acts on semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously . . . There is no longer a tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 22, 23).

The effect of language as providing meaning is essential in relationships. The illusion of identifying and locating precise meanings derives from the supposed close interrelationship between signifier and signified and, accordingly, a person's existential experience of consistent personal identity over time to appear both coherent and unified. According to de Saussure (2011), language is made up of these signifiers or arbitrary marks of difference that go on to structure language and our ways of perceiving and thinking about the world. The ramifications are that all of language is built on systems of difference – differentiations that bind our conceptualisations to a binary mode of being and inhibit thinking of difference as a positive expression of life, of deterritorialising from the givens of this early millennium. Words exist in the future as well as in the past, and utterances evolve through time. And within the space of the interview, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes are never the same as they might be outside the context of the specific, though shifting intersubjectivities created by the researcher and the participant. That which Arendt calls the "subjective-in-between" (1998, p. 183), and which Ogden elaborates as "the analytic third" (Ogden, 1994, p. 94), emerges as the creation of a reality constructed by what both participants in the endeavour achieve together through the interaction of conversing, discussing, and adjusting our frames of reference to accord one with the other. Clearly then, what women in the project share in common has considerable bearing on the outcomes and the impact the discourse has on their lives and future wellbeing – the storytelling's after-effects of bringing the social into being and the personal into the social: "co-narrative transformation" (Ferro, 2006, p. 2).

One contention of this thesis is that long-term victims of domestic abuse do not use or experience language in any ordinary way. As vivid, quotidian activities collapse under the pressure of terrifying threats, actual physical assault, and unbearable emotional violence, the oppressed woman becomes imbued with heightened affect, and her sense of temporal continuity is experienced as a series of disconnected, discontinuous signifiers bearing little or discontinuous sequential connection. The abused victim loses language articulation in some fashion, where the past possesses little causal structural connection to the present and both past and present have little relevance for the future. As one consequence, the abused person begins to lose a

sense of personal identity, based on continuity and forward movement over time, because the “feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the “I” and the “me” over time” (Jameson, 1982, p. 7).

The difficulty of change due to the vitiation of “independent” identities in such circumstances is paradoxically the motivation for a quest for the opportunity to create relatively stable and flourishing subjectivities (though it might well be that “identities” are in fact connections of potentiality and Whitehead-like ways of prehension). The aim then, in Deleuze and Guattari’s (and Whitehead’s) theorisation, is toward an intensity of becoming rather than a static subjecthood, this rhizomatic movement defined as an actualisation of potentia where “multiplicities” come into play at a particular time. What emerges at critical points of suspension is an increased sensitivity to the relational, contextual aspects of life that people occupy, an empowering point of manoeuvrability and an opportunity to experiment, to have a go. Change is a creative process, open-ended, and never achieving a once-and-for-all settled state. It may be that the certainties of domestic arrangements which have been severely damaged or destroyed provoke possibilities that encourage the sorts of opportunities that restore a precarious harmony in a different way, perhaps a certain confident stillness at the centre of the flows of the layered complex assemblages in our late capitalist society. At any rate, the project entails the participants’ acknowledgement of the dimension of “not-knowing”, by showing the women’s discourses as proscriptively defined by deductive frameworks that lack relationality to their desired lives and the quality of their self-empowerment.

And yet. As strategies here, Deleuze’s concept of immanence and his notion of nomadic thought are blueprints for the changes in the women’s movement from restraint to relative freedom, offering lines of flight and new forms of thought and action, though the women were unaware of his (and Whitehead’s, and Nietzsche’s) revolutionary programme in their acts of becoming. “Immanence”, on Deleuze and Guattari’s account, argues for the emergence of identities where the effects are contained already within the causes; in other words, there is no transcendent model beyond what is already given. Connected with this is their theory of “multiplicity”, in which non-hierarchical, scarcely-identifiable and only temporarily-united entities contingently congregate in direction or dimension to form that which might be

ascribed the labels of “subject” or “object”. Accordingly, there is no permanent or essential “being” behind doing”, as Nietzsche (1967, p. 45) says, “the doer” is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything”, while Judith Butler states that “there need not be a doer behind the deed” (2006, p. 195); Alfred North Whitehead (1978, p. 23) affirms that “[a] being” is constituted by its “becoming””, and C. S. Lewis claims, “I am what I do” (1955, p. 225). “Being”, i.e., “identity”, is a post-hoc justification for that which supposedly initiates behaviour.

For all the women in the study, engaging in radical transition and transformation, the future is both a matter of management and a management of matter. “[S]he believes anyhow that she is singing to deaf ears; there is no lack of enthusiasm and applause, but she has long learned not to expect real understanding, as she conceives it” (Kafka, 1952, p. 308). Put otherwise, the women’s desire to take control of their future lives through managing and realising their potential relies on a significant unfolding of pre-existing capacities and a simultaneous rejection of the “imperfect tense” (Nietzsche, 2006b, p. 61) of those habitual behaviours that had previously constrained them to enact conventional procedures.<sup>84</sup> Connecting power with desire as an alternative to subjugation becomes a suddenly viable course of action. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of the virtual and the actual and on Massumi’s (2002, 2009; see n. 85, below) account of affect and intensity provides a theorisation of motivation that has direct relevance to these women’s narratives.

With the postmodern turn, identity, and the emergence – with language – of the self and its affects is constructed within discursive practices. A prior identity that presupposes motivation for envisioned aims to be achieved is not rejected on these accounts but is combined with the realised capacitation for action under harsh conditions by these women who assumed responsibility for the management of themselves and their lives. The possibilities that

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<sup>84</sup> Nietzsche claims that, “He who cannot sink down on the threshold of the moment and forget all the past, who cannot stand balanced like a goddess of victory without growing dizzy and afraid, will never know what happiness is – worse, he will never do anything to make others happy. Imagine the extremest possible example of a man who did not possess the power of forgetting at all and who was thus condemned to see everywhere a state of becoming: such a man would no longer believe in his own being, would no longer believe in himself, would see everything flowing asunder in moving points and would lose himself in this stream of becoming: like a true pupil of Heraclitus, he would in the end hardly dare to raise his finger” (2006b, p. 62). Well, yes. Complete stasis is death, and ubiquitous variance is schizophrenic. Balance is all.

An important contention of this essay is that a willed rejection of past mores and conventions liberates persons from predetermined behaviours to open new trajectories of flight. Nietzsche continues: “The capacity to develop out of oneself in one’s own way, to transform and incorporate into oneself what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recreate broken moulds” is necessary in order to transform the future (Nietzsche, 2006, p. 62).

converged in their lines of flight are not considered final goals but rather as staging posts indicative of, and explained by, the women's linguistic and other behavioural repetitions – and breaks from them – that simultaneously obscure their origins and signal the variations and vitalisations that provided ever more interconnections.

### Why women leave and why they stay

Freud argued that the death instinct was universal in human life, applicable and observable in all cultures and in all periods. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the death instinct is a recent invention, the inevitable result of a particular set of circumstances under capitalism and the way that that regime restricts and contains desire. These authors argue that, à la Nietzsche, the death instinct is a result of the changes that humans underwent as they moved from primitive societies to despotic rule. Instincts at that second stage could no longer be discharged externally but became internalised, “mak[ing] desire into the property of the sovereign, even though he be the death instinct itself” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 198). Nietzsche believes that this internalisation of the instincts was a frustration of the life instinct, emerging as a result of sacrificing individuality to authoritarian rule: “this ugly growth . . . would be lacking if a tremendous quantity of freedom had not been expelled from the world or at least from the visible world, and made as it were, latent under their hammer blows and artists' violence. This instinct for freedom forcibly made latent – we have seen it already – this instinct for freedom pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself: that, and that alone, is what the bad conscience is in its beginnings” (Nietzsche, 1967, p. 87). The capture of libido in our time, “caught in the net of the despotic State” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 224), is the result of the way capitalist production harnesses desire to a repetitive cycle of endless consumption, within lifetimes of life-denying activities of “anti-production”.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Guattari explains **anti-production** thus: “. . . behind every process of production, circulation and consumption there is an order of symbolic production that constitutes the very fabric of every *relationship* of production, circulation and consumption, and of all the structural orders. It is impossible to separate the production of any consumer commodity from the institution that supports that production. The same can be said of teaching, training, research, etc. The State machine and the machine of repression produce *anti-production*. That is to say signifiers that exist to block and prevent the emergence of any subjective process on the part of the group. I believe we should think of repression, or the existence of the State, or bureaucratization, not as passive or inert, but as dynamic. Just as Freud could talk of the dynamic processes underlying psychic repression, so it must be understood that, like the odyssey of things returning to their “rightful place”, bureaucracies, churches, universities and other such bodies develop an entire ideology and set of phantasies of repression in order to counter the processes of social creation in every sphere” (Guattari, 1984, p. 34, emphasis in original).

Following Nietzsche, Deleuze claims that happiness is the ability to live life actively, affirming the particularity of one's existence. A person lives reactively if she identifies a "true" world or programme above and beyond the world in which she lives. Opposed to this or any idea of transcendence, Deleuze's ethics of living lies in its capacity to think specific difference rather than generalities, for to base life on common forms is to remain a slave to dogma, preconception and prejudice. If individuals accept an openness beyond their specific egoselves by adopting a non-individualistic impersonal joy as a force that affirms and expands life, that force increases the power to become (joy), which accepts the transformative force of the future and resists that which diminishes life (sorrow). Where the participants in this study affirmed their actions by leaving sequestered existences, "disinvest[ing] in repressive structures" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 61), and developing new connections, these actions enhanced and expanded their lives and the whole of life, because such affirmations necessarily include and broaden relationships. After all, Deleuze, following Spinoza, insists the normative aim of life is to increase its affective capacities by developing its powers of engagement and sociability (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 97-104),<sup>86</sup> where desire is radically conceived as an immanent principle, developed through production and process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 4-8).<sup>87</sup> In becoming-other, the Deleuzian subject opens to an interference of dynamic affective forces where the transformational pragmatics of experience and context occur in the middle of a "broken chain of affects and variable speeds" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), coursing through life; consequently, all values are the effects of these flows. This process is transindividual, directly relational, and both bodies in the encounter transition through the encounter to different outcomes and roles. Further, the transition is *felt*, as the movement from one level to a different power of living (higher or lower) brings with it a higher (or lower) intensity and sensitivity, experienced as an affective preparedness for future encounters, a "thinking-feeling" (Massumi, 2015, p. 94) understanding.

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<sup>86</sup> "That individual will be called *good* (or free, or rational, or strong) who strives, insofar as he is capable, to organize his encounters, to join with whatever agrees with his nature, to combine his relation with relations that are compatible with his, and thereby to increase his power. For goodness is a matter of dynamism, power, and the composition of powers. That individual will be called *bad*, or servile, or weak, or foolish, who lives haphazardly, who is content to undergo the effects of his encounters, but wails and accuses every time the effect does not agree with him and reveals his own impotence" (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 22, 23, emphasis in original).

<sup>87</sup> Opposed to Lacanian lack, Deleuze & Guattari's revolutionary formulation of desire indicates that the satisfaction of pleasure is never a goal. On their account, desire seeks only its enlargement and flow: "desire does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined, introducing therein breaks and captures – an always nomadic and migrant desire . . ." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 292).

This means moving beyond morality, which posits transcendent antitheses of good and evil, towards a Deleuzian ethics, where life itself selects those powers that enlarge life as a whole.<sup>88</sup> It is not extravagant to say that the women in this study eschewed conventional morality through acting divergently; consequently their ethics displaced morality. On Deleuze's view, had the women, according to conventional moral norms, stayed in their unhappy marriages, maintained their positions as resentful, judgemental and subjugated objects, then that would have diminished the forces of their lives and the lives of those with whom they came into contact. Their perceptual boundaries would have been reinforced and potential generativities would have been closed down.

Confronting this dilemma, Deleuze and Guattari theorise a notion of desire as always a positive force. Yet "[w]hy do men [sic] fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?" they ask, ". . . why do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they *actually want* humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves?" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 29, emphasis in original). This is explained by Leibniz's theory of *perceptions petites*, *perceptions insensibles*, and by Deleuze and Guattari's spin on Spinoza's and Nietzsche's notions of the drives. To take the first: Leibniz claims that perceptions insensibles are unnoticeable perceptions, forming a subclass of *perceptions petites*. Unnoticeable perceptions are not noticed as such, because they are so minute, virtually infinite, but in their union are noticeable, become conscious, and therefore have an effect on decision making because they have recognisable consequences (Leibniz & Rescher, 1991, *The Monadology*, §14, p. 77; Leibniz, 1996, *II, IX* §1, 9; *II, I* §10).

The separation between the unnoticeable and the noticeable is explained by Deleuze's theory of affects<sup>89</sup> – the gap between the sensible and the intelligible, the precursors of qualities

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<sup>88</sup> This is prompted by Deleuze and Guattari's astonishing claim (prefigured in Leibniz's *Fifth Letter*, §§14-17, *Correspondence*, and Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, §36), that the individual's introjection and projection of the norms of the political and libidinal economies within which she is located and with which she identifies, accounts for the very drives and impulses that she regards as most especially her own. These drives, state Deleuze and Guattari, always arise from, and are channelled by contemporary social formations: they are "part of of the infrastructure itself" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 63), and invite a transcendent morality rather than an immanent ethics.

<sup>89</sup> "Affect", according to Colman, is "the change, or variation that occurs when bodies collide, or come into contact" (Colman, 2010, p. 11). Massumi, referencing Spinoza in his translator's notes to *A Thousand Plateaus*, states that in Deleuze and Guattari's work, "affect" does not denote a personal feeling, but rather, "an ability to affect and be affected" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi), that it is "a pre-personal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (p. xvi), and "a collapse of structure distinction into intensity, of rules into paradox" (Massumi, 2002, p. 27). Clough and Halley elaborate affect by including also the "capacity . . . to engage, and to connect, such that autoaffectation is linked to the Self-feeling of being alive – that is, aliveness or vitality" (Clough & Halley, 2007, p. 2).

which operate intensively as they happen to people, across and through them, preconsciously. Affects are the flash that provokes an involuntary blink, the swift movement that raises body temperature, the thud in the night that precipitates pupil dilation, the current that lights the bulb, the “whispering voices” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 105), from which emerges something termed the self. But disjoining customary connections of affects from their expected ordering and sequence ruptures and scrambles the faculties such that the eye may desire that from which the flesh recoils. The organising perspective of coherent bodies moving in time along anticipated trajectories in unified action may be disrupted, provoking affective rather than cognitive responses, prompted by the search for ever new perceptions and experiences that Leibniz calls “appetitions” (Leibniz & Rescher, 1991, “The Monadology”, §15, p. 79). Affects being the disorganised “bodily capacitation, felt transitions, quality of lived experience, memory, repetition, seriation, inclination, in dynamic relation to each other” (Massumi, 2015, p. 49), the microperceptions that make up the individuality of who and what people are, describes how bodies respond to, and desire forms and actions even when they are not in their best interests.<sup>90</sup> Collected into assemblages, these microperceptions may habituate, releasing neurochemicals of adrenaline and dopamine, and be perceived as excitement, stimulation and engagement. On this account, women submit to ongoing oppressive pressures, not because of erroneous cognition, not because of the contrition shown by their partners, not because of their hopes that the violence is aberrant and passing, but because of their investment in, and desire for Leibnizian *perceptions insensibles* accompanied by certain thrilling affects, not least their feelings for the “better parts” of their partners.

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Other commentators remark: “[A]ffect . . . lies between soma and psyche, as between the hammer and the anvil, as it were” (Green, 1999, p. 21); “affect is that moment of singularity (sometimes Deleuze and Guattari will use the term “hæcceity” or thisness), where a universe pours in, flows out – an unlimited One-All, universal-singular . . . the state of a body inasmuch as it affects or is affected by another body” (Seigworth, 2011, pp. 182, 183); it is “synonymous with force or forces of encounter” (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 2); it is “the physiological shift accompanying a judgement” (Brennan, 2004, p. 5); “allow[ing] for an analysis of the dynamism of the body’s matter, such that the body is thought as a center of action and reaction, a site of energy flows and changes in intensity” (Wissinger, 2007, p. 232). Affect is “related to the build-up and fall-off of stimulation and tension” (Stern, 2002, p. 84); it is “likely to be a component (though usually unconscious) of every act of perception” (Stern, 1998, p. 53), is “the basic steps of an interactive regulatory process” (Stern, 2006, p. 63); is a relationship identified with “cumulative transformational experiences of the self” (Bollas & Jemstedt, 2011, p. 4); is referred to chiefly “by the indirect method of describing [its] causes or [ . . . ] effects” (Langer, 1954, pp. 195, 196); and is “less formed and structured than emotion, but not lacking form or structure altogether; less “sociolinguistically fixed”, but by no means code-free or meaningless; less “organized in response to our interpretations of situations” but by no means entirely devoid of organization or diagnostic powers” (Ngai, 2005, p. 27, emphasis in original).

<sup>90</sup> This is not to revictimise the victim by blaming her staying in an unhappy relationship, nor is it to minimise the traumatic effects of abuse outlined in Biderman’s “Chart of Coercion”, including “rituals of deference, modes of enforcement, sanctions and forbidden places” (Stark, 2007, p. 194).



Sad affects are those which decrease personal power and the power of all life, whereas in joy, by contrast, the individual experiences that which is other than herself, and in so doing, expands what she is and enlarges her conatus<sup>91</sup> – that which she has the power to become. Her investments and desires are never exclusively or simply her own but a symptomatology of a collection of impersonal investments – clearly expressed in such diverse writers as Dostoyevsky, Proust, Kafka, Melville, Woolf, and Easton Ellis. What these writers express, and what the women in the study exhibit, is a very Deleuzian becoming in experiencing first-hand the forces of life through which (a certain stability of) character is developed and from which judgements of good and bad are derived. The women’s challenge was the issue of perception and freedom, of opening to the life that surrounds and pulsates within them, rather than yielding to pre-objectifying that life through given moral categories. There is always a plurality of lines of new becomings or lines of flight, and life is enhanced by varying in as many ways as possible through multiple encounters and the multi-levelled affective capacities these produce. A common resistance to these becomings, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the notion of love as enclosed within the family or viewed as exclusive romantic pairing, and the practice of fusing two into one (Badiou, 1999, 2005, 2009; Freud, 2001; Lacan, 1998; and Žižek, 2004, 2008, 2020), are all guilty of this). Linked to this is the idea of love’s merging into sameness, with an accompanying destruction of difference, and the notion of love as passive and unproductive. Deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation involve openness to the transformation and maintenance of difference applying equally to those closest and those furthest away, those most similar and those most dissimilar. *Caritas*, freely given, invites openness and multiplies difference, conjunction and assemblage(s). Love is ontologically productive, active and creative, productive of difference and singularities.

In Guattari’s *Chaosmosis* (1995), the author criticises the way that Freud and Lacan have yoked the idea of desire to primary repression on the one hand, and to “the analysis of the self, its adaptation to society, and its conformity with a signifying order” (Guattari, 2011, p. 10), on the other. “The Freudian Unconscious is inseparable from a society attached to its past, to its phallogocratic traditions, and its subjective invariants. Contemporary upheavals undoubtedly call for a modelization turned more towards the future and the emergence of new social and

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<sup>91</sup> ‘Conatus’ just is a thing’s nature. It manifests in the human mind as *will* (see n. 22, above).

æsthetic practices” (Guattari, 2011, p. 12). Instead of accepting that desire is untieably knotted to the very foundational reality that purportedly explains it but which in fact it produces, Guattari proposes instead a psychology of liberation, based not on the dualistic dichotomies of “capitalist subjectivity” (Guattari, 2013, p. 26), nor on Lacanesque signifiers that mirror a logic of equivalence compatible with capitalism’s abstraction of surplus value. Breaking with conventional meanings by producing “transversal relations” (Guattari in Watson, 2009, p. 126), that account for both the individuality and the self-organising movements of connections, Guattari claims that in this way the unconscious is then capable of escaping the repressive structures that invest the social field. Writing about escaping from self-destructive patterns of behaviour, he states: “It’s not a question of curbing desire, of switching its objects, but of expanding the field of *jouissance*, of opening it to new possibilities” (Guattari in Genosko, 1996, p. 155, emphasis in original). “Josephine likes best to sing just when things are most upset” (Kafka, 1952, p. 310).

Desire is productive, claim Deleuze and Guattari, and neither it nor life emerge from lack. Desire itself lacks any fixed subject, and desire and its object are one and the same thing: “Desire is a machine , and the object of desire is another machine connected to it” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 26). On Deleuze and Guattari’s view, desire does not emerge from lack, but instead, in a radical departure from Freud’s thesis, expects resultants from desire, the latter being the impulse to produce: “. . . desire clasps life in its powerfully productive embrace, and reproduces it in a way that is all the more intense because it has few needs” (p. 27):

There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 2).

Lack is constructed and organised through particular social production, where subjectivisation and subjugation as deliberately planned functions of the market economy in the hands of a ruling class are consequences of submission to the œdipal authority and its interconnected patriarchal regime. Mindless consumerism is the constructed answer to the constructed emptiness within, and the former manifests capitalism’s death instinct. This instinct, which

Freud was at pains to justify through his insistence on the function of mythic universalism, is sublimated throughout individuals' lifespans in contemporary life.

Heading the list of myths in relationships is the Freudian oedipal narrative, but as Deleuze and Guattari point out, "[t]he only modern myth is the myth of zombies" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 335), concordant with the ways in which capitalism captures and directs desire. Zombies are reflective in their thinking rather than reflexive, exclusively intent on recruiting members to their undead ranks and on self-preservation and reproducing their kind. In this metaphor, the shuffling animus of the zombie is a uncomfortably vivid image of a life that has no meaning beyond relentless consumption – the death instinct, with no mediating life impulse. Undeniably, death exists, and also the experience of death, which Deleuze and Guattari identify as the movement from one intensive state to another.

For Deleuze and Guattari, under capitalism and the Oedipus, death has been transformed into the death instinct and comes to represent repressed desire, not as the overcoming of organic impulse through the erotic pleasures of self-discipline and abnegation, and certainly not as in earlier and more primitive societies, as anti-production at the utter limit of production. On the other hand, ubiquitous, interconnected, continuously-flowing "desiring machines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 2, 3), on Deleuze and Guattari's view, are the non-pathological schizophrenic "subjects" that are repressed by the constrictions of the paternal/authoritarian order. Where there is a pause or interruption in the flow of connections, is where "identity" emerges, peculiarly described as the "body without organs" (p. 9). This is the liminal state, differentiated from the processual nature of the desiring machine: "It is this identity that constitutes a third term in the linear series: an enormous undifferentiated object" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 7).

If this anti-production is diffused throughout society and internalised in subjects as anxiety, guilt and dissatisfaction, then this "death instinct" is not, as Freud proposed in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", a compulsion to return to a former inorganic state, but is, rather, a period of "latency", which Nietzsche argues, occurred in the human race when it moved from filiation in primitive tribal collectives to association under despotic control. This latency was initially actuated by the sense of indebtedness subjects felt for the founders of their generations, their

origins and very existence, and is an interruption of the life impulse, where desire becomes velleity.

In this way, Deleuze and Guattari rebut Hegel's dialectic which that writer presents as limitless, always moving onward from one state to another, ever incorporating the previous stage into the next, without any entropy. Hegel thus demonstrates the flows of capital as they envelop desire and restrict it to producing ever more capital. This difficult concept is described in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*. The process (encountered and created anew in each encounter), challenges the authority of the conventional concept of knowledge as something to be acquired through comparison and choice and opposes the use of preformed conceptualisations, opting instead for a Peircean (1955) abductive reasoning that encourages "bodily feeling" (Massumi, 2015, p. 9), permits "listening awry" and allows the women to re-experience and accept or deny the non-relational aspects of their talk with their partners. Accordingly, the study employs both the nomothetic interpretative techniques of discourse and content analysis and grounded theory and the ideographic approach of Guattari's programme.

In conversation with Claire Parnet, Deleuze professes that whether we are individuals or groups, "[a]t each moment we are made of lines which are variable at each instant, which may be combined in different ways" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 102). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari call these lines "[b]reak line, crack line, rupture line" (1987, p. 200). And in *The Human Condition* (1998), Hannah Arendt, speaking of the "unique, unexchangeable, and unrepeatable entities" (p. 97) of individuals, addresses the question of how telling stories speaks of the determination to defend the "unchangeable identity of the person" (p. 193) in the plurality of human existence. The main characteristic of human life, Arendt claims, "is that it is itself always full of events which ultimately can be told as a story, establish a biography . . ." (p. 97). In concordance with Arendt's thesis, Michael Jackson maintains that humans are simultaneously individuals – *ipse* – and members of varied communities, connected to all human beings who have lived or who are yet to live – *idem* (Jackson, 2013, p. 6). Both parties in an intimate relationship derive benefits as well as incur costs from the union, albeit it being the woman who most frequently bears the burden of a structure loaded against her full participation. Participation in a partnership comes loaded with desire, and every investment in desire (Spinoza, 1910, *Pt. III*, P. XXXII, p. 106), has social affects

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 25 and following). For Deleuze & Guattari, desire is always productive, never, *contra* Freud and Lacan, signifying lack, but always affirming, positive and productive of being – a superabundance of desiring machines.<sup>92</sup> It is the various connections and experimentations of these desiring machines, “directly political” (Sauvagnargues, 2013, p. 91), that produces subjectivity as a residue that prompts a radical creativity capable of multiple transformations and new becomings, of constructing desire’s status as expression and self-differentiation, of affecting others and being affected by them, transcending biological imperatives of need.

Some time ago, Chris Anderson, the then editor of *Wired* magazine, wrote a provocative piece entitled “The End of Theory”. In it, he claimed that computers, algorithms, and the availability of uncountable volumes of possible data render contemporary research strategies and theories quite redundant. Moreover, he went on to say, these data provide more accurate and insightful results than traditional methods because of the data’s ability to identify and track patterns, trends and relationships: “Today, companies like Google, which have grown up in an era of massively abundant data, don't have to settle for wrong models. Indeed, they don't have to settle for models at all” (Anderson, 2008).

Anderson’s argument relies on a narrow and simplistic conception of theory that treats calculable entities and the correlations between them as the most relevant items of interest. But numbers do not “speak for themselves”, (Anderson, 2008), and data cannot construct truth. It is not data-crunching that arouses thought, but rather, theory, which begins with an initial decision-making identification to determine what counts in the first instance. Theory initiates a selective paradigm which introduces a narrative pathway that illuminates and tracks data (= given facts) as guide and parameter, and reveals facts in a new light. Theory clarifies and contextualises, imposing order and form and direction and transformative potential on what would otherwise be a pullulating mass of information. Far removed from the immersive tendencies of the narcissistic data machine, a distancing Socratic love, employed in this study, is expected of the theorist as interviewer, wherein Eros, expressed as friendship, is manifested as Logos, as Philosophus, the friend of wisdom in Plato, “a presence that is intrinsic to thought,

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<sup>92</sup> Beyond the scope of this thesis is the curious notion that women “accept” “lack” and paradoxically, are fuller persons because of this.

a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 3). It is opposed to that additive, positivist information – used, as I’ve said, chiefly for comparison and a kind of cognition – which merely increases the noise and entropy of the world, changing little and achieving less. But the narrative tension emerging from hermeneutic study announces a re-cognition that is insightful and negative: *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung*.

Following from these ideas, any contemporary investigation of a current issue is characterised by the identification and formulation of the new problems associated with it at the present time. The tentative answers which issue establish a framework of facts which in turn direct the perspective, the mode of inquiry and the expectation of further analysis. Today’s experience is not tomorrow’s, writes Susanne K. Langer (1954), neither is it yesterday’s, and traditional approaches may give inadequate account of new factors, nor do they necessarily address today’s worrying issues and contradictions. There comes a time, when, to invert Topsy’s words, thought needs to proclaim, “I wasn’t growed, I was made”. The necessity arises, then, following the collapse of previous ages’ narratives, of how we might live otherwise, and better, in a world lacking consistent validation of human behaviour, and this indicates a significant departure from, if not a complete rejection of, prior solutions, in a search for more coherent questions concerning ways of living more fulfilling lives.

Thus, modern thought backgrounded the Socratic question of how one should live life (Williams, 1993, pp. 1-21), and its structural grip that implicitly produces conformity and a requisite consistency. In the same way, the significance of Kant’s categorical imperative ceased to form the basis of what it was to live a good life. Nietzsche completed the process with his declaration of the death of God. There could be no longer an overriding cosmological order wherein all human beings were embedded, no greater hierarchical structure for all of humanity (beyond that of one’s society), and no stability or general order that ought to be followed according to one’s ordained role in life. Instead, opening up towards democracy and the rise of individualism, post-World-War-II thinking exposed these forces of confinement and introduced the different idea of how one might live; i.e., how one might act, according to one’s contemporary obligations. If the programme was liberating, it was also without any external transcendent anchor. Foucault (1990a, pp. 152-156) had demonstrated a need for “deep

transformation” (p. 155), wherein a programme becomes “a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest” (p. 154). “Does anyone know what we’re living for?” pleaded Freddie Mercury in his last, poignant song (“The Show Must Go On”). In fact, Deleuze’s whole corpus may be considered a rejection of Aristotelian formal and final causation in favour of non-arbitrary, efficient or agential desiring flows to fulfilment. It is to these causal agents, the women of the study, that I now turn.

## Chapter 6

### The Women: Mobility, Transformation, Identity

A dominant part of Deleuze's project is the affirmation of positive and multiple differences, where the body is the "play of forces, a surface of intensities . . . within a complex interplay of social and affective forces" (Braidotti, 2002, p. 21). This body, as much the ongoing structuration of processes as the site of connective forces, is the complex that is subjectivity. And while subjectivity necessarily embodies its social and symbolic givens, its subjugations and constraints, it has too the capacity to transmute and transcend those variables, opening to the forces of the universe and changing in kind through a deliberate aesthetic and ontogenetic construction of a different world. Power's negative hold on subjects, its cultural and legal restrictions, rules and requirements, sustain *auctoritas* and *potestas*. That which resists and rebels and chooses desire is termed *potentia* – the power of affecting and being affected, the force that intensifies life. Choosing to choose is an act of belief in the world and its possibilities, dismantling conventional inevitabilities to allow "possibilities of movements and intensities so as once again to give birth to new modes of existence" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994, p. 74), and where "a set of possibilities produces a second set of possibilities, which in turn produces a third, each set in the chain of events being affected and partially determined by the preceding set, yet with each set's potential for subsequent differentiation always being multiple and undeterminable" (Bogue, 2019, p. 32).

Power is construed by Deleuze and Guattari as that force which develops a sense of subjectivity through the positive force of desire. In fields of interconnecting forces, speeds, mobilities and affections, where many codes - sex, gender, age, class and ethnicity, ideological positionings, capabilities, etc. - are written, in, on, and in relation to bodies, "desire produces reality" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 30), and subjectivity is the result. "[D]esire does not take as its object persons or things, but the entire surroundings that it traverses, the vibrations and flows of every sort to which it is joined" (ibid, p. 292). Singularities, that is, points where everything changes, connect to (any) other points, rhizomatically, and are synthesised into three types: connective, disjunctive and conjunctive syntheses. The *connective* synthesis connects part-objects and flows of energy or material to form simple desiring-machines. The *disjunctive* synthesis, the "plane of consistency" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 205), allows bodies and



energies to be recorded (and potentially reconfigured), affirming and absorbing disjunction into a positive principle, and the *conjunctive* synthesis involves the consumption of intensive states accompanying the first two, and is “consumed” by the body, which increases in power to the degree that its capacities to affect and to be affected (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 62), are enlarged.

Restated, a preliminary step to psychic well-being involves, first, doing no harm to one’s self, next engaging in those activities that give pleasure. More precisely, the elevation of the self to a greater state of intensive feeling, i.e., to *desire*, is typically connected to activities outside itself. Engagement with the world and with other selves, ordinarily people, beyond a focus on the individual, involves participating in others’ actions, and is how a self increases its own co-constructing sense of power, intensity and joy – its identity. Enhancing the power of others by way of appropriate uses of the syntheses, Deleuze and Guattari obliquely say (1987, p. 4), invites fluid and open-ended connections with others – attendant on the risk/excitement of irrevocable transformation of the original identification. I believe the women in the study undertook such changes, accepting vulnerability and caring for themselves by reaching out to others. Of the differing success of their endeavours, readers of their stories will decide.

Each chooses his pitch or his tone, perhaps even his lyrics, but the tune remains the same  
(Gilles Deleuze, 1994, pp. 83-84).

My first interviewee, **Leila**, aged 69 at the time of the interviews, is the oldest of four siblings (one sister and two brothers). Her mother, said to have been the most beautiful woman in Rotorua, met and married her Irish father in Wellington. The couple moved to Rotorua after the Depression where Leila's father broke in land<sup>93</sup> for a farm around Ngakuru. Leila and her brothers and sister worked on the farm, pulling ragwort,<sup>94</sup> feeding calves, mowing the lawns, and helping in the house until she was 16. Then, armed with School Certificate<sup>95</sup>, Leila obtained a job in nearby Rotorua working in the Bank of New South Wales. Together with her sister, she travelled to work in a little Hillman Imp<sup>96</sup> that her father had bought for them.

Leila spoke very highly of her mother, whom she said she loved deeply, and her account suggests a tight-knit, traditional family where her father, as head of the house, dealt with the money: "Mum couldn't sign a cheque or anything or had any of her money or anything like that". Life involved hard work but there were rewards. Leila's reminiscences were of happy times: the family regularly went to the cinema together<sup>97</sup> in Rotorua on Friday nights, and they were the first in the area to buy a television set. But Leila's pleasure was of a mixed and repressed kind, the marginalised product of Foucauldian disempowering discourses.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> "Breaking in" land involves clearing trees and scrub and ploughing the land before sowing it with grass as a fodder crop.

<sup>94</sup> Ragwort, introduced into the country in the 1870s as a pretty yellow-flowered plant which attracts butterflies, is a noxious weed, poisonous to livestock.

<sup>95</sup> To gain their School Certificate, 5th form students (Year 11), had to achieve an average score of at least 50% and a 'C' grade (50–64%), or better in all subjects, including English and mathematics. Some subjects were a mixture of internal and external assessments. For most, achieving SC was a source of pride as well as a rite of passage from school to the workforce. It was replaced in 2002 by the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA).

<sup>96</sup> A small economy car, the Hillman Imp was a British mass-produced vehicle, made from 1963 until 1976. It used a rear-engine design and a rear-wheel-drive layout to allow greater luggage and passenger capacity. Such fun!

<sup>97</sup> This was mentioned with some embarrassment. Her friends went to the same theatre and would snigger at Leila and her siblings being with their parents. They would "slide down in their seats" to escape notice.

<sup>98</sup> In his inaugural lecture: "The Order of Discourse", at the Collège de France, Foucault (1970), specified the rules and procedures constituting the "will to knowledge". These comprise a realm of discursive practices - the order of discourse - where knowledge is produced. The effect of discursive practice is that it is virtually impossible to think outside of the rules; to be outside is to be beyond comprehension and rationality. Accordingly, discursive rules are strongly linked to the exercise of power: discourse itself comprises and ensures the reproduction of the social system through forms of selection, exclusion and domination. As Foucault asserts, "... in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a number of procedures" (cited in Young, 1981, p. 52), and as Marx asseverates: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past" (Marx, 1972, p. 10). In the narrow world of rural New Zealand in the 50s and 60s, it was, in other words, quite impossible to think outside the square.

Desire, Deleuze and Guattari claim, exists always as a potential “tangent of deterritorialization” (1983, p. 315), “never separable from complex assemblages” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 215), and Leila judged those things good that she and her family strove for and desired (Spinoza, 2000, III, p. 9). In a Deleuzian sense, Leila’s life comprised a molecular sensibility in her appreciation of the myriad “tiny perceptions” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 87), or impulses that ran through her life. Microscopic perspectives – the effect of clusters of affects – have social, psychic and political dimensions and contribute reciprocally to extending and amplifying lives and enlarging power.<sup>99</sup> This means that before there is a change in direction or even a decision to change, “there is first an unconscious and affective investment in an image of life and a style of morality that is subsequently reconceived as the moral ground of life itself” (Spinks, 2012, p. 185).

A surplus-repression<sup>100</sup> mirrored the rigid patriarchal structures in her family and its dealings with the local community. The mind of the state became her state<sup>101</sup> of mind, not susceptible to realising the state of affairs as contingent, changeable, and open to a reworking of personal

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<sup>99</sup> Deleuze believes that ideas are not accurate representations of thought but rather concepts of fluctuating relations between bodies, their motions and velocities. Derived from Spinoza’s view on affects (translated as “emotions”), he and Guattari connect affect to percept and concept and argue for affect’s capacity for action and novelty. The writers are influenced by Spinoza’s idea of the effects of external bodies that cause the body to feel pain or pleasure and the individual’s ideas of these effects leading to inadequate thoughts and passive relations with the outside world (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 283, 256), which nevertheless are the basis for adequate ideas and an active relation to the world. In Spinoza’s words:

By EMOTION (*affectus*) I understand the modification of the body by which the power of action in the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the ideas of these modifications. Thus if we can be the adequate cause of those modifications, then by the emotion I understand an ACTION (*actio*), if otherwise a PASSION (Spinoza. *Ethics III: Origin and Nature of the Emotions*, def III, pp. 84-85).

On Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Spinoza, any becoming which effects a change in conventional relations of forces (of the will to power), or of speed, increases or decreases the capacity for action. Leila, and most of the women in the study, exhibit this remarkable capacity for action. Leila’s actions, for example, in finding a job and leaving Jack for Paul combined innovation, experimentation (and complication), and summoned the creation of new interpretations and engagements in the affirmation of new senses, new life and new possibilities. Changing things changes minds and lives.

<sup>100</sup> Marcuse distinguishes between the biological demands of the instincts and the social restrictions of particular contexts. *Basic* repression refers to that repression or “modifications” of the instincts necessary for the perpetuation of the human race in civilization” (Marcuse 1998, p. 35), at which level it does not tend to domination or oppression. *Surplus repression*, on the other hand, refers to “the restrictions necessitated by social domination” (p. 35). The purpose of surplus repression is to shape the instincts in accordance with the social domination of “the prevailing historical form of the *reality* principle” (p. 35, emphasis in original). Both Deleuze and Guattari, but especially the latter, explore the effects of this surplus repression in several books (e.g., *Chaosmosis*, *Chaosophy*, and *The Three Ecologies*).

<sup>101</sup> Because throughout history until the capitalist formation, individual being has never been regarded as singular but always plural, consequently, always political, it bears mentioning that the word “state” underwent a transformation, attendant upon the transition from mediæval arrangements, from status (L), signifying a “state of affairs” to the more concrete “State” as an institutionalised situation. Emerging concurrently with the rise of capitalism, it is of interest to note that the rise of the modern state resulted from the elusive problem of legitimacy for the Italian princely domains of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in a world recently come to a money economy: only a state could provide the infrastructure necessary to maintain expensive mercenaries after the collapse of the feudal system, only universal laws could protect the state’s *raison d’être*, and only the now-reified state possessed the authority to validate the universalised power and control subsequently successful conquerors might exercise to justify their rule. Today’s states regulate most parts of individuals’ lives.

history. Thus, when her father bought a new Ford Fairlane 500 with “big wings”, the purchase attracted derision and malicious comments, particularly, she remembers, from the Ngakura headmaster: “. . . when one Ford passes another, it’s tin past tin”. Leila put these comments down to envy because her father was a successful breeder of pedigree Jersey cows, attending shows throughout New Zealand. The unexamined and comfortable conformity to the homogenies of the common ideologies: social acceptance, self-effacement, hard work, etc., was Leila’s dominant value.<sup>102</sup>

And so, life continued uneventfully, until at 19½, Leila met and married Jack, a young teller at the bank “[t]hinking that I was in love with him . . . ’cause everyone was getting married back then at that time; they were pregnant or something. I wasn’t. When I look back on my life, I think I probably married him because my parents were quite protective and we probably didn’t do what all the other kids did”.

“What the other kids did” was engage in drinking and sex. Leila perceived an opening, a risk, an escape, a vulnerability to possibility. Being relatively unformed, her family name “containing its already domesticated multiplicity within itself” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 27), dimly recognising that she was formed by relation to others – humans and things, that she was not a fixed form nor yet a fixed subject but gradually co-emerging through varied intimacies, her separate selves needed fuller integration.<sup>103</sup> “The proper (*nom propre*) name does not

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<sup>102</sup> The commitment that people show to desiring their own suppression has been explored at length by Wilhelm Reich in his exhaustive study (1980) on fascism. Rejecting interpretations that attribute the rise of repressive authoritarian regimes to the fascination of charismatic leaders, state propaganda, political ideology, or just plain ignorance, Reich finds that people desire their repression on a psychic level: “Reich . . . refuses to accept ignorance or illusion on the part of the masses as an explanation of fascism, and demands an explanation that will take their desires into account . . . no, the masses were not innocent dupes; at a certain point, under a certain set of conditions, they *wanted* fascism . . .” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 29, emphasis in original).

In his preface to *Anti-Œdipus*, Foucault alludes to the “fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. xiii). For Deleuze, following Nietzsche, our drives interpret the world and not our conscious thoughts; so, it is that we have multiple perspectives on the world, and these are often contradictory: “While “we” believe we are complaining about the vehemence of a drive, at bottom it is one drive *which is complaining about another*; that is to say: for us to become aware that we are suffering from the *vehemence* of a drive presupposes the existence of another equally vehement or even more vehement drive, and that a *struggle* is in prospect in which our intellect is going to have to take sides” (Nietzsche, 1997, p. 65, emphasis in original). Uncomprehending, we take our dominating drive and create it as our whole ego, backgrounding other competing drives as minor and “it” (hence, Freud’s “id”). There is no struggle of reason against the drives: what is called reason is no more than a certain ‘system of relations between various passions” (Nietzsche, 1968, §387). On Deleuze’s account, “[u]nderneath the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our “self” only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says “me” ”(Deleuze, 1994, p. 75). For Deleuze and Guattari, what is essential is not a *transcendent* set of ethics, but an understanding of the various modes of existence and their capacity to enlarge or diminish the power of acting, up to the limits of what might be achieved.

<sup>103</sup> A recent book (Sheldrake, 2020, pp. 101-2), illuminates the process of being “sucked in”: “Zombie fungi”, *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, live within the bodies of carpenter ants modifying their behaviour for their own benefit. Once infected by the fungus, ants lose their instinctive fear of heights, leave their nests, and climb the nearest plant—a syndrome known as “summit disease”. The fungus then “forces” the ant to clamp its jaws around the plant in a “death grip”. Mycelium grows from the ant’s feet, stitching them to the

designate an individual: it is on the contrary when the individual opens up to the multiplicities pervading him or her [ . . . ] that he or she acquires his or her true proper name” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 37). Deleuze and Guattari’s model of schizoanalysis, and their paralogisms, presented in *Anti-Œdipus* (Ch. 2), in the form of the three syntheses of desiring production: connection, disjunction and conjunction, afford an explanation.

So, Leila, vaguely dissatisfied, following Deleuze and Guattari’s dictum to “[l]odge yourself on a stratum” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161), accepted the authoritarian domination of the time and yet experimented with the opportunities the relationship offered, seeking small potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, and producing flows of conjunctions, trying out “continuums of intensities, segment by segment” (p. 161). The young couple moved to Auckland where they bought a house in Pakuranga and Leila got a job in a department store. Six years later, two children, and two shifts of location, found the two in Hamilton, where Jack obtained employment at the Dairy Company. That job didn’t last long: “I think it might have been a year or two. I think he [Jack] was a bullshit artist, ok? and a drinker”.

When the children were both enrolled at a local primary school, Leila took stock of her life and realised she wanted more. Despite the protection offered by the values of her family and by others’ attitudes and expectations in the cultivated lands of capitalist subjectivity, the possibilities of closer relationships and the exploration of more meaningful forms of being through deeper social connection, beckoned Leila to consider opportunities of adding to, or deviating from the mode of life in which she felt she was merely following preordained patterns. “Modes of existence” are always plural and relational, says Bruno Latour (2013), and Etienne Souriau (2015); furthermore, events always precede such “modes of existence”, which latter are to do with the emergence of possibilities, and Leila felt an urge to move beyond the unrelenting sameness of her life. The pulse of emergent process in the interval between existing modes is the beginning of becoming, as Manning and Massumi have it (2014, p. 156). More prosaically, Deleuze and Guattari, following Nietzsche (1997), claim that a person’s current desire is simply the temporary state of her impulses and drives, “the desiring-machines themselves” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 35), these determined by that person’s false

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plant’s surface. The fungus then digests the ant’s body and sprouts a stalk from its head, from which spores shower down on ants below. Inside infected ants, the parts of the *Ophiocordyceps* genome responsible for the production of these alkaloids are activated, suggesting that they play a part in manipulating ant behaviour. Metaphorically, some women suffer from summit disease.

consciousness (Marx) and unconscious libidinal investment (Freud). What moved Leila then, was the combination of a coincidental collision of unconscious drives – answering the question of why people “fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 29): it is because one’s drives are not one’s own but rather the product of an (already constructed) investment in a particular social formation.<sup>104</sup>

At the roots of human psychic make-up is the fundamental attraction of subjection.<sup>105</sup> Evans and Reid’s (2015, p. 2) Deleuzo-Guattarian depiction of fascism as the desire of people for their own repression, and Massumi’s definition of “a manic attack by the body politic against itself” (1992, p. 116), are anticipated by Reich’s claim that the natural development and free sociality of humans is perverted by the authoritarian demands of the state, mirrored by the family (Reich, 1980, pp. vii-x). Correspondingly, the core of Deleuze and Guattari’s thought is an exposition of the possibilities of harmonious relationships, and while the barriers that inhibit these potential relationships from developing or even emerging are always because of the interests of some other person(s) in the relationship, together with their values, expectations, ingrained life patterns, economic strictures and political convictions, obstacles arise because of the positions<sup>106</sup> these people inhabit. “[H]ave a small plot of new land at all times,” advise Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 161).

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<sup>104</sup> This also explains the positive feature of desire. While thinkers like Lacan stress the negative aspects of desire, Deleuze and Guattari reconfigure the concept of desire in terms of the social formation in which people invest. In this sense, desire is both negative as the result of lack, and positive as productive, causal, and freely chosen.

The goal of psychoanalysis, Freud believed, was to bring to awareness those unconscious impulses which threaten the ego. Strengthening the ego, he maintained, would enable it to withstand the conflicting demands of the id and the superego. But Freud also claimed that the ego comprises defence mechanisms (Freud, *S. E. III*, 2001: pp. 45-61, 162-185), whose function it is to repress unconscious motivations from acquiring consciousness. Thus, at varying times, Freud confusingly claims that the ego should be strengthened and weakened.

Both Freud and the Lacanians on the one hand, and Deleuze and the Marxists on the other, are correct, though neither’s standpoint fully includes the insights of the opposing camp. On an individual level, psychoanalysis regards psychic conflicts as a split between conscious and unconscious forces, i.e., an internal, *intrasubjective lack*. On the social level, this split is seen as the alienation of the individual from the products and processes of her labour and on the socially constructed nature of language and relationship, i.e., an external, *intersubjective fissure*. Psychoanalysis tends towards addressing the individual’s concerns in order that she and society be made whole, while Deleuze and Guattari’s approach advocates the opposite direction.

<sup>105</sup> Deleuze and Guattari address the question of desire, not, as does Kant (1998), as willed decision-making, but as a series of competing drives on an unconscious level. They take their lead from Nietzsche (1968): “. . . we forget that valuation is always from a perspective, a single individual contains within him a vast confusion of contradictory valuations and consequently of contradictory drives” (§259); “it is our needs that interpret the world; our drives and their For and Against. Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm” (§481).

<sup>106</sup> Reich (1980), claims that parenting styles in the industrialised world, characterised by authoritarianism and repression, produce subjects conflicted between a desire for autonomy and free expression of their skills and interests, and a fear of the consequences of taking responsibility for those sought-after freedoms. The impasse rests on our predilection for transcendent explanations and what appear to us as eternal truths of human destiny (see Freud, 2001, *S. E. IV*, p. 261, and following). Thus, our supposed “Oedipal desire for our mother is transposed into a structural desire for the forbidden, and our first murderous hatred toward our father [is] transposed in to a structural agency of prohibition that has been variously associated with authority figures in general” (Buchanan, 2008, pp. 32, 33). All the relationships that people might invest in, “the domain of free syntheses where everything is possible: endless connections,

Real change happens, say Deleuze and Guattari, when additions or subtractions – amendments – occur, often simply by borrowing strategies from other sources and ways of life.<sup>107</sup> The practical step of actively intervening in one’s own life in order to escape from dominating subjectivisations isn’t necessarily achieved by adopting a new model, but by opening up to the singularity of those “existential refrains” (Guattari, 1995, p. 15), already available to the subject, ‘respond[ing] to the event as the potential bearer of new constellations of Universes of reference’ (p. 18; see also Guattari’s schema). “The material [of one’s life] becomes a *condition*: in working the material, the artist is working the values of the reality isolated, and thereby overcomes the material immanently, without going beyond its bounds,” says Bakhtin (1990, p. 308, emphasis in original).<sup>108</sup> This singularity becomes key, “activating a complex refrain which will . . . open up new fields of virtuality” (Guattari, 1995, p. 18). Not having a clear plan or goal, an exploratory break along a rhizomatic line of flight must nevertheless lead away from the centre of power and advance new social relations provided the break does not revert to unreformed acquiescences and obligations, institutions and environments.

Deterritorialisation is not without its dangers, however. Complete deterritorialisation evacuates all possibilities and collapses all meaning, usefulness, and value into nothingness because it contradictorally halts any future change from occurring, positing itself, as it does, as ultimate value. No one wants to go to the absolute limit of their abilities, despite what Deleuze and Guattari say, because beyond that is only the abyss. Perhaps because of this, some women accept domestic captivity over an unknown nomadism. Perhaps it is the fear of erasure of their voice, perhaps it is the horror of undertaking an arduous and frightening plunge into the unknown. Most probably, it is that œdipalisation appropriates desiring-production’s energy so that social yearnings, dreams and aspirations are seen as beyond the reach of individual desire

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nonexclusive disjunctions, non-specific conjunctions, partial objects and flows” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 54), are thereby foreclosed under psychoanalytic repression.

<sup>107</sup> Guattari’s life changed immeasurably when he obtained his driving licence: “I became more independent, which eventually led, among other things, to a divorce” (Guattari, 2000, p. 10).

<sup>108</sup> Bakhtin (1990, p. 308), on the creative process, continues:

“The word, the utterance, ceases to expect and to want anything real beyond its own bounds—action or correspondence to reality, that is, actualisation in reality or verification and confirmation (the overcoming of subjectiveness). Through its own strength, the word transposes the consummating form into content. Thus, a request in the lyric—an aesthetically organised request—begins to be sufficient unto itself and does not need satisfaction (it is satisfied, as it were, by the very form of its expression); a prayer ceases to have need of God, who could hear it; a complaint ceases to need assistance,—repentance ceases to need forgiveness, and so on.”

because of their displacement into structural agencies of prohibition and control associated with authority figures in general and the paternal figure in particular.

But, nomadically speaking, deterritorialisation, undertaken to advance immanent relationships, provokes awareness of the performativity unconsciously undertaken in domestic subjugation. Performing within the socially available space of one's choosing, however, invokes the shaping and ordering of many of the mediating factors that had previously confined the spirit, in such manner that the rewritten script creates the writer. The social relations thereby initiated result from the relations that are developed within it: those relations limit its boundaries. If "performativity" is a term that describes gender roles as an unconscious acceptance and continuance of previous, unquestioned actions of gender practices (Butler, 2012, p. 175, and following), then Leila's acts of domestic performativity had been supplanted by positive acts of "affect", "a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xvi). Now came a change in her capacity to act, an increase in bodily limit, an affective "change in the rules" (Massumi, 1995, p. 87), provoking "not the staticness [sic] of formulated truths" but a "living process of transformation of the self" (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 100). Leila came to regard Jack as "very lazy and selfish . . . because he worked all week, he used to go out and play golf all Saturday, and I'd be home with the children. Do you know what I mean? I just thought that was my lot really; like I just looked after the children, yeah, 'cause in those days it was different really, wasn't it?"

New connections needed to be made, the number of dimensions enlarged, heterogeneous terms embraced. Leila became steadily unhappy. In her mode of existence, the issue was whether her way of life was actually life-affirming and flourishing, or whether it was undertaken to justify her position in daily drudgery. No longer bound to the discarded "horizon of meaning and ontological stability" (Viriasova, 2016, p. 225), nor committed to any clear acceptance of the true and the false, Leila was obliged to acknowledge her condition of groundlessness. Being constructed as a minoritarian place-holder in a particular context in late modern capitalism, she had arrived at the liminal point of realising a peculiar fluidity.<sup>109</sup> It was time to sound her grace notes.

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<sup>109</sup> " . . . only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming, but under such conditions that it ceases to be a definable



Still, drawing aside the net curtains on self-destructive patterns of behaviour requires not just a degree of rational awareness but also a set of immanent values. Any action that blocks ordinary flows or sunders the connections between parts of a unit, be that entity body or marriage, abruptly smashes expectations and introduces deterritorialising disorder, despite its capacity to act against life-denying forces. Leila had come to a fork in the road, one which provided an opportunity to take another path. A decisive moment opened a bifurcation where a decision, seemingly slight, instead of leading to a small change, provoked large configurations of her future life. A “sensitive dependence on initial conditions” (Devaney, 2003, p. 65), a key aspect of chaos theory (aka the butterfly effect), meant that, for her, the shock of realising her dissatisfaction over her marriage and her expectations of family life, led Leila to search for those alternatives available in her limited milieu. A throw of the dice necessarily wins “since it affirms chance sufficiently . . . instead of reducing it to probabilities” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 5). Disrupting the flows that sustain a relationship effectively blocks continued connection and destroys that relationship. She began a self-affirming project that emphasised opening to more life – and increased vulnerability. Loosely connected, lonely, inauthentic, neglected, and resentful, Leila found herself seeking another partner.

The axiomatic dominance of the power structures of “majoritarian . . . white-man, adult-male, etc.” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 291), determinations within contemporary society being the set of conditions from which emerge subjectificatory subjects of enunciation opposed to the subjects spoken about, meant that, as a woman, Leila had to pass through becoming-woman. To live more fully, outside society’s judgement, means experimenting, creating, and becoming (De Beistegui in Smith & Somers-Hall, 2012, p. 77). For Deleuze, identity is always a problem; nevertheless, the (doubly-paradoxical) sub-culture of assumed womanly subservience offered a means of becoming. The majoritarian standards prevailing through the paradigmatic enunciations and relationships surrounding marriage, motherhood, the political system, and consumerism, specify recognisable and valorised positions on the arborescent, molar structures of signification in which subjects are categorised into static and docile territorialised units where significations can be applied and where they make hegemonic sense. They are almost always reactive forces. Positive action requires moving from passive reactivity. A life can

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aggregate in relation to the majority” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 291).

be revitalised and transformed only by aligning with active forces. “Only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming”, write Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 291), and so, “. . . becoming-woman impl[ies] two simultaneous movements, one by which a term (the subject) is withdrawn from the majority, and another by which a term (the medium or agent) rises up from the majority” (p. 291). “Openness to others is an expression of the nomadic relational structure of the subject and a precondition for the creation of ethical bonds”, claims Rosi Braidotti (in Smith & Somers-Hall, 2012, p. 174), and Leila’s capacity to establish and develop empowering relationships and cultivate the sorts of social circumstances that promote the positive over the negative, including pain and hurt, prompted her to move from a reactive equilibrial self-containment to an enlargement of her ability to act. Leila got a part-time job at a bank and, realising now that she wanted no more of her husband, she fell in love with a man, Paul, who worked there. Consequently, she left Jack, who was “completely devastated”, for Paul.

Jack challenged her right to the two children as an “unfit mother” and obtained a court order to claim the boys. A few months later, the children asked her if they could leave their father and live with her, and this eventuated. Had Leila’s journey arrived at a less volatile destination by this time, she might have been content, but this wasn’t to be the case. Paul owned a house following the breakup of his second marriage, and Leila used her share of the matrimonial money to buy into this house; “um, and um, the saga of the Paul Smith,<sup>110</sup> yeah . . . began, yeah”.

Paul had had two previous marriages and it transpired that his first wife had left him because she discovered he was having an affair with a woman in another town. Immediately, Paul started treating Leila’s boys harshly; for instance, insisting they eat the broccoli he knew they hated, “when the younger one would be just about gagging. He, Paul, was emotionally cruel to my children”. By contrast, a gentler set of rules for Paul’s daughters obtained whenever they visited. “I used to say, they’re all our children, they should have the same rules . . . and if I, um, took him to task over something, he would just go into a white rage, really nasty . . . Um, he had grandiose [sic] ideas of what he was entitled to, and that, I learned after the marriage, was very much a psychopath/sociopath attitude”.

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<sup>110</sup> Throughout the interviews, Leila consistently referred to Paul Smith by both his first name and surname, a formally distancing act.

Consistent with his sense of entitlement, Paul built an attractive house in an upmarket area in Hamilton (“he has to move all the time and have a better house and a better house”), and to achieve this, he had gone to Leila’s father to borrow money to complete the project. The interest on the capital was paid in cash to Leila’s father who used to visit at regular intervals to receive the payments. When her father died, Leila’s sister and brothers claimed that Paul had not paid this interest, and there “was a huge kerfuffle for three years with lawyers and we all fell out. It was absolutely terrible, and my, Paul Smith, would not let me have anything to do with my family for ten years”.

Again, the perverse denial of desire characteristic of psychoanalytic fascism and “the pornography of patriarchal violence”<sup>111</sup> conditioned Leila to accept the repression of her own multiple and fluid selves. In a striking parallel with Marx’s famous MCM’ formula where money-capital (M) is liquidity, flexibility, freedom of choice; commodity-capital (C) is capital invested in a particular input-output combination in order to make a profit (together with a curtailment of choice); and M’ means enhanced liquidity, flexibility, and freedom of choice (Arrighi, 2010, p. 5), the couple’s relationship had moved from the original MC phase, corresponding to Deleuze and Guattari’s connective synthesis with its release of libidinal energy, to the C phase, corresponding to the synthesis of disjunction – a place of extreme volatility (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 19). Economically, here is situated the tension between capital in its fixed state and capital in its liquid state, a place of either/or assessment posing the capitalist question “Will it be profitable or not?” On a psychoanalytic level, the neurotic’s questions: Am I alive or dead? Am I a man or a woman? Am I a parent or a child? Something had to yield.

During the time before Leila’s father’s death, Paul had been conducting an affair with a young woman with whom he worked. After the funeral, Paul moved out of the house and went to live with this woman in one of the rentals Leila and he jointly owned, phoning Leila every evening to bid her goodnight. Leila lived alone in her house for the next two years and continued working, confiding in no one and being in such distress that she “could hardly sleep”. Her weight dropped from 10½ to under 9 stone.

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<sup>111</sup> bell hooks, “Understanding Patriarchy”, p. 2.

Attempting to account for psychical recording and based on Freud's notion that drives cathect images of previous objects of satisfaction and pain where these sensations/perceptions can not be directly experienced, Deleuze and Guattari developed Artaud's (1947) idea of the "body-without-organs" together with the concept of repetition to account for pleasure. Unlike Freud, however, who believed that repetition was grounded in a desire to return to an inorganic state of non-differentiated matter, coupled with his notion of a static and fixed past, Deleuze and Guattari insist that it is the repetition of difference which finds pleasure in variation and extension in a productive process. Under capitalism, and psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari's desiring-production becomes anti-production (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 335), the effect of which is to sever connections and instead, merely record networks of relations among networks, the recording surface named body-without-organs. To the fixed organ-isation of the body, Deleuze and Guattari propose a dis-organisation to be achieved through a "schizoanalysis", in order to effect the production of other forms of more fulfilling organisation.

For the individual, this is achieved by recognising and denying the reactive forces of status-maintaining homeostasis (Nietzsche's "slave morality"), in favour of a particular combination of those organs which, together, actively unite to obtain genuine flourishing. The assemblage of various organs of the body in different ways (e.g., a finger can point and it can beckon; it can signify approval and it can express the most complete denigration; it can start a machine and it can determine location; it can pick a nose and it can summon exquisite pleasure), provides the motivating energy for the most profound changes in a person's life. The construct called "I" is itself a combination of varying forces and predilections and of certain arrangements of the body's organs, embodying not only ways of perceiving events and having associated feelings about them, but also having certain beliefs that can be appropriately identified.

It is here that Deleuze and Guattari's explanans provides illumination.<sup>112</sup> Unlike Marcuse's<sup>113</sup> notion that authoritarian control and oppression begin first in the family and extend outwards

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<sup>112</sup> There is no resolution to the Œdipal drama. Either one accepts its terms and conditions and internalises it as psychic conflict and anxiety, or one identifies with Œdipus and suffers continuing crises. Either "solution" binds the individual to the family setting as the start and end of desire, blocking other more fruitful desiring-production: "[I]t is not the father who is projected onto the boss, but the boss who is applied to the father . . . [T]he social field is not reduced to the familial tie" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 104).

<sup>113</sup> Against Marcuse's account in *Eros and Civilization* (1998, pp. 59-61, and following). To be fair, Marcuse does suggest that "external restrictions" (p. 35) are introjected into the developing child's psyche, but his greater emphasis is on the movement from the family outward into society. Claims that family psychic formations are the foundation of the social constructions that bind, confine, and regulate people suggest that there is fascism in all of us; that we forge and enjoy our chains, and that we extend these formations into other social arrangements.

towards society as a whole and onto its authority figures of teacher, boss, health worker, etc., Deleuze and Guattari reverse the direction of domination and suppression, locating oppression in society as primary, reconfiguring libidinal and social investments as products of desire and surplus labour. Like all social institutions, the family relies “to some degree on force or its threat” (Goode, 1971, p. 624).

Leila’s narrative illustrates the trajectory. Finding her own voice, saying “no”<sup>114</sup> to her situation, moving away from the internalised instincts of her herd through manifesting the first action of a will to power, is another way of expressing the ceaseless, excessive enactments of life itself. This rejection of conformity and homogeneity is of interest to Deleuze and Guattari, who place considerable value on “becoming-animal” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 26-38, 232-309).<sup>115</sup> They observe that, unlike a domesticated or herd animal, a wolf has no master, nor are its relationships those of docility and servility. Wolves move in packs, resisting homogenisation, totalisation or unity, and their hunting, playing, and fighting are in relation to the velocities of the pack, improvised to the project at paw, their flexible status and function always negotiable, but never “hereditary” or of greater or lesser relevance or of greater or less equality. Similarly, the socius of humans organises itself immanently, with individual subjectivity emerging from (though not defined by), the productive functions of persons in relationships. Love too, enacts – or should enact – intersecting multiplicities:

What does it mean to love someone? It is always to seize that person in a mass, extract him or her from a group, however small in which he or she participates, whether it be through the family only or through something else; then to find that person’s own packs, the multiplicities he or she encloses within himself or herself which may be of an entirely different nature. To join them to mine, to make them penetrate mine, and for me to penetrate the other person’s. Heavenly nuptials, multiplicities of multiplicities (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 35).

Deleuze and Guattari are, of course, aware that the division into herds and packs is theoretical, and that the two constantly interact in the unconscious and in behaviour, according to their

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<sup>114</sup> Often, saying no is an act of rancour, despondency, petulance or aggression. But aggression is also *aggredi* = Latin *aggress* + *ive-*, past participle stem of *aggredi*: “to approach; to attempt”, from *ad* “to”, + *gradi* (past participle *gressus*), “to step”, from *gradus* “a step”, so, “a step toward something, an approach, to step forward decisively”.

<sup>115</sup> The concept of multiplicity is developed in the “Rhizome” plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus* (pp. 3-25). Deleuze and Guattari riff on aborescent vs rhizomatic multiplicities: a pack of wolves, vs. a unity of wolfness.

vacillating territories. Wolves (and humans) leave their pack and connect with another, roles and ranks fluctuate; even pack animals may be domesticated, individuals may “take another being into its world . . . while preserving or respecting the other’s own relationship and world” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 126).

After two years, Paul and Leila reunited, buying a section at Shelly Bay so that Paul might have a view of the ocean. They built another house there, Leila putting some of her inheritance money into it and setting up a trust. Despite her misgivings as to how long their relationship would last, Paul persuaded her to make him a beneficiary of the trust. Then, after eight years, they moved again (the salt air was rusting Paul’s vintage car), this time buying and moving to a higher position in Whangamata; a few months later, they moved again to another site in Whangamata. Paul had stopped working by this time, living on Leila’s inheritance and on the capital gains they made each time they sold a house.

That Christmas (after the third move), the pair was invited to a Boxing Day brunch. Leila hadn’t seen her family for ten years and elected to go despite her husband’s refusal to accompany her. When she returned, he threw several grapefruit at her, bruising her arms and torso. This was not the first time that Paul assaulted her. On a previous occasion, Leila had visited Paul’s office and noticed the photographs of a young (married) woman that adorned the walls. Later, at home, she asked him why, when he was working, how he had the time to take all the photos of this woman:

He got so, he went into a white rage. I had a beautiful porcelain doll . . . he picked my doll up and he threw it at me, and it hit me here [the bridge of her nose] and the blood was just squirting out of my head and he said, oh, I have to take you to A&E and they were open, about half past five . . . and I remember the guy coming up to me, the doctor saying to me, he stitched me up, my face was black, my eyes were black, and I had to hide . . .

I remember Paul Smith saying what are you going to tell them about what happened? and I said I’m going to tell them the truth. He said you can’t do that, they’ll lock me up, and I said, oh, well, ok, I fell over, so when the, and I don’t think the doctor believed me because when he came up to me and said did he just hit you, and I said no, I just fell over in the garage.

And he never showed any remorse, no remorse whatsoever.

Throughout their relationship, whenever Leila “did something wrong”, Paul would squeeze her fingers hard. On one occasion, he threw a small dresser containing her jewellery down the stairs, damaging a valuable pair of earrings. Another time, during a dinner date with a couple at a local restaurant, Paul commented on the other woman’s permed hair. Leila queried, “in a nice way”, how he knew it was permed and, as they were leaving the restaurant, Paul struck her “so hard across the back of my head, and all I could think, I felt so ashamed, I just looked around to make sure that nobody had seen him”. Again, the disempowering behaviour of the “guilty” victim within the dominating social field forestalled the unblocking of Leila’s creative “schizo” forces. A revolutionary-becoming with the “right to desire” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 147), was not (yet) available to her. Even so, Leila’s narrative indicates a state that is both beyond and inside reality, offering the opportunity of escape and an insistent interrogation that might advance a kind of becoming. Her burgeoning actions might not completely afford escape from her almost ideological oppression but nevertheless might enlarge those parts of the self which intuit the games her mind was playing and contradictorily resist and adapt circumstances to advance her desires.

Leila subsequently learned that Paul had had an affair with the permed woman, and also with another woman who used to come to their house after her husband had died. “If I’d listened to my gut feeling all these years, I would have been absolutely bang on, but he used to say I was a mental c-u-n-t.” [spelled out]. Leila’s comments from this time indicate how she thought about her problems: not in terms of control but of the rightness and wrongness of people’s behaviour and her own reactions to them. But a shift in motion, from inertia and passivity to impetus generated a change of the frame through which she perceived her previous existence. In Freudian symbolism, Leila had moved beyond the anal stage where the individual is anxious to meet the other’s demands, towards the phallic stage, where personal desire might be sought and claimed. In Lacanian terms, innumerable traumatic events had destabilised the Symbolic Order in which she had dwelled, collapsing the old master signifier of paternal rule, structuring the whole field of meaning and forcing a change in the way reality presented itself to her (or perhaps a fragmentising of reality itself). The grotesque appellation – “mental cunt” – linking the Real and the Symbolic together in a terrifyingly obscene neologism, “faced with which all words cease” (Lacan, 1991, p. 164) – acted to liberate her from the Deleuzian actual, prompting her to cut transversely across the contemporary bourgeois bo(u)nds of commodity relations and patriarchal marital “property rights” (Kollontai, 1980, p. 248), characterising her

relationship, guaranteeing her subordination, and motivating her to seek to develop “many and varied bonds of love and friendship” (p. 231). New alliances might be formed, sympathy might flourish apart from the narrow confines of marriage, and new lines of force could be pursued.

Love between a couple is never just a private matter because the couple and their family are always socially and legally regulated. And property too comes with responsibilities; one is obliged to care for that which is one’s own. Consequently, not caring for property is a violation of property rights. Fidelity seems to be the key issue for contemporary relationships, and property rights are posited as the solution. With possession, there is less danger that untrammelled desire will spin out of control and destroy privatised connection. But what might love be if property love were to be discarded? asks Michael Hardt (2017), what might a relationship be(come) were it not founded on property contract or the logic of ownership and possession? “The individualistic property morality of the present day is beginning to seem very obviously paralysing and oppressive” claims Alexandra Kollontai (1980, p. 240), and Leila’s experience provided events that compelled alternative categories for interpretation (for instance, different kinds of emotional and physical living, divorced from economic inequality), and potential lines of flight more useful to her than categories of unexamined good or bad – instead, Leila intuited that situations might be in or beyond her control. More was to follow before she followed a clear line of deterritorialisation.

Next to attract Paul’s attention was the wife of an English couple that came to live with them in Whangamata for six months while their own house was being built; after that a Danish woman, then his cousin from Dunedin: “. . . she stayed a couple of nights; when I got home [from work] we went out for dinner, and I felt like I was the intruder with these guys. You know how you get this, I’m very perceptive on feelings, and, um, when he [Paul] took her off that day that she had to go in to catch the plane or whatever, I went downstairs, she hadn’t even stripped the bed or anything and all the sheets were stained . . .”

During the time they were living in their last house, Leila and Paul belonged to a local wine club. Leila suspected that Paul was having an affair with one of the married women in the club (“I could tell, my gut told me, and, um, different things like he didn’t come home on time. Um, on a Saturday when I was working, he was off into town . . .”). A dispute arose between the woman



and Paul at one of these wine gatherings, and Leila decided she wanted to leave early and go home. Paul was annoyed over this and said that what she needed was “a fast trip into Waihi”.<sup>116</sup>

All individuals express the whole of creation,<sup>117</sup> claims Deleuze, each according to the degree and clarity of her (his, or its) unique perceptive capacities (Deleuze, 1993, p. 130). Life’s drama just is this striving to express, extend, and amplify the individual’s creative manifesting, which alone is real. But, for human individuals, because of the processes of socialisation, contingent upon the era’s mode of living (its modes of production and exchange), and their habitual experiences and adaptations to the exigencies of life (Deleuze, 2004a, p.20), *manifesting* is ignored in favour of *manifestation*, thereby mistaking the goal for the journey. “[All our false problems derive from the fact that we do not know how to go beyond experience towards the *conditions* of experience, towards the articulation of the real”, says Deleuze (1991b, p. 26, my emphasis). Despite this ignorance, humans nevertheless possess some sense of the real, and, through continuation and intensification of life experience, it is always possible to learn what isn’t known. This learning may happen positively through a Damascene intuition of the real, or more frequently, *passively*, as the result of disruption or collapse of the individual’s existing organisation. Depending on the intensity of the experience, the individual is never the same again:

[Paul] had already turned left to come into Whangamata and there is [sic] two huge, big flax bushes, I don’t think about it now, but I used to, I know exactly where they are but I don’t even think about it now and he slowed down to drive in just off the road. I was really scared because I knew he would almost kill me. I undid my seatbelt in the car and before he stopped the car, I leaped out of the car and I ran and I hid myself inside one of the flax. I ran behind one of the flax bushes and pushed myself right in under it and I was really scared. It was pitch black, it was about 11 o’clock at night.

Paul sped away but returned to the spot after a few minutes. Leila had turned off her mobile phone to prevent revealing her position through the sound of the ring tone and she stayed still and silent while he searched for her through the bush.

Shortly after that incident, Leila and Paul separated (on Leila’s birthday), Paul grabbing at her car keys in a last attempt at intimidation and immobilisation.

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<sup>116</sup> Waihi is a very winding 30-minute drive from Whangamata. Paul’s intention was to scare Leila by speeding over this section.

<sup>117</sup> “Each chooses his pitch or his tone, perhaps his lyrics, but the tune remains the same, and under all the lyrics, the same tra-la-la, in all possible tones and all pitches” (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 83-84).

It was ever Deleuze and Guattari's goal to construct a materialist theory of subjectivity by which a greater egalitarianism might be developed between classes and among sexes, but this project and its objective of deliberative political activism has been overshadowed by schizoanalysis's "positive task" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 322, and following), of identifying and liberating desire and desiring machines (p. 322). The usefulness of DeleuzoGuattarian theory for social change on this minor scale surely depends on the conceptual ideas that are selected. What might pass, *prima facie*, as genuine DeleuzoGuattarian theory may, on closer investigation, be revealed as a misappropriation of their ideas for an incompatible project. Nevertheless, Deleuze and Guattari take the view that one's relationship to the world is mediated through conceptual categorisations, no less political than personal. "Every talent must develop through a struggle," claims Nietzsche ("Homer's Contest", 1872, in Pearson & Large 2006, p. 98), and so the wisdom of the body-based emotions, "mak[ing] reference to the person's own flourishing" (Nussbaum, 2001, p. 30), in a eudaimonic sense of working with the emotions rather than against them, encouraged Leila to engage in a more active and creative role in her life. This is what she began to undertake. That which Deleuze calls "static genesis"<sup>118</sup> is the process by which an event generates significant changes on the level of thought and on the body, altering both and their content and expression.<sup>119</sup> The trauma of hiding in the flax evoked a radical reconfiguration: from that time on, Leila began to think differently and make use of concepts that she had not applied previously to her situation.

In Deleuze and Guattari's view is the idea of agency in terms of differentiation: people create themselves, not through the selection of alternatives from the multitude of concepts available, but by creating new differences from the concepts already existing. Further, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the logic of exclusionary disjunction supposed to govern concept formulation is rejected in favour of a rhizomatic form of thought, where concepts are not stable, not representative, not recognisable, but instead constantly immersed in unpredictable movements, modifying, or being modified in the flows from one area of concern to another. "[T]o bring into being that which does not yet exist. . . To think is to create – there is no other creation," says Deleuze (1994, p. 147), and "[t]rue freedom lies in a power to decide, to

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<sup>118</sup> Deleuze outlines the main features of the static genesis in the "Twenty-Seventh Series of Orality" in *The Logic of Sense* (2004b, pp. 214-25). Although an event, on Deleuze's account, is not a new occurrence or an historical rupture, but, rather, "a novel selection in ongoing and continually altering series" (Williams, 2008, p. 2, emphasis in original), its appearance in a person's life subjects that individual to a continuing flow of forces productive of new relations.

<sup>119</sup> This draws on Spinoza's notion that "the body shapes the mind's contents more so than the mind shapes the body's, although mind processes are mirrored in body processes to a considerable extent" (Damasio, 2003, p. 217).

constitute problems themselves” (Deleuze, 1991a, p. 15). “[T]he spirit of human subjectivity is the power of differentiating, of “abstracting”, of tearing apart and treating as free-standing what in reality is part of an organic unity” (Žižek, 2014, p. 46). A person with some insight into her present functioning, then, might develop a series of actions with which to respond (not react!) to events at a molecular level. She might develop an understanding of how external pressures, dominant social structures, and power systems are internalised, and how the individual interacts with them. In other words, if she wants to ski, for instance, she should know how gravity works, what forces of slope, snow configuration, wind and air conditions prevail, what her desires are (and how they are constructed), what occasions pain and pleasure, what she finds truly meaningful, and why, and how she might begin to approach a fuller meaning. On another level, she might develop ideas about her ideas, and ideas about these . . .

Reading Deleuze and Guattari’s ideas in this way prompts a questioning of existing patterns of being in authoritarian (gender, class, social, professional) sets of practices and encourages employing the revolutionary dynamic of their conceptual totality, undertaking a critical engagement with the cultures of femininity and masculinity under current patriarchy in order to loosen and perhaps free the individual from the bonds of previously unexamined domination and the fetters of compliance. In Deleuzian language, Leila engaged in an opening up to a “becoming active” (Meillassoux, 2012, p. 99). Becoming is always a molecular process for Deleuze and Guattari, where the molecular escapes the molar sedimentation of structuration and representation (though certainly the molar is (initially) indispensable to women for “winning back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity”, Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 276). According to Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-woman is the ineliminable start of all change: “. . . all becomings begin with and pass through becoming-woman. It is the key to all the other becomings” (p. 277). Here, the importance of being in the minority (in respect of its potential to diverge from the norm, rather than any numerical inferiority), provides an element capable of deterritorialising the dominant social conventions.

A breakthrough occurred when Leila chose to stand up to Paul. A real choice, says Deleuze, “is not between terms but between the modes of existence of the one who chooses” (Deleuze, 1992b, p. 114), and in choosing to choose. Once Leila had decided to make a stand, she became more serious in her efforts. Her determination not to be subjugated any further provided a

strategy for dealing with her previous lack of control: She made her home a safe place, developed rules about dealing with her estranged husband, and began experimenting with a new style of living. A “floodgate of creative forces [made] it possible [for her] to be actually fully inserted into the *hic et nunc*, defined as the present unfolding of potentials, but also the enfolding of qualitative shifts . . .” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 155). First, she obtained a protection order against Paul which obliged him to surrender his collection of firearms to the police, some of which weaponry (including a pistol) had been her father’s. This prompted an outburst at the local real estate office where Leila was working: “. . . he came in and stood at the Jim Jones office and called me, at the top of his voice in front of Jim and Jane, a mental c-u-n-t. again”. Within a week of his moving out of the house, Paul came around, letting himself in with his key and saying he wanted to move back. Leila refused and insisted on a divorce within two years. Her encounters, her new sense of control and a new-found decisiveness had facilitated an opportunity to engage in a second chance for working through unresolved personal issues, including questions about the nature of her identity, her life, what behaviours gave her pleasure and meaning, and how she might develop greater social connectiveness and perhaps even intimacy.<sup>120</sup>

Subsequently living at her son’s home, Leila needed access to the family home to retrieve her personal effects, amongst them, her documentation of how Paul had persuaded her to change the beneficiaries of her trust. (This had been removed from its hiding place between the base and the mattress of a bed in a spare room.) Her lawyer had arranged for Paul to be absent from the house that day and her friends and family had gathered with their cars to help Leila with the move. Paul appeared in the driveway of the house, eating an apple, glaring at her before driving off. When Leila returned to her son’s house in Thames, there was an apple core in the driveway.

It took ten months to obtain a satisfactory settlement due to Paul’s obstructive behaviour, but ultimately Leila’s lawyer prevailed. The lawyer “gazumped him . . . and he had to pay me another hundred grand”. For some time, then and during the contentious legal disputation, she lived

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<sup>120</sup> At one interview, I introduced Leila to the game of chess, explaining the rules and the moves. Leila spontaneously drew parallels between the pieces and people in her life, referring the former to the latter in subsequent meetings in an insightful and I believe, therapeutic prosopoeiatic manner.

with her son and commuted from Thames to Whangamata for work: “. . . I felt that the whole [of] Whangamata, probably the whole Whangamata town were yakking about us, and I didn’t even want to cross the street, it was pretty awful”. Now, Leila said, “It’s really hard to make a decision . . . I think I was so sad for so long and feigned that I wasn’t, um, um, I don’t know, I still feel very alone . . .”<sup>121</sup>

Leila is retired now and appears much more cheerful. Her story continues to the present. It is not the narrative of a failed relationship as a necessary hiatus or step on the road to a happy ending, nor does it propose a triumphant resolution that recuperates or valorises her experiences. On the contrary, the necessary Hegelian<sup>122</sup> failure implicit in every act, project, or decision is redeemed by the understanding she has gained from a revisionary shift of perspective, one that accepts that that “failure” is the necessary negative contradiction (Hegel, 1977, p. 19), implicit in every purposeful action for those who select discovery instead of recovery, producing over construction, and creativity over reproduction. For Leila, actualising a sustainable present prods virtualities into her future, stretches boundaries, invites transformations and extends connections into the generativity of affirmative becoming. In *Anti-Œdipus*, in the first and second syntheses of connection and disjunction, the two-stage movement of registration–representation records on the BwO, and unconsciously represses or privileges particular images and sensations of objects and events as tokens of future satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Social proscriptions and valorisations are also represented here. In some subjects, the forces of anti-production prevail, such that desiring-production is denied appropriate conjunctive outlet in the third synthesis (of conjunction), deforming action in the present and bending desire to social mores. Leila awaits her Prince Charming.

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<sup>121</sup> In “J comme joie” (“J for Joy”) in *L’Abécédaire*, Deleuze defines “sadness” as “. . . when I am separated from a capacity of which I believed myself, rightly or wrongly, capable: Ah, I could have done that, but circumstances prevented it, or it was forbidden, etc. That’s sadness, one should say: all sadness is the effect of a power over me”. Deleuze goes on to define the bad: “the lowest degree of capacity is power. I mean, what is evil? It’s preventing someone from doing what they can. Evil is preventing someone from acting, from enacting their capacity.”

<sup>122</sup> Hegel is perhaps the first to realise the (unconscious) investment people have in failure as a necessary component of desire and hence subjectivity. It is the contradiction of the impossibility of successful attainment inherent in all goals, (upsetting the Aristotelian principle of non-contradiction) that is expressed as the non-attainment of the goal, that sustains desire, that constructs the individual as a desiring subject.

[T]he being most proper to humankind is being one's own possibility or potentiality.  
(Giorgio Agamben, 2007, p. 43).

**Marie** was the oldest of seven children. Born in Frankton, she moved to Kawhia with her family where her father obtained work as a mechanic. Early memories include carrying chicks in her "pinny" and setting fire to the grass at the back of the section, her mother becoming pregnant to the boarder, and her morphine-addicted aunty chasing Marie and her brother with an axe. Mother treated all the children poorly: "She'd do things like throw you down the steps, aeroplane you down the steps and bash you with a broom. She threw a knife at my brother twice; once she got him in the head with a bread knife, the other time she slit his leg open and wouldn't take him to the doctor".

On the verge of turning fifteen, Marie left school because she was directed to help support the large family. Lacking a high school uniform, "I got hassled by teachers, and you stand out . . . so I bunked," and started work in a grocery shop. Shortly after, her mother left to stay in the-then Oakley asylum in Avondale, eventually marrying the father of Marie's half-brother. Mother took the youngest two children and then a third, while father kept the other four. When Marie married her first husband, Robbie, her sister Nina came to live with them.

Doing things "sensibly, Robbie had bought a section before we got married, he'd paid it off and we had our first home by the time we were married. Very, very conservative . . . he was a kind man, but not terribly interesting or stimulating; he never wanted to do anything, and he wasn't much fun really, and I hadn't had much fun as a child, so I was kind of missing having a bit of fun in my life. I started to find myself and so I'd got a circle of friends, really the first time in my life I'd learned how to make friends and how to be sociable and that sort of thing".

According to Spinoza, joy and sorrow are changes in our bodies, the former being realised when we live at the fullest extent of our powers. Deleuze, in *L'Abécédaire*, affirms this where he describes joy as "everything that consists in satisfying a capacity". But Robbie denied Marie the opportunity to develop, and inevitably, things began to unravel. Marie became depressed, developing anxiety and believing that the relationship was struggling. She felt that if the marriage failed, it would be her fault, and she didn't want that for their two children; "[I]t just suddenly all went to pieces really. I remember looking in the mirror and thinking, I'm

somebody's wife and somebody's mother but I don't know who I am. This is the first time I felt like crying for years".

Freedom consists in the power to decide and to develop problems oneself, through invention rather than discovery, says Deleuze in *Bergsonism* (Deleuze, 1991b, pp. 14-16). This involves giving existence to what had not previously existed, going beyond what people think they are or what they think they are capable of. There is something that humans are required to be, writes Giorgio Agamben, which is neither following a particular destiny nor denying that destiny. It is, he says, acknowledging "*the simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality*" (Agamben, 2007, p. 43, emphasis in original). Failure to do so is the "original sin," he goes on to say, because we are "always already in debt. . . [H]umans are guilty for what they lack, for an act they have not committed" (p. 44). Related to this, Silvan Tomkins speaks of how in self-confronting shame, ". . . the head may . . . be hung in shame symbolically, lest one part of the self be seen by another part and become alienated from it" (Tomkins, 2008, p. 352). Marie saw no recognisable face in the glass – yet, vaguely aware, acquiescent or resistant, she showed some degree of complicity<sup>123</sup> in the hegemonic identity she decried in the most intimate parts of her unconsciousness. Notwithstanding, the positivity of the difference announced through experiencing the "luxury of guilt" (Braidotti, 2011a, p. 104), a time of chaos and despair can show a way towards clarity, and a nascent reconsideration can construct forces of resistance, resolution and repair, offering revelation and new registers and practices.

Of the women in this study, Marie was the one who peered most deeply into that dark mirror in an effort to truly discover herself. *Conatus*, the striving to persevere, common to every thing, is consonant with Spinoza's "sovereign natural right" (Spinoza, 2018b, p. 193), and though judgements of self-preservation are likely to be based more on "the laws of desire" (p. 198), than on rational evaluation, the individual is no more obliged to follow the rule to "honour thy superiors" (Kafka, 1952, p. 156), "than a cat is bound to live by the laws of nature of a lion" (Spinoza, 2018b, p. 193). Given that the compact of connection is "only made valid by its utility,

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<sup>123</sup> It's notable, as Jacqueline Rose (*The Guardian*, 28/7/18), observed, that women are always coming forward to clean up the mess the boys have created and declined to take responsibility for. In the current Covid-19 crisis, our own **Jacinda Adern** has been lauded in the world's press for "going early and going hard"; she is polling 89% approval for the measures she is taking; **Angela Merkel** acted swiftly by closing Germany's borders and banning large gatherings; Taiwan's **Tai Ing-wen** initiated comprehensive measures to identify and contain the disease and efficiently allocate resources; Iceland's **Katrin Jakobsdottir** has banned gatherings of over 10 people and over 10% of its population have been tested; Norway's **Erna Solberg** is currently relaxing the stringent rules that have effectively contained the disease in her country; and Finland's **Sanna Marin** has an 84% approval rating for the way she is handling the pandemic.

without which it becomes null and void” (Spinoza, 2018b, p. 197), since she was now aware of “the possibilities for being otherwise, the unactualized latencies in any situation which could, may have been, instrumental in the generation of the new or the unforeseen” (Grosz, 2005, pp. 75-76), and because “this is why the only ethical experience . . . is the experience of being (one’s own) potentiality” (Agamben, 2007, p. 51), then it behoved Marie to seek different connections,<sup>124</sup> and open herself to the unfolding virtualities of differentiating forces and alternative ways of life.

In Guattari’s logic (1995), between expression and unactualised possibility lies the processual unfolding of the incorporeal complexities of a universe of virtuality brought together in the content-possible. In the bridging, a subjectivity emerges that carries a capacity to envisage new vistas while respecting continuing flows and assemblages. The “abstract machines”<sup>125</sup> (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 72), to which Deleuze and Guattari refer open up social fields that encourage particular connections between lines of flight over others: “Collective assemblages of enunciation and machinic assemblages stabilize certain rules in the working machines of social meaning comprising them, the rules of an abstract machine are optional and each move changes the rules” (Lorraine, 2011, p. 15). From a DeleuzoGuattarian perspective, Marie’s way of life, her history and her relationships provoked creative new intensities, previously unimagineable, that might be realised. A Nietzschean affirmation of the stronger, positive and active forces of life, beyond any notion of dominance or negation of others’ will, opens up a

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<sup>124</sup> On Deleuze’s view, time is explicable not just in terms of static states from which predictions can be made about the future through specialisation, “where [time’s] character is ontologically de-activated” (Borradori, 2001, p. 5), and isolated from becoming, but also in terms of the implicit or latent *tendencies* (following Bergson), in items in time. To describe a body as something that possesses certain properties and capacities, identifies that body as a static, self-contained presence that seemingly endures over time and in space (p.5). But that presence is also a particular set of tendencies which differ, one from another. Deleuze regards bodies as expressions of tendencies before they are considered as causes or effects (p. 7). And according to Bergson, Deleuze states that “it is not to the presence of character that we must pay attention, but to their tendency to develop themselves” (Deleuze, “Bergson’s Conception of Difference”, cited in Mullarkey, 1999, p. 45).

<sup>125</sup> “A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks” (Deleuze & Guattari 1983, p. 36, emphasis in original). Conventionally viewed, subjects interact with objects, e.g., by perceiving them. But for Deleuze and Guattari, relationships and their “flows” are primary. Almost anything can be said to flow, but Deleuze and Guattari focus on everyday flows: money, shit, milk. Their machines are composed of smaller machines which interrupt the flows; examples are the anus and the mouth. A human body is a DeleuzoGuattarian machine comprising other smaller machines. Machines integrate flows but there is never a start or end point for a flow: the process is merely transformed through the interruption. There is no “final cause” and any attempt to limit the flow, for attempting to describe desire as originating with a subject and ending with an object is a linguistic operation obscuring the actual unlimited flow. “Machines” provides an illusion of production, consumption, etc., but things and people are never ‘molecular’ or ‘nomadic’; they are always only “becoming-molecular”.

Deleuze and Guattari’s work is a viable alternative to the power/knowledge view espoused by Foucault where subjects are created and delimited by power. Describing subjects as systems of machines that operate as interruptions opens a way beyond this illusory subjectivity to the fluidity of flows. Power, for Deleuze and Guattari, is an ability to multiply and intensify connections. Furthermore, “[c]onflicting real-life experiences are characterized by their difference; philosophical thinking, then, is conceptualized as the quasi-empirical, practical, mapping of such a difference” (Semetsky, 2017, p. 426).



multiplicity of virtualities for actualisation in continuous becoming. A specialised notion of time anticipates everything staying the same until there is a compelling reason to change and so, for Marie, desire as a flow of matter and energy “coursing through [her body] in networks of production in all registers” (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 76), spoke to what she could become.

Marie had changed. At the moment of her crisis, she saw the past as something that was ceasing to define her future completely and she glimpsed what she was in the process of becoming. Laughing at the bad choices she had made, dealing with the past as the pivotal point of what she was capable of moving towards: a confusingly multi-layered and paradoxically multi-directional evolving, bruised, yet imbrued with a *joie de vivre*, she was able to gather the actual reality of the past and the virtual possibilities of the future into a synthesis of both: a virtual past and an actual future, a projection of what she (always) will have been becoming through an affective-cognitive mapping of the positive forces within the negative that better determine the generative forces of affirmation. Accounting for what had happened to her was an active cartographic exercise of mapping power relationships, as Braidotti describes it (2019, p. 466), empowering her to understand her position as “embodied, embedded, relational and affective” (p. 466).

In a materialist sense, moving among the flows and directions of de- and re-territorialisation is a way of operationalising an awareness of what Marie was ceasing to be and what she was striving to become. In DeleuzoGuattarian language, a “line of flight” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), demanding new thinking and actions, had opened. “[T]hinking only really begins when its faculty is confronted by a “sign” that throws it into “discord” (Brown, 2010, p. 106), or when “a violence which brings it face to face with its own element” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 141), occurs, forcing thought to emerge “as para-cognitive perception of a “problem” . . . [Problems] are continuously created and recreated by an exercise of thought that overturns common sense” (Brown, 2010, p. 106). It is striking that so many of the women, besieged by numerous intolerable conflicts, opened to the chaos underpinning reality. Believing in an inviolate ego as the source of all becoming imposes the regularity and consistency that day-to-day practice demands; “the multiplicity of change” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 270) requires it. But “[t]here is no such thing as will” Nietzsche says, (ibid), and it may be that, in crisis, identity dissolves: “If we let our tongues lose self possession/Throwing off language and its watery clasp” (Graves, “The

Cool Web”, 1927), people gain the insight and strength necessary for effecting radical change. On Deleuze’s reading, Proust does just that, subtracting the self from experience, “treating the subject as a by-product or residue of experience itself” (Holland, in Ardoin, Gontarski & Mattison, p. 271). Only then, may those virtual potentialities produce new futures, new possibilities, and new practices.

“We will never find the sense of something (of a human, a biological or even a physical phenomenon) if we do not know the force which appropriates the thing, which exploits it, which takes possession of it or is expressed in it”, says Deleuze (2006, p. 3). And signs are those qualities, more than just the sensual perceptions of a perceiver, that involve the myriad potentials of submission to, the capacity to be affected by, a force or forces, as well as the power to affect or release a force. Deleuze and Guattari’s example (1987, p. 409), is a piece of wood an artisan chooses to plane. She must first “find the wood where it lies”, it must have the “right kind of fibers”, the artisan must impose her design and shaping and at the same time submit to “follow[ing] the wood”, its grain and pliability, to a level where the wood’s functional and aesthetic qualities are realised. The force that presented strongly throughout Marie’s narrative was the confrontation and overcoming of fear, from surviving her aunty’s frightening violence to the calculated bullying of her second husband. The challenge of triumphing against intolerable hardships forms the coin of her life.

Tellingly, Marie claimed she “outgrew herself”, where power,<sup>126</sup> connecting with desire – as opposed to subjugation by external forces – prompted her developing into a different person, while Robbie, she believes, didn’t change at all. In Deleuze’s notion of thought, a being’s sense of existence is characterised in terms of contraction and the unconscious: “Time is constituted only in the originary synthesis which . . . contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living, present” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 70). As Deleuze describes it, organisms are “made of elements and cases of repetition” (p. 75). One of the advantages of a “schizo” break then, is its offering of limitless exploration with no conclusive end in view, pursuing alteration and investigating counter appeals in timeframes of differing

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<sup>126</sup> Unlike Hegel, for whom power is most clearly realised when life is alienated, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that life’s power – puissance – is most fully expressed in its excessive response, impropriety and deviance, “a form of Hegelianism without sublation” (Colebrook, 2010, p. 13).

duration and different stresses. While there cannot be any movement from the present to the past, 'from perception to recollection' (Deleuze, 1991b, p. 63), nevertheless an organisation of the actual would be a movement from perception to recollection that might be called a future memory, a "future perfect", where the future indeed impacts the present. In the gap between instinct and intelligence, there exists a spark of creative emotional potential (Deleuze, 1991b, p. 110), that allows woman to go "beyond [her] own plane as [her] own condition, in order finally to express naturing Nature" (p. 107). Like ice flows creaking and cracking, deterritorialisation shears. Structuring collapses. Shifts happen.

Extending Bergson's insights,<sup>127</sup> in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze posits a set of passive syntheses operating at an elementary level which are constitutive but not active. This is in radical contrast to both Kant and Hegel as the idea proposes no concept of anything like a prior mind that comprehends and evaluates aims, ends, or even actions. The passive syntheses simply receive internal and external stimulation and operate in habitual patterns without awareness, in autopoeitic life, driven by expectation and need. "There is no continuity apart from that of habit" says Deleuze (1994, p. 75), and "[W]e must regard habit as the foundation from which all other psychic phenomena derive" (p. 78), this including the habit<sup>128</sup> of living. In so doing, habits, linked to the constitution of the organism, constitute the form of the sensate living being itself. Add to this the ceaseless pulsation of the fluctuating demands of the "little selves" (p. 75) that make up the organism and the materialist exposition of desiring-production describe the physical, and thus, the thoroughly economic, social, and political conditions at

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<sup>127</sup> All bodies exist within two structuring cartographies, says Bergson (1944), the first subsumed within individual variation and the second according to the organising principles of natural selection. Both regulate the positive forces of creative evolution, modifying connections with other bodies of their type as well as with others of different types or species and with their changing spatio-temporal environment. As well as the body's internal demands, external forces provoke human bodies and their internal composition, colonising and becoming intimately connected to, indeed, part of, their internal milieus. Bergson affirms the prosthetic nature of human intelligence in its close bond with material existants and evolving circumstances, transforming and accelerating intelligence and capabilities more swiftly than natural selection can provide by creating deterritorialisations that result from differentiations encountering one another (and re-territorialisations folding back on to the body). Beyond the body, the "material" includes acquisitions and cultural inheritances and developments of the organism in original ways. Together with instinct (the tendency to use the body in specific routines), these external enhancements and augmentations initiate new actions, and develop properties and abilities that may have not been possible hitherto, enlarging pre-given performance capacity and moving beyond closely pragmatic requirements. Taking up elements of the material world and using them intelligently, "... reacts on the nature of the being that constructs it; for in calling on him [sic] to exercise a new function, it ... confers on him, so to speak, a richer organization, being an artificial organ by which the natural organism is extended' (Bergson, 1944, p. 156). And '[f]or every need that it satisfies, it creates a new need; and so ... it lays open to activity an unlimited field into which it is driven further and further, and made more and more free" (ibid, p. 156).

Bergson believes the mind to be more than a simple recording device. Used plastically, mind could "become an intuitive power capable of discerning subtleties and differences regardless of their value in an already given economy of life-management" (Colebrook, 2010, p. 11).

<sup>128</sup> Bergson's "specific routines" (see N. 123).

stake in the interplay of intention and desire. Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis reveals the material circumstances that are too often conducted into problematic familial relations.

Marie had changed. She spent a voluntary five months undergoing therapy in the Neurosis Unit at Kingseat Hospital in Auckland, coming to terms with issues surrounding her mother and recognising the triggers for her depression and anxiety.<sup>129</sup> The depression with which she was labelled, is, on Deleuze and Guattari's view, not a pathological state, but in her case, a denied positive and expansive effort to address and engage with the world in terms she could understand. The story they tell about schizoanalysis explores the place of subjugation under capitalism in that it is more a psychological narrative than a sociological one.<sup>130 131</sup> Through its capacity to liberate sexual desire and productive capacity, capitalism does indeed possess the potential to expand beyond illusory limits. However, its tendency to contain and direct this energy into the confinement of the privatisations of property and family means the possibility of liberatory desiring and social connection is largely foreclosed. The positive, therapeutic side of schizoanalysis, by contrast, corresponds to decoding and recoding stratified containments into the revolutionary investments of "desiring-production" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 28, 29, and following), thereby "releas[ing] molecular desire from the constraints of molar representation" (Holland, 1999, p. 99).

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<sup>129</sup> "[T]he third thesis of schizoanalysis posits the primacy of the libidinal investments of the social field over the familial investment . . . The relation to the nonfamilial is always primary . . . [Families] *play at Oedipus*, a sublime alibi. But beyond all this, there is an economic situation: the mother reduced to housework, or to a difficult and uninteresting job on the outside; children whose future remains uncertain; the father who has had it with feeding all those mouths – in short, a fundamental relation to the outside of which the psychoanalyst washes his hands, too attentive to seeing that his clients play nice games" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 356, emphasis in original).

<sup>130</sup> "Things are very different in capitalism. Precisely because the flows of capital are decoded and deterritorialized flows; precisely because the subjective essence of production is revealed in capitalism; precisely because the limit becomes internal to capitalism, which continually reproduces it, and also continually occupies it as an internalized and displaced limit; precisely for these reasons, the identity in nature must appear for itself between social production and desiring-production. But in its turn, this identity in nature, far from favoring an affinity in regime between the two modes of production, increases the difference in regime in a catastrophic fashion, and assembles an apparatus of repression the mere idea of which neither savagery nor barbarism could provide us. This is because, on the basis of a general collapse of the large objectivities, the decoded and deterritorialized flows of capitalism are not recaptured or co-opted, but directly apprehended in a codeless axiomatic that consigns them to the universe of subjective representation. Now this universe has as its function the splitting of the subjective essence (the identity in nature) into two functions, that of abstract labor alienated in private property that reproduces the ever wider interior limits, and that of abstract desire alienated in the privatized family that displaces the ever narrower internalized limits. The double alienation – labor-desire – is constantly increasing and deepening the difference in regime at the heart of the identity in nature. At the same time that death is decoded, it loses its relationship with a model and an experience, and becomes an instinct; that is, it effuses in the immanent system where each act of production is inextricably linked to the process of antiproduction as capital" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 337).

<sup>131</sup> Schizoanalysis acknowledges psychoanalysis for its insights into the unconscious and desire, but challenges psychoanalysis's insistence on the family as origin of these. Instead, Deleuze (1984, p. 238) indexes social, historical, and political motivations for mental disparities. "The task of schizoanalysis is that of learning what a subject's desiring-machines are, how they work, with what syntheses, what bursts of energy in the machine, what constituent misfires, with what flows, what chains, and what becomings in each case" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 338).

Assuming the psychic guilt of her failing relationship, Marie spotted a newspaper advertisement offering positions at the local high school for adult learners, and hoping to move to office work, she enrolled and successfully completed a fifth form (School Certificate), and a sixth form year (University Entrance accreditation), before undertaking a compressed teacher training course in Auckland, at the same time working evenings at the local Cosmopolitan Club.

Her husband was unhappy with her endeavours: “I remember him saying to me, when you’ve had these three years off, I’m going to take three years off too. I thought: three years off? I’m a wife and mother, I work at night. Where’s the three years off?” Hugely influenced by *Educating Rita*, a popular movie of the time, (I loved that movie and I’ve seen it so many times!) So, I went to [Teachers’] Training College and I thought, Wow! There is a life out there that I didn’t know existed. It was amazing! I had the most wonderful time. It was hard work. I mean, I studied like mad, compulsive A-getter, met some fabulous people, in fact, people I’m still friendly with now”.<sup>132</sup>

Marie’s marriage collapsed in her first year of teaching. Different subjectivities arise from different social formations, and Marie’s evolving forms of self were directly affected by her creative experiments in divergence. In Deleuzo-Guattarian terms, the myriad contending subagents clamouring for cognitive dominance retreated when a breakdown of the normal course of events in her life occurred. A new world had emerged, her mindset had changed, and her emotional tonality had shifted: “the moment *during a breakdown* [had] actualize[d] the birth of the concrete” (Varela, 1992, p. 329, emphasis in original). Her sense of entrapment, the cumulative effects of which were in opposition to her developing self-image through her time at college, had provoked a separation, although “since all stimulations which the organism receives have in turn been possible only by its preceding movements which have culminated in exposing the receptor organ to external influences, one could say too that *behavior is the first cause of all the stimulations*” (Merleau-Ponty, 1963, p. 13, emphasis in original).<sup>133</sup> Thus the

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<sup>132</sup> The virtual possibilities of actualised reality differ from themselves as they are being realised, altering other virtualities not (yet) activated, strengthening certain tendencies or intensities in some, weakening or blocking others, transforming and extending all. Thus, one cannot step into the same river twice (Heraclitus); one cannot step into it even *once* (Cratylus). The challenge of *A Thousand Plateaus* then, is to think the world and its inhabitants in terms not of stable, unchanging entities, but as continuous flows of interconnected and proliferating processes that are then categorised as familiar and unvarying. What is “real” are the movements, speeds and self-differentiations that unfold through “a virtual and actual process of creative evolution” (Ansell-Pearson, 1999, p. 33).

<sup>133</sup> Merleau-Ponty goes on to say: “Thus the form of the excitant is created by the organism itself, by the proper manner of offering itself to actions from the outside” (1963, p. 13).

organism, be it human or non-human, both initiates and is formed by the environment, bound by reciprocal selection and structuration. The divorce was a civilised arrangement, both realising that their relationship hadn't been working for some time. One of their teenage boys stayed with Marie, the younger opting to live with their father. She claims that decision broke her heart, but she was adamant that the children should be allowed to choose where they wanted to be.

Two years later, she met Pat, her second husband, "and that's when I learned a few life lessons". Marie had her own place at that stage, a small unit, and Pat moved in. Part of his attraction for her, she believes, was that he was studying at university, completing a PhD in computer science, and that seemed glamorous and interesting.

I hadn't been to university, and I was easily impressed, and I am a bit naïve in my approach to people. I didn't realise what I was getting into with him, really, how manipulative he was, and because I was used to my mother, I suppose. Always dramas, you know. She used to . . . if you didn't do what you were told or something, she would have fake heart attacks, so she would lie on the floor and writhe, and oh, all sorts of things. I was kind of used to that over the top [behaviour] so when he behaved like that it didn't really strike me as totally weird . . . I kept trying to figure out [Pat's and my] relationship, so I did a course on co-dependency. I did another course on loving relationships, thinking maybe I'd learn something from that. I did a lot of reading trying to work it all out and then I thought, he's like my mother; now this is a pattern, this is not a healthy situation'.

Nevertheless, moving into Pat's house at his insistence, Marie perforce endured his increasingly bizarre behaviour. He, and his daughter from a previous marriage who had come to live in the newly-weds' house, mounted emotional and verbal attacks on her. An agreement that Marie would cook the dinner and the others stack the dishes in the dishwasher was never realised because Pat and his daughter didn't fulfil their part of the task. (One time, she left the dishes until maggots appeared, but father and daughter didn't change their behaviour.) Marie ended up loading the dishwasher despite her annoyance, asking Pat, why, considering he had a PhD, he couldn't work the washing machine?

Marie suffered continual perlocutionary badgering, culminating in an horrific physical assault where Pat held a knife to her throat, threatening that if he couldn't have her, he would make sure no one else would want to. Then he ejaculated. Later, he denied this sexual response, but by now, Marie had come to understand the major features of control and its component parts,

which for her involved Pat's attempted isolation of her family (her sons disliked him and would have nothing to do with him), his alienation of her friends, the restricted movement, coercive demands and denial of basic rights such as privacy, autonomy and dignity, and her own bank account (she wouldn't accede to his demand for a joint account). Not doing what she was told – IPV is always a gendered behaviour; women most often the victims and men usually the perpetrators – provoked Pat's resistance. New Zealand's culture with its dominant mythical emphasis on rugged hypermasculinity and its associated enactments, demands as its excluded opposite – femininity – that it be passive, submissive, and almost inevitably, lacking in power and control. The hegemonic ideology binds both men and women to patterns of destructive domination and inferiority, compliant to unquestioned displays of power and control, subordination and inequality.

Of equal concern over direct violence was Pat's aberrant behaviour with its implied aggression. When Marie attended a meeting despite his disapproval, he displaced his anger by smashing up bedroom items: "I thought, shit, the next thing he smashes might be me . . . I was naked and I just put my dressing gown on; it was winter time and I didn't have anything on my feet. I just ran down to the local ambulance station, ran in there, and they said, look you need to call the police, and I said, no, he'll be alright once he settles down". On another occasion, Pat pushed her repeatedly along the road as they were walking. People in a car stopped and asked if she wanted a lift. Marie accepted but returned home, again telling herself, "he just needs to calm down". On a holiday in China with Pat, Marie, who has a first-aid certificate, wanted to stop to assist a pedestrian who had been struck by a truck. Neither the taxi driver nor Pat would permit it, Pat declaring that he hoped that the incident "wouldn't ruin [their] holiday".

In such ways does the dominant ideology persuade women to continue serving oppressive relationships, despite understanding that a set of actions is wrong or harmful. "[A]lthough we need norms in order to live, and to live well, and to know in what direction to transform our social world, we are also constrained by norms in ways that sometimes do violence to us and which, for reasons of social justice, we must oppose", writes Judith Butler (2004, p. 206). The unwritten norms of the Lacanian Big Other do not necessarily persuade people from not undertaking those behaviours that are against their interests. "I know very well that [my subordination is cruel and disgusting], but still . . ." as Žižek (1989, pp. 12, 28) might say.

Enacting the chores and duties of a toxic patriarchy, abetted by her Catholic childhood, locked into a bi-polar role of exclusive disjunction, the norms Marie enacted were not the expression of an inner essence or a fixed identity but the effect of the imposition of repeated behaviours.

But that which is constituted by repetition is also available to variation.<sup>134</sup> The repeating of subservient acts may produce, as Deleuze points out, not just repetition of the usual, but also difference, divergence and perhaps a subversion of existing patterns. Alternative ways of living as outlined in the “zone of indiscernibility” (Deleuze, 1987, pp. 247, 301), become apparent, in which the terms of distinct separation overlap, allowing possible relational structures where “all inclusions are simultaneously modes of exclusion and all exclusions are simultaneously modes of inclusion” (Gilson, 2007, p. 98). Such zones are the very milieu of becoming and change, in which “something passes from one to the other, something that is undecidable between [the conceptual components]” (Deleuze, 1991b, pp. 20-21). These passages are transformational and always minoritarian, potentially acting as ways of escape from oppressive majoritarian modes of behaving, such that a human being is displaced from her usual habitual modes of comportment and enabled to do things differently, often with newly-discovered or enhanced capabilities – a kind of pure potential, “the experience of being (one’s own) potentiality” (Agamben, 2007, p. 44). Desubjectification occurs through the dismantling of the master signifiers of the dominant party in the relationship: resistance is enacted, Bartleby-like<sup>135</sup>, by not doing, not complying, by invoking a womanly flexibility.

Marie fell sick with what she initially thought was flu. Prescribed panadol by the doctor, but deteriorating throughout the day, she rang Pat at his work to ask him to take her to her own doctor. Pat pleaded work obligations prevented him from helping, sending in his place a woman colleague (who Marie believed was sleeping with Pat), to assist her. This doctor x-rayed Marie and diagnosed her with atypical pneumonia, requiring immediate hospitalisation. At hospital,

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<sup>134</sup> “Indeed, when the subject is said to be constituted, that means simply that the subject is a consequence of certain rule-governed discourses that govern the intelligible invocation of identity. The subject is not *determined* by the rules through which it is generated because signification is *not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; “agency,” then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition. If the rules governing signification not only restrict, but enable the assertion of alternative domains of cultural intelligibility, i.e., new possibilities for gender that contest the rigid codes of hierarchical binarisms, then it is only within the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible” (Butler, 2010, p. 235, emphasis in original).

<sup>135</sup> *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* (1853), is a short story by Herman Melville. Bartleby’s eccentric nature is characterised by his passive resistance to work and his insistence that “I would prefer not to”.



to the question of her next of kin, Marie responded: her son. During her stay, Pat did not visit her; instead, going away on business. After ten days, when she was well enough to leave, he did not bring her clothes, claiming he didn't know what she wanted to wear. "So I had to go home in my dressing gown, and I remember one of the doctors sneering about it, um, and I just thought, this is . . . and then we went home". Pat refused to get her medicines from the pharmacy, again claiming the pressures of work, but obtained them, however, after his work had finished, flinging them at her from the doorway. That was the incident that forced her to face up to the unacceptable nature of her relationship, and she stated, "No, I'm not doing this. I had a lot of wine stored at his place, and I said to him, "I think it's about time I took my wine", so I piled it into the car and I said, "Well, this is it, Pat, this is goodbye, you're never ever going to hurt me or make me cry ever again, it's all over" ". As a consequence of considering the possibilities of how life might be different, wondering how becoming might be otherwise, how the norm that seemed to guarantee survival at the same time threatened to engulf her (Butler, 2004, p. 217), new modes of becoming were compelling. "Life cannot be reduced to the systems or structures that are known and actualised, for there are potentialities or living tendencies that exist, insist and inflect that [sic] orders of discourse and action we negotiate", writes Claire Colebrook (2008, p. 6), and so, two days later, unwell and unloved, overwhelmed and undermined, Marie moved into a friend's place.

Despite believing that the money from the sale of her unit was secure with a "pre-nup", she discovered that it had been assimilated into the joint matrimonial property, "and he spent it all". Marie was left with some \$3000 after the separation ("we'd never divorced . . . 'cause that would have involved money"), and resigned from her job in order to travel to England, at one time joining a youthful backpacking tour to Ireland, complete with suitcase, coat and handbag. In England, she received an invitation to work in Hong Kong, and lived there for 8 years, helping to set up a primary school. She travelled widely in this period (including Russia which she loved), paying for her grandchildren to visit her on holiday. As well, her friends got together to pay for her sons to fly over to help celebrate her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday. With much good humour she recounted how she became separated from her tour party in Moscow, managing to find her way back to the hotel using the metro maps as guides. She also went on a couple of holidays with Pat ("I hadn't let him go"). Staying with him in New Zealand on one of those occasions, she overheard his speaking on the phone to a woman, saying he was alone in the house. A small victory was

seized: Given to her by a friend and taken by Pat and locked in his filing cabinet was a piece of the Berlin wall. One time when the cabinet was unlocked, Marie stole the stone, substituting a piece of old concrete in its place.

Recently, Marie returned home from Hong Kong to bury her father, say prayers, light a candle in church and plant a tree in his memory. She also wanted to see more of her grandchildren and be a “Narnie”. She bought a small place in Auckland and recommenced teaching, supporting her stepgranddaughter and her daughter (her great-grandchild), for a few months after that marriage had broken up. One day, sitting around home, “having a bit of a blue day about something”, she decided to phone a friend. “I said I need cheering up, Diane, how about we go over and serve the divorce papers on Pat?”.

The pair served the papers and, despite Pat’s wishes to stay in touch, Marie resisted his attempts. Currently, Marie plans to move to Katikati, undertake voluntary work at the local school, get to know people in the village, make friends, enjoy her retirement, and continue travelling. She had planned to work through the alphabet visiting a country (or major city: some countries were inaccessible due to war), and, at the time of writing had four to go. As for Pat, she believes that what he wanted most of all was “money. Money and power <sup>136</sup>. . . I think it [my life] will be wonderful because I want to take control of my own destiny. I don’t want anyone ever again having or feeling that they have to make decisions for me. I want to make my own”.

In Spinozan terms, power is the basis of all being (*Ethics*, IP, 34), and in Deleuze’s brilliant analogy of the respective powers of the lamb and the bird of prey (Deleuze, 2006a, pp. 122-4), the metaphor might be adapted to show Pat attempting to position Marie in the place of the “bleating lamb” (p. 122) through “*the fiction of force separated from what it can do*” (p. 123, emphasis in original). The sophistry maintains the victim in a fictitious causal relationship that constructs the predator as having greater power to desist in its action and equal “deserving” (p. 124) for the prey should it not exercise what it does not, in fact, possess. Yet on this portrayal, lambs lack the power to act but may only react. Marie chose not to play this role, opting instead to reject the lack of loss, the bitterness of resentment, and the moral directive

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<sup>136</sup> “The confusion between powers and capacities is ruinous, because power always separates the people who are subjected to it from what they are capable of” (Deleuze, *L’Abécédaire*).

of dwelling in irresolvable regret. “Thus through each fragile combination [of chance] a power of life is affirmed with a strength, an obstinacy, an unequalled persistence in the being” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 5).

A compelling image in “The Smooth and the Striated” section of *A Thousand Plateaus* describes the constitution of patchwork quilting. Unlike knitting, embroidery, or crochet work, patchwork has no centre, and no predetermined pattern, extending in all directions, its “basic motif . . . composed of a single element . . . fits together pieces of varying size, shape, and colour, and plays on the *texture* of the fabrics” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 476, emphasis in original). Unlike patchwork, however, rhizomes are heterogeneous and can assume “very diverse forms . . . and diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.), that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status” (ibid, p. 7). Marie has crafted her life as a beautiful crazy quilt. Like Josephine, Marie won’t be subdued.

“A life. You know what that is? It’s the shit that happens while you wait for moments that never come.” (“Slapstick”, *The Wire*, S03E09, 2004).

**Della** has only “blurry” early memories of her parents: “Mum was, had issues, and sort of disappeared for a period of time. I’m not sure how it happened or how it came about, and my dad was somewhere in the picture but not all the time so I’m not sure how it happened”. Della lived with her grandparents, mostly on a farm in Geraldine, and went to a small school on a “biscuit-tin bus”. Then she and her brother, Jason (from different fathers), moved to Waihi where there were lots of parties, drugs, alcohol, and violence. Jason (Kevin’s son) was abducted by his father “out the window at midnight one evening and was taken and was very hard to find from then on”. Della’s mother went from relationship to relationship, and in between, Della lived with her grandparents. Around the time she was 7 or 8, mother’s new partner, Mark, took them all to Katikati. Della was happy to be with her mother, but she believes her best time was with her grandparents, who she loves. She has not told her grandparents of the abuse she suffered from Mark because “there’s already a big rift between my mother and her [grandmother] and I don’t want to make matters worse”.

Mark began sexually molesting Della from when she was 8 years old, “making me do horrible things to him, and stuff . . . he used to say it was a secret and he’d buy me things and bribe me not to tell mum, and so I didn’t actually know it was wrong at that age. . . So that went on for a long period of time, like years and years,” up to the time Mark married her mother when Della was 12. Jesse, her new brother, was born when Della was nine; when he was one his father accidentally reversed his car over him in the driveway, breaking his pelvis. Mark’s abuse dwindled then, because he and Della’s mother had found God following Jesse’s miraculous recovery (his heart had stopped on the operating table). The sexual torment ceased when “[Mark] ran away with her [mother’s] best friend and had another two children”. Mark still considered himself to be Della’s stepfather and when things became difficult at high school in her rebellious adolescent years, her mother sent Della to live with him, leading to her initiation into methamphetamine use and sexual intercourse “every night”, concerning which her mother accused her of “fucking my husband”.

Aged 14, Della spent a short time at Nelson Girls’ High School, for which her grandparents paid but, “I didn’t like it, the girls were too catty”, and she transferred to Waimea College, a co-

educational institution in Nelson where she started “getting into drugs and alcohol”. She “hung out with lots of boys, so that caused some problems. I was bullied, I got beaten up by girls at some point in time. That’s when I really started coming into, sort of finding out who I was and things”. Going out at night, being told by her mother that “prostitution was ok at a young age, because she was one and you had to hustle and make some money somehow”, sometimes staying away for days on end, it aroused little interest when she returned home “after a week of partying with older men and prostituting myself”.

The perceptions humans choose are only time/space selections of all the becomings potentially available to them, and it is these perceptions, together with the intensities of the patterns of movement in interaction that sustain a more-or-less sense of stability in life (Boundas, 1997), conveying the conscious-sensible. When selected, virtual tendencies are reinforced, forming further actualities, further intensified or diminished, while at the same time, those virtualities are actually, dynamically, continuously changing. What is real is not just the actual that emerges but also the tendencies and potentialities that do arise, that could have arisen, and still might arise. The challenge that Deleuze and Guattari present, particularly in *A Thousand Plateaus*, is that, given certain tendencies insisting in process as well as virtually, is to regard the world of entities, not as stable things, but as ongoing flows, identified and labelled as enduring items or behaviours. Della’s continual movements enacted her strong sense of survival: “I could have been killed many times. A Tribesman<sup>137</sup> picked me up once when I was hitchhiking, and we went to a place where he picked up a fucking chainsaw and put it in the boot, and I thought, Oh my God, I’m going to be murdered, but he was fine. He let me go”.

Many such harrowing affections inform Della’s narrative, connected by her sense of determined resilience. Campbell, Sharps and Parsons conceptualise resilience as a process involving “positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (2009, p. 390). Coming from the insights of Luthar and Cicchetti (2000), both groups of authors caution against considering resilience as a personal attribute, viewing it rather as a response of resourcefulness and flexibility of action in difficult circumstances. Individual factors favouring resilience include courage and determination, problem-solving skills, and a sense of purpose and optimism for

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<sup>137</sup> “Tribesmen” are one of a plethora of motorcycle gangs in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

future well-being (Campbell, Sharps & Parsons, 2009, p. 391). Kearney (2001, p. 271) has further synthesised the stages or turning points in her grounded theoretical analysis of women's experience of domestic violence as well as detailing women's rationalisations for staying in their relationships: (the "salvation" ethic – caring for their abuser, submission to duty and tradition, denial of the seriousness of the abuse, inability to identify practical and emotional alternatives, the continuation of an emotional bond with their partner, and an inability to move due to isolation, depression, substance abuse, and economic control).

Connected to the desire for self-perpetuation is the intensity of resilience and a correlative capacity to actualise different attitudes, encouraged by the persuasive images of 21<sup>st</sup> century media which valorise the body in a diversion of its behaviours to those which might, *à la* Bergson, be termed prosthetically technological: in Della's case, the monetising of her frequent sex encounters. In this sense, the technological is a social re-organisation which facilitates stronger and wider possibilities of action " . . . to see the way out of a difficulty in any circumstances whatever, to find what is most suitable, what answers best the question asked" (Bergson, 1944, p. 166). This idea of resilience is founded on a false belief: that representation expresses a true account of reality.<sup>138</sup> Efforts to make any sense of experience within the confines of a hierarchical system which represses women demands an investigation into representation; if not, established values will be replicated. Representation, on this view, relying on the commonsensical and the intelligible smother's creativity and the new, its principal expression that of resentment.<sup>139</sup> Representation denies difference, which latter is for Deleuze:

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<sup>138</sup> Representation compares reality to transcendental ideal forms, whose authority relies on imagined and unchallengeable perfection. But as US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld said, "there are unknown unknowns, the ones we don't know we don't know" (news briefing, 2 Feb, 2002). And as a character in the movie, *The Truman Show*, states: "Everything is real. Everything is true. Nothing is fake. It's merely controlled". This control is not transcendental but emerges from the interaction between organism and environment. And "the subject itself is not at the center . . . but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, *defined* by the states through which it passes" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 20, emphasis in original). This is to say that attitudes, and hence, responses to the world, rest on perceptually guided action, together with the cognitive patterns emerging from recurrent sensorimotor patterns that guide action.

Uexküll's (1992) notion of the *Umwelt* is pertinent here: organisms do not simply occupy their environment, but encounter each other in dynamic and reciprocal determination. Of course, the world with which the organism interacts is limited to those areas in which it has an interest, and, taken further by Deleuze and Guattari, the subject is considered to be not so much *what* it is, but more *where* it is, and *how* it is; i.e., how it engages with its environment and its affordances. Then too, middling perceptual capacities, with their relatively sophisticated repertoires of emotion and reflection guiding behaviour (as opposed to lower "instinctual" reactions, or higher abstract cognition), coupled with middle frames of reference (Rosch, et al, 1976), and "basic objects", comprise the subjectivising *Umwelt* of most people. Della is no exception.

<sup>139</sup> "While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is "outside", what is "different", what is "not itself" and this No is its creative deed. This inversion of the value-positing eye – this *need* to direct one's view outward instead of back to oneself – is of the essence of *ressentiment*: in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, physiologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all – its action is fundamentally

. . . affirmation itself is multiple . . . Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 55, 56).

Conventional thought views “representation”, portrayed as a neutral, obvious, mediating device between reality and ideas, between subject and world, around at least since Plato, as a masculine strategy which structures the world in ways that privilege men: in representing, the masculine subject posits the identification and hierarchisation of difference in terms of superiority and subordination, expressing these differences, including gender, in his favour and interests. Representation, seen as expressive of a single (patriarchal, racist, and class-committed) perspective, viewed as unobjectionable reflection of reality, locates the subject as transcendent to the empirical world, situates gender as hegemonic power, and implicates it as a set of paradoxically stable attributes<sup>140</sup> within a larger social nexus. Within this (often) unconscious ideology, Balibar (2007, p. 45) comments, domination “is always already included”, masking and distorting exploitation in such manner as to commandeer its duped victims to participate, against their best interests, desires and aspirations. Moreover, representation conceives space and objects in terms of static states, and accordingly overlooks the dynamic becoming of all life as well as the limitations of categories based on identity, which last is but one of the many ways which society uses to organise and make sense of the world. But there is, in brief, no individual subjecthood, only bodies that are produced through their connections and contexts in that world.

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reaction” (Nietzsche, 1967, pp. 36, 37).

“When we learn to recognize in ourselves and in others the paradoxical dynamics of resentment, to which we are all inevitably exposed, we can also denounce the privileges and inequalities of power, of wealth, and of control that prevent the spread of cooperation, that stifle solidarity, and identify the changes required to promote equality and equal opportunity without, contrary to what Nietzsche thought, unequivocally condemning ourselves to the morality of mediocrity and resentment” (Tomelleri, 2015, p. 230).

Della lacks resentment because she exhibits no “feelings of self-disvalue over against others . . . an individual of strong personality has no need to compare [her]self with [her] fellow humans . . . [she] is not easily embarrassed or ashamed about herself” (Scheler, 2007, pp. 10, 11).

<sup>140</sup> “Paradoxical” because “gender” has traditionally been seen as referring to culture, to the social classification into “masculine” and “feminine”, whereas “sex” supposedly refers to the biological differences between male and female: the visible difference in genitalia and procreative function. Yet women have been defined as belonging to nature and men to rationality, to universal, non-situated objectivity, separate from nature, with autonomous agency. Objectivity here is an epistemological stance, and “creates the reality it apprehends by defining as knowledge the reality it creates through its way of apprehending it” (MacKinnon, 1983, p. 636). Representation rests on “the subject” and relies on subjectivity as the power of representing and indeed, of constructing reality. Accordingly, the intelligible is valued over the sensible, ideas beyond appearances and the univocity of being above the equivocal multifariousness of becoming.

For Deleuze, an immanent ethics is about maximising the capacity of bodies to affect and to be affected by enlarging and intensifying these connections, and so, heavily influenced by “representations” in advertising and the media, her mind shaped by stories inspiring individual control and command, Della described herself variously as a “bikie chick”, a “danstar”, (a combination of “dancer” and “gangsta”), and a recent partner as a “renegade trooper”. Her talk (“strong, sexy, classy danstar”, “ride-or-die bitch”), alludes to images and events drawn from a television programme about a gang of renegade motorcyclists, *Sons of Anarchy*, its extravagant escapades offering a confirmation of the events in her life, a desperate attachment to family cohesion, a kind of romantic identity, a proof of sorts of a *certificat d’existence*. Like Kafka’s mouse-star, Della has a talent for “making a ceremonial performance out of doing the usual thing” (Kafka, 1952, p. 306), sharpening a critical voice, even though it is as thin and small as Josephine’s among the general “tumult of a hostile world” (Kafka, 1952, p. 314). And in an age of declining state interest in protecting its poorest individuals (crumbling health care, urban housing crises, growing unemployment, child poverty), there can be little social connection for those, like Della, who live on the edge.

For all of this, nomadic citizenship suggests a viable possibility. Ignoring any allegiance to transcendent institutions, Della, like so many of her cohort, locates participatory loyalty in small-scale, decoded, flexible, and temporary exchange partnerships across boundaries of age, sex, class, ethnicity, cultural practice. The deterritorialising power of money, especially when evacuated of its capitalistic surplus-value (including taxation), has a hugely positive capacity to free individuals from the yokes of subjection and confining representation, and can create increasing freedom and material abundance (Holland, 1999, p. 59, and following). Framing the horizon of her nomadic reality is Della’s compulsion to flight, “irresponsible, solitary and joyous” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 131). Always accelerating to provide a sense of motion, any movement in her life provides an ever-changing background wherein to act out her saving truths. A necessary one of these is the elaboration of scenarios constructed to maintain (the position of) her mother in her essential innocence. The contradictory – and protective – nature of this fantasy is evident.<sup>141</sup> In all her narratives, she portrays her mother as a victim: “Mum

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<sup>141</sup> Žižek comments on the essential significance of fantasy thus: “[R]eality” stabilizes itself when some fantasy-frame of a “symbolic bliss” forecloses the view into the abyss of the Real. Far from being a kind of figment of our dreams that prevents us from “seeing reality as it effectively is”, fantasy is constitutive of what we call reality: the most common bodily “reality” is constituted via a detour through the maze of imagination” (Žižek, 1996, p. 290).



had a huge battle on her hands . . . “My mum’s my mum, you know, I loved her as well, and um, I was happy that I got to see her [at age 8] . . . she’s probably not ok with her life, she’s pretty upset. She thinks she’s a lonely old woman now that’s dying with no one . . . my mum has a heart of gold . . . my mum is the kindest person you’ll meet, she doesn’t have any bad intentions towards anyone, she never hurts anyone or fucks anyone over; she’s never been like a thief or like to get herself, you know, but she’s very, she’ll do anything for anyone but then no one gives a fuck about her so she gets hurt and used all the time. But then she gets taken for advantage . . .”<sup>142</sup>

Yet something quite mysterious happens in Della’s stories. In the example above, it’s as if her unshakeable belief in her mother’s inherent goodness (against all the evidence), diverts the flow of sordid events in their lives to offer both a linear pragmatic rationale (“prostitution was ok at a young age”), and a transcendent explanation for them; e.g., she states her mother claims: “I’m getting married this year, I’m getting married this year, like she, God will help me get married this year. I’ve seen it in my visions. I’m going to see; I’ve got a man . . .” A backward causation: “I thought he was the only person that ever loved me, I don’t regret anything she’s ever done. I don’t have any remorse or regrets towards her. I don’t blame her . . . Mum always thought differently . . .” provides signposts from the future, so to speak, offering the opportunity to recast her past events in accord with her values. This circular reasoning is entirely valid: from an objective perspective, Della’s interpretations provide a scaffolding for recognising the turmoil of her emotional and economic environment, and for some understanding of how power and social structures have impacted on her life. And, from a psychical point of view, Della is competently able to articulate what she desires, how those desires were established, what causes her pain, what she finds meaningful and how she might approach those meanings.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Understood in this way, Della’s stories about her mother are also about her own life journey, about her enigmatic efforts to edge nearer to – and stave off – the disavowed reality of their dysfunctional lives. Just as the wooden wigwam in Lars von Trier’s *Melancholia* (2011), offers symbolic protection against the impending planetary collision, so too, does Leo’s wire loop endorse the fantasy of salvation. As long as the planet can be seen as being contained within the circle, the fantasy of the denial of the destruction of life can be maintained. Della’s stories are similarly designed to protect against the realities of her mother’s and her life from overflowing the frame of fantasy and spilling into consciousness.

<sup>143</sup> To a point. Deleuze believes that the question of freedom, of what an individual chooses, is that which chooses inside a self. He argues that the subject is formed by several larval selves that combine and influence one another in repetitive patterns that contract habits. These in turn are constitutive of that self. Our linguistic and structural institutions, chance occurrences, and the stories we tell ourselves are also part of the unconscious prepersonal field.

The Freudian superegoic injunction to “enjoy” must surely find its most ardent advocates in those whose shattered childhoods demand attachment to some authoritative feature or figure that was lacking in their formative years. The difficulty here lies in the nature of authority: authority demands obeisance, but compliance to that authority with no reflection is the very reason for Deleuze’s Spinozist claim of inadequacy of thought – as in life. The contradiction lies in the conflict with an individual’s own inner life which demands recognition of its own desires without consideration of external demands. “What is the mode of existence of the person who utters any given proposition?” asks Nietzsche (in Deleuze, 2006a, p. xvi), answered by: “we always have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts given our way of being or our style of life” (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 1).

Actions and thoughts then, are judged by identifying and evaluating the mode of existence that underlies them as moral injunction. For Della, her idealistic image of her mother and her unshakeable confidence in her capacity to triumph against all obstacles provide the platform of her motivation. The dilemma insists: to submit to the thrust and tug of the “consumerist syndrome” (Bauman, 2005, p. 84), of capitalist integration and the will of the Other, or continue to “unhook [herself] from the points of subjectification that secure [her], nail [her] down to a dominant reality” (Deleuze, 1987, p. 160). Against representation, which encourages conformity to convention, her power, or will, resides in her immanent desire, which rejects conformity to the status quo as a condition of recognition. Such a dissociative perspective releases immense energy and freedom as it justifies the provenance of the subject as neither purely transcendent (Kantian transcendence), nor wholly constructed by social forces external to it (Marxist determinism). Della’s desire<sup>144</sup> stems from her different living and different thinking: Della’s desire is creative and therefore beyond representation; it is powerful and thereby relatively unrestrained by hegemonic forces; and it is productive and therefore performative of new modes of not just being in the world, but also of changing the past.<sup>145</sup> In

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<sup>144</sup> “For Gilles Deleuze and me desire is everything that exists *before* the opposition between subject and object, *before* representation and production. It’s everything whereby the world and affects constitute us outside of ourselves, in spite of ourselves. It’s everything that overflows from us” (Guattari in Genosko, 1996, p. 205, emphasis in original).

<sup>145</sup> T. S. Eliot’s insight in “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1998), are relevant here. Eliot asserts that every new piece of literature commands a re-examination of the whole canon. Similarly, in an individual’s life, present events re-order the past, present and future, shuffling and re-prioritising, intertwining and influencing experiences and their relationships.

behaviours strongly reminiscent of Hegel's exposition in *The Logic of Science*, she accepts deeper and more difficult contradictions in her life. In Hegel's words:

... it is of the essence of [human] spirit to be free, and so to be free for itself, not to remain within the immediacy of what is natural. ... The extreme to which spirit tends is its freedom, its infinity, its being in and for itself . . . it is this motion, this process of proceeding forth from, of freeing itself from nature . . . it is of the very nature of spirit to be this absolute liveliness, this process, to proceed forth from naturality, immediacy, to sublimate, to quit its naturality, and to come to itself, and to free itself, it being itself only as it comes into itself as such a product of itself; its actuality being merely that it has made itself into what it is (Hegel, 1978, pp. 5-7).

Della took to the road for some months, hitching around the country, sleeping with strange men for money, and using methamphetamine.<sup>146</sup> Arriving in Napier where her mother was then living, she fell in with her mother's friend living nearby, sleeping with her husband and cooking meth with the pair. Shortly, the husband was arrested for the preparation and distribution of the drug, the wife found out about the illicit affair, and Della's mother asked her to leave the house. Next stop was Wellington, where a Black Power member introduced her to the "Babes Bar".<sup>147</sup> Della "worked in the prostitution part upstairs":

I was on a fake ID . . . and little did I know, 'cause I was also living upstairs, 'cause there's another part upstairs that you could live in, all the girls could stay, you pay rent and you can stay there. The girl that I took with me to Wellington, she was actually going back to the Black Power member when I was working and ticking up crack. And I didn't realise that she was doing that. So, he knocked on my door and said, you owe me a couple of grand, and I was like, What? Why? And he was like, Well, she's been coming and getting crack off me for some time now, the last couple of weeks and I thought you knew about it, and I was like, Nah, and then she gapped it, so I got the bash and he grabbed me and threw me across the room and grabbed his big greenstone thing and just about cut my

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<sup>146</sup> Deleuze and Guattari suggest that, for a restless spirit, any escape from a strongly determined socius demands "agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges . . . and the private certitudes that our vanity and our complacency bestow generously upon us" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 341). Exploring the productive nature of the schizophrenic response to the "fascisizing investments" (p. 134) in and of society, where "[t]he powers that be need to repress us" (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 61), offers a recognition of the lack introduced into desire, and into life itself, thereby repressing and controlling their dynamism and their potential to challenge and change the structures of contemporary capitalism. By practising schizoanalysis, the productivity of desire is affirmed, confirming the potential to dissolve subjugating and seemingly unmovable territorialisations that inhibit the enlargement and fulfilment of life. Freedom erupts at moments of social upheaval, writes Deleuze, hidden in the remnants of the old order and in the "first fruits of a new" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 193).

On a molecular level then, if a particular way to which an individual has become accustomed is disrupted, then her virtual components – both at an intrapersonal and at a higher level may be rearranged in such ways that new actualisations become available. Individuals are thus "multiple and aleatory members of multiple and aleatory communities" (Colwell, 1997, p. 21). This is why Deleuze is so insistent on the conjunction "and" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 57).

<sup>147</sup> Not the real name.

head off with it and she come in and his mum come in and called the police and I just ran, I just ran like there was no tomorrow. I had to survive.

Moving back to Napier, Della stayed with a friend, Dawn, who was living with her boyfriend's uncle. Going into the basement one day to do the washing, "the uncle came down and said he wanted to have his way with me, and I told him no, and so he had his way with me anyway". Leaving that situation, she met Benjamin, 25, whom she had known from when she was 18. They smoked drugs, then decided to move to Hamilton where her mother was then living. She went first, Benjamin following, and the two lived together harmoniously for the best part of three years, Della working at the P Bar, studying for a manager's certificate and Benjamin working as painter and plasterer.

Benjamin was a heavy drinker and became possessive, turning violent and throwing things at her when he was drunk. She threw objects back at him, the violence escalating into strangling and punching, "and then like, I'd be in the corner crying, and he'd say, Well go on then, cry. Kill your fucking self, and throw me a knife, saying, go on then, kill yourself then, no-one will even care. Your mum wouldn't even care, your family don't even . . . All that emotional stuff . . . [T]he last point in that relationship was when I got pregnant and I told him and he said, Oh well, there's the hospital, 'cause we only lived a two minute walk from the hospital. He said, there's the hospital, go and get rid of it. . . . it was like, Wow! After three years, I was just really shocked. I didn't think that that's how he felt. He was like, I want you but I don't want a fucking kid. . . . So I went and had a termination and I walked myself home because he wouldn't come and get me and he was pissed".

Della entered into an affair with another man, "'cause I was getting back into the meth scene and this guy was nice to me and bought nice things for me and made me feel better about myself and things were so bad at home". Her relationship with Benjamin ended after she smashed a bottle over his head, requiring stitches. At the police station, the police told her they had received ten phone calls from the neighbour concerned about her being attacked, so they let her off with a warning, directing her to leave her house though she held the lease. Benjamin had damaged the house: "Like he'd smashed all the walls and just volatiled [sic] the house in anger and then, I suppose, and then left". Nevertheless, they saw each other for the next three years: "He was my first love, I was his first love; he'd never loved anyone ever 'til I came along.

I couldn't break that tie with him; even when we'd separated, I still kept going back. And it was wrong. I shouldn't have gone back. I should have just gone, f you, later. But I thought he was the only person that ever loved me 'cause he put that in my head, so I just kept going back".

On the road again, hitching, Della felt like a gypsy, travelling without aim, going where the whim took her, wandering beyond the familiar: "I used to hitch for miles, and I'd say, "Oh yeah, I'll go where you're going" ". As a consequence, an emphasis on the situatedness of events became the common coin of her subjectivity. Openness to vulnerability and exclusion "is another name for being-there and being-in-relation to others" (Braidotti, 2012, p. 174), and to the development of 'multiple forms of intensity' (p. 174), and a precondition for transforming negative moments into affirmative and productive modes of being. Finding herself in Auckland and locating the drug scene, Della was "passed around", and through meth parties, worked as a prostitute. A new friend, Ebony, introduced her to an Islander group, the King Cobras, and she was told by one that "Calvin" wanted to meet her. "[S]o I went up to the Hilton and here I was, this big flash apartment, and I thought, Oh, my God. He paid me \$1000 the first time I met him just to stay the night and smoke meth, so that's how I used to get me and Ebony's meth addiction and our money for rent and things". Calvin maintained her for 6 months but became increasingly possessive, threatening to push her off the apartment balcony. When he hung her from the rail of his flat, "I whacked him or something and I managed to get away to the elevator and ran for my life . . . that was the only time I really, really, did fear for my life".

Della changed her phone number and left Ebony's house. On bail for drug possession and smoking meth with some "dudes I just met", she was introduced to an older man, Roger, with whom she lived for a year, until he said he couldn't afford to keep her. 'Til then, these were good times, Roger giving her money and buying her a car. But in that period, Calvin somehow learned of her new phone number and texted her, "so that freaked me out. . . . I said I'm fine and tried to be as civil to him as I could be because if he was a hitman [as reputed] he could find me and that freaked me out a lot, and so, yeah, so I sort of had to just play into his world, like his game, to make him know that I still cared or something, but I had to try and break that thing. . . . You gotta do that sometimes just to keep yourself safe". At such times of disruption, habituated ways are dispersed into new configurations that allow new actualisations to occur. All possibilities are open, any connections are allowable, and fresh "identities" may be created.

Desire is explicated in *Anti-Œdipus* as the processes of “connection, registration and enjoyment of flows of matter and energy coursing through bodies in networks of production in all registers” (Bonta & Protevi, 2004, p. 76). The “paranoid-fascist” (p. 76) pole of desire constructs whole subjects who insist on their stable identities and an unchanging world. “Schizophrenic-revolutionary” desire (p. 76), by contrast, in moving from filiations to alliances, deterritorialises rigid codifications of family and property. *A Thousand Plateaus*, construes desire entirely in relation to the social and physical milieux in which they occur, proposing the “joy that is immanent to desire that implies no lack” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 155). In all cases, the social dimension of desire is emphasised as connected to a particular form of assemblage, a particular form of life. Then, opposed to molar forms of assemblage that are unified, totalising and regulated, molecular assemblages are rhizomatic, unpredictable and changing their qualities when they change their rhythms, speeds, and connections.<sup>148</sup> In the presence of conflict, deterritorialising attributes such as the absence of hierarchical authority, and the heterogeneous resources of low-density links, high social mobility, multiple direct and indirect networks, flexible values, and transient contractual relations, make it relatively easy to move on and away. Thus, when Della discovered Roger was on life parole for “almost murdering his wife” and for “kidnapping girls and stuff”, he left her in Hamilton, because he “couldn’t afford to keep her anymore,” and, not caring whether they were still together or not, she returned to living with Benjamin in Huntly, paying rent and sleeping in the hall of the old Huntly church while he lived in the main part, “and then I just started frequenting back to Tony’s [a friend] like Cockle’s [Tony’s nickname] place, and there I met Nick”.

She felt she should tell Roger that their relationship was over<sup>149</sup> after she moved in with Nick: ‘We were pretty messed up. We were homeless, each. He was living in a bus and at first we

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<sup>148</sup> This does not imply that a rhizomatic process in a nomadic line of flight is not responsive to other organisations and other assemblages beyond itself, but that it adapts in ways that are determined by its own capacities and tendencies to change. Certain changes invoke different kinds of relations between and within organisms from which emerge non-metric multiplicities, in which original elements are included but in ways where “the situation of one determination . . . cannot divide without changing in nature each time” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 483, emphasis in original).

<sup>149</sup> “. . . He was ok, except for I remember him texting me and saying, “you fucking bitch. If I ever find you, I’m going to fucking kill you for fucking me over and cheating on me”, “and I was like, wait, I didn’t know if we were together or not. I couldn’t make sense of it. . . . I’ve never seen or heard from [him] since. And I’m always a bit afraid that if I see him, he might kill me . . .”

“. . . That’s pretty much it; the abuse was really Ben, yeah. Ben was just nasty in my head, he just used to get into my head. Calvin was totally scary, really scary, like he was all guns, he was really scary. He was nasty, he wasn’t right in the head. He was very volatile, he loved, like, blood. He was strange. I think he would probably be a murderer. Roger was a sick twisted individual who would like to kidnap and have fun with people, so he was fucking crazy. I was always on eggshells with him. Calvin, I was always on eggshells with too. I couldn’t even drive somewhere to the supermarket without him saying who was that guy you were talking to when I got back, and freaking me the fuck out, and I’d be what are you talking about. I don’t know what you’re talking about, I wasn’t talking to anyone

didn't like each other but I offered him a ride and we smoked some meth together and discovered that we liked each other". That relationship lasted six years and produced two children: "I like Nick", she said. "Nick's never ever hit me; he's the only one that's never done anything violent towards me".

Though she claimed to have made as much as \$1000 a night as an escort or working from a parlour, Della is unsure of what she will do in the future ("I'm still trying to find my calling"), but she says she would like to study, perhaps pursue counselling and looking after children. She assigns much blame to her grandparents for their parenting of her mother: ". . . they needed to help mum, it just makes me annoyed because they didn't help her and what happened with me repeated itself through every child. You know what I mean, just repeated, like mum is still repeating the same way that I was parented. Like there's no change. Like we've all come from different fathers, we've all come from broken homes, we've all been to millions of schools. It just goes on and on . . . My mum<sup>150</sup> had a million men as boarders, and not just that, but they stalked her and they raped her and some went to jail, and me and my brother, Jesse, we watched that . . . I'm surprised I've made it. I'm surprised I'm alive. People I've put myself in [sic] and predicaments I've put myself in, they are really quite dangerous and scary.

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at the supermarket, I had someone follow you, bitch, rah, rah, rah, rah, rah. He was cuckoo, real cuckoo, and that was quite scary. And then he wanted to have, he was like into swingers and stuff, and he wanted me to treat one of his friends and he'd have sex with some other chick, and that was weird because I didn't want to do it, I wasn't into it and he was, and he was testing me to see if I'd go through with it, and I went through with it and he didn't, so he was like testing me. He'd play games like that, really sick, volatile games and then he'd turn around and use that on me and use that against me all the time, and then he turned up and he actually said to me one day, your friend Ebony came here last night and tried to screw me, and he'd play games with my head, like Ebony would turn up and he'd say why do you want Della, what's she got that I haven't got? and I'd be like, What? Why would you say that? Why would you tell me this? There's no way, and he'd say, Well, where was she the other night? and I'd say, I don't know because I wasn't looking after her kid, and so he messed up me and Ebony's friendship. So, I went and like knocked her out and punched her over. Yeah, we had a big scrap and um, so he just stirred, he just stirred my life. Had fun, you know, real horrible, nasty. He's in jail now, I believe. He was the scariest. Roger was probably the creepiest and the nastiest. Ben was my first love, so he fucked with my head a lot. He messed me up the most."

". . . I think that the emotional abuse is one of the hardest things to get over. When you've got people turning round and when you are someone that doesn't have any family around you at the time and when you have taken yourself away from your family because of situations or reasons in life and they turn round and say to you no one ever loved you as much as I love you and no one will ever want you after I've had you and I'll just fucking kill you. You know, things like that . . ."

<sup>150</sup> "Mum's had a fucking hard life compared to me. She's always putting herself in these situations all the time and she's never seen the signs. I remember when we were living in Nelson and I was going to Nelson Girls'. I remember that there was a guy who was hanging around and he was her friend and he was alright, and they were friends and there was nothing going on, and mum, we lived in a house that was two-storey, and there was a carport and then mum's bedroom, and he used to sit outside mum's bedroom at night and watch her get undressed and go to bed, and he used to watch her at night, and then finally he built up the courage to break in and rape my mum, cut the phone cord, cut up all the photos of us and our dads, cut us kids out of photos and our photo albums, tie her up and everything, like crazy. We were asleep in our beds, but he went to jail. There was like, heaps of times we were broken into, she was stalked. It was freaky. Like me and Jesse used to sit in bed, so shit scared every time we heard a noise. We were like, nah, like we were freaking out. We were not brought up properly . . . Yep, I've seen abuse from my mum. I've seen my mum get beatings, I've seen my mum throwing us all in a taxi and catching her husband cheating on her and smash the pie over his head and waste the bitch in the bar, while we're all sitting in the taxi . . . we were all kids."

I've just always managed to survive. I think I always manage to get out of things. Just strong, I suppose".

"Identity" involves a kind of territorialisation of sensation and perception, and also a sort of deterritorialisation, yet varying rhythms and speeds of movement must find some relative repose to settle in in order to maintain life. Paradoxically falling between categories and yet capable of multiply residing in many locations and different subject positions, Della's account presents a phenomenological experience of what most people would consider a chaotic life, one that vividly illustrates how her creative identity-as-circumstance is lived, not at the discursive or even emotional level, but at the level of orientations of expected corporeal practices and repertoires of social responses. Dependent upon the companion of the moment, for instance, the very act of strolling along the street takes on different attitudes and gestures. She conforms to middle-class practices where necessary, such as making a cup of tea for a guest, but these practices have the air of rehearsed behaviour, very like mime, very deterritorialised: pure expression. And separated – subtracted – from a conventional way of life, Della's living continues to be fragmented, marginalised, disposable, displaced and decontextualised, ever situated in new territories, reterritorialised. Her attitudes and behaviours, freed from original purposes, have taken on different, precarious, untenured intentions, partitives forming semi-consistent multiplicities, defined by "... the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9).

For Della, through de- and re-territorialising ways of expression, a proliferation of new understandings and new feelings are created, leading to new happenings, new possibilities. Her way is an affirmative functional solution to the intolerable violations and deadlocks of her past life, generating (transitory) new relations, new forms of becoming, new affects, actions with new effects in the world. A flexible existence. No-where. Now-here. Della's is a *partial* deterritorialisation, where full flight isn't undertaken, but change occurs. As Deleuze insists: "The only question is how anything works, with its intensities, flows, processes, partial objects – none of which *mean* anything". (Deleuze, 1995, p. 22, emphasis in original). The events in Della's life may be interpreted as stratified in and by the consistency of habituated everyday behaviour, requiring at one and the same time, the disciplin(in)g articulation of the body as



organism, its representation as a set of signifiers and signifieds, and its subjectivation (pp. 158, 159), within a particular horizon of sense, and the BwO's urge to diverge and create (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 40, and following). The assemblage of material and immaterial arrangements of events that transform the organism, actualising a constitutive differential relation of singularities and ordinary points, bubbles over in psychic multiplicity to change her way of being and produce something novel, often out of character. For Della, experiencing the deep interrelation of forces within the current multiplicity – be it in terms of power or understanding, or of Deleuze's three stratifications, her quest is venturing along those lines of flight from which she might create an alternative meso-project of becoming that resists conformist stability – too boring – and a ceaseless wandering of the infinitely alienated – too fraught – and yet allows the potential for continual personal transformation and recomposed subject habitations.

For the time being, it'll do.

The only evil consists . . . in the decision to remain in a deficit of existence, to appropriate the power to not-be as a substance and a foundation beyond existence; or rather (and this is the destiny of morality), to regard potentiality itself, which is the most proper mode of human existence, as a fault that must always be repressed (Agamben, 2007, p. 43).

**Julie**, 62, is her family's darker, heavier daughter. She refers to this difference as "a defining part of my childhood" . . . and "a constant source of embarrassment to my mother" who suffered a barrage of demeaning comments about "the milkman". By contrast, her sister in childhood was everything that Julie wasn't: "musical, clever, petite, and blonde". Growing into adolescence and discovering a facility with languages: ("When I read a word in Danish or Icelandic or German, I have it in my head. I feel the words. I love the words. I love the way they bubble inside my mouth"), aged 17 and showing resistance to parental rule, Julie undertook an exchange programme to Iceland despite her parents' preference for her to "go somewhere more useful like Switzerland or something; somewhere I could use the language". But Julie wanted to go as far away as possible because of what she described as an attempt to flee from "a terrible submissiveness" both at home and at school.

Then, in her early twenties, Julie married a farmer cum rural businessman who was in partnership with his father. Neither she nor her husband's mother had shares in the business, though Julie did not see that as a lack: "I loved my in-laws. When I had the kids [three boys, spaced two years apart], my mother-in-law and I took turns looking after the kids while the other one worked in the business".

Things went well for a time, but then, the onset of Rogernomics,<sup>151</sup> the death of her mother-in-law, and her husband's falling ill, precipitated a collapse: "All his negative traits absolutely took off and he became a very nasty person". Having been close to his mother, Mark took her death badly and became depressed, sinking into himself and treating his father and Julie poorly. Julie was expected to make ends meet and pay for all outgoings through a small wage Mark paid her for work she did for the business. "He became very angry and aggressive if I wanted anything".

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<sup>151</sup> "Rogernomics", coined by loose homophony with "Reaganomics", denotes the neoliberal economic policies introduced by Roger Douglas, Minister of Finance in the fourth NZ Labour government, July 1984 - November 1990. Rogernomics was characterised by market-led deregulation and the control of inflation through tight monetary policy, accompanied by a floating exchange rate and reduction in public debt.

Defined as physical or sexual assault or psychological torment of a partner in an intimate relationship (Basile & Black, 2011), intimate partner violence (IPV) occurs across the spectra of class and race, but it begins with an acceptance of subordination and deference that many women of that time accepted as their inevitable lot.<sup>152</sup> Julie suffered no physical harm, but the emotional effects of coercive control, including fear, anxiety, guilt, diminished self-esteem, “psychological abuse” (Stark & Hester, 2019), insecure identity, and depression (see Ali, Oatley, & Toner, 1999; Anderson, 2008; Baldry, 2003; Crossman, Hardesty & Raffaelli, 2016; Lammers, Ritchie & Robertson, 2005), took their toll. Julie’s children preferred their father “because, he, you know, he would put me down, and if I asked them to do something, he would say, “You don’t have to do that, you guys”. It was much easier [for the boys] with Mark. He had different values to mine, you know, there was this conflict around values”.

Despite these negative impacts, including feelings of insecurity and incompetence, and a general loss of quality of life, Julie, like so many other women, as de Beauvoir describes, constantly “struggled with him in the effort to uphold her independence, while resisting his domination” (de Beauvoir, 1956, p. 453), “pass[ing] her days in a state of nervousness and acrimony” (ibid, p. 504). Julie chose to stay with her partner (Laing & Bobic, 2002), the discourse of romantic love (Craven, 2003; Towns & Adams, 2000, 2016; Wetherell, 1998), “making much of the struggle of love and relationships [and] women’s role in saving . . . relationships” (Hayes & Jeffries, 2013, p. 69), working “against [her] husband’s specific oppression as well as against the “morality” that forces a woman to remain silent or to seek fault in herself for her husband's violence” (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. ix), offering reasons to forgive and persist.

And perhaps (the Lacanian notion of) lack led her to a (Deleuzian) desire for more power than she had hitherto possessed. Power, according to Foucault (1978, 1980), is not just something possessed and deployed by individuals over others with the intent and consciousness to dominate. Rather, in its positive sense, power can be construed as a force that relates the individual to others and to other objects; one that produces the individual, her subjectivity, and her subordination, as well as establishing patterns of behaviour, language and

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<sup>152</sup> The processes of inculcation of men into working life carry a raft of investments such as stoicism, virility and insensitivity to pain – their own and others’ (Dejours, 2015). The incorporation of these capacities cannot be discarded or backgrounded easily at the family door, and the demands of the working collective over the private subjective cannot be assimilated readily into the psyche, leading to issues of decompensation as men strive to reconcile conflicting pressures. Women often intuit this conflict, especially in early marriage, and “make allowances” for unreasonable behaviour.

consciousness, and new forms of desire, creating Kristevan connections (1980, p. 283), and GuattaroDeleuzian machinic assemblages (1983, pp. 81, 111, 297, 315; 1987, pp. 4, 257), that develop self-conscious identity and agency (Butler, 1997, 2011; Foucault, 1980; Kendall & Wickham, 1999). Said otherwise, the abilities and capacities inhering in an individual and defining her mode(s) of behaviour are not the self-created powers of agentic performance external to the constraints of power but the result of these operations.<sup>153</sup>

A heteronormative relationship is not a monolithic universal given, despite its endurance over millennia, nor is the violence perpetrated on women by their partners a feature of only capitalist societies (Bograd, 1988). Relevantly, Deleuze elaborates the dual nature of power, and Stark (2007), asks his readers to take “on faith” (p. 102) the notion of gender as primarily a form of structural inequality that explains “why women become entrapped in abusive relations” (p. 102), though the latter does little to interpret the reasons for this. Anderson (2005) criticises this approach, finding that “gender is not a particularly important predictor of intimate partner violence” (p. 855). Nevertheless, considering western civilisation’s socio-economic and political development and the repressive nature of representation, as Deleuze and Guattari do in several books (e.g., Deleuze, 1997; Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, 1987, 1994; Guattari, 1995, 2011), has considerable consequences for women enmeshed in contemporary cultural and ethical diminution. Where power and control manifest in the dialectic between men and women within heteropatriarchy (Crenshaw, 1991; Dobash & Dobash, 1992; Farr, 2019; Lehrner & Allen, 2009; Starr, 2018), it is insufficient to define the dynamics of abuse and domination as residing solely within a feminist purview (Barnes & Donovan, 2018; Tomer & Busha, 2000). As the latter state, “violence occurs when one person, one group, one country believes that she/he/it has the right to control the body, the land, the religion, the lives, the free will of another person, group, country . . .” (Tomer & Busha, 2000, p. 1). Subjugation includes racist, nationalist, and elitist oppression, and conventional representations compared to ideal universalist models will not apply to those subjected to control. It is necessary to build new subjectivities away from normalising models and apart from dominant social models in self-made productions that are *sui generis* (Guattari, 1995, p. 18): “There is no question of posing a standard model” (p.18).

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<sup>153</sup> Where Foucault explores his analytics of power in what he calls its ‘techniques’, Butler signals her different view of subjectivity in terms of performativity, interpellation, and psychic organisation (Butler, 1997, pp. 83-105; 2010, pp. 127-144; 2011, p. 190, n. 19).

Assemblages of ordinary and singular points (“events” in Deleuze’s language), make up the multiplicities within and beyond the body. Any determination of an individual is a combination of the singular and the ordinary, of the *outré* and the habitual. Singularities are those points where something significant (an event), happens within the multiplicity or in relation to another multiplicity, causing the individual to exceed her identity and produce something new. Because events – singularities – cannot be predicted, the exact trajectory that a person’s behaviour will construct is similarly unpredictable, which is why Deleuze says that an actuality is always surrounded by an aura of virtualities, which are not simply logical possibilities, but physical realities, precisely because they constitute the problematic structure of that person’s existence. In the next instant from the present, a person will have actualised some of those virtualities: she will have spoken in a certain way, moved in a certain manner. This does not realise a possibility (in which the real resembles an already-conceptualised possibility), but actualises a virtuality; that is, she will have produced a difference, non-arbitrary, but undeterminable.<sup>154</sup>

Deleuze maintains that, generally, power has been conceived as a negative, external force, associated with masculine majoritarian consciousness and pronouncement, ideological dogmatism, and exploitation (Balibar, 2007, p. 49; Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 13). But power, he claims, entails an increase in a body’s capacity to act as it becomes more capable of affecting (and being affected by), the various bodies and forces it encounters, and through the affects/effects and relations thereby generated. A body’s encounters are transformed by its affects and capacities, understood as the body’s “power of action” (Deleuze, 1992a, p. 225), “the only real, positive and affirmative form of our capacity to be affected” (p. 225). Capacities – powers – are not innate properties of humans, but instead, emerge in the body’s internalising and externalising “folding[s]” (Deleuze, 2006b, p. 97 and throughout), of various human and extra-human engagements – habitual actions, “passive syntheses” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 74), where the past is preserved in the present (Deleuze, 1994, p. 75) sense data, nutrients, ideas, affects, percepts, energies, technologies and *hæcceities*, as the body partakes in a continuous series of ceaseless individuating processes. The human subject then, is never the cause of the human subject, nor the body, the body (de Beistegui, 2010, pp. 58, 64, 90, 92, and throughout).

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<sup>154</sup> The virtual is not the same as the set of possibilities from which one somehow becomes reality. Were this the case, it would mean that everything is already given, that nothing new ensues. Instead, on Deleuze’s account, the virtual accedes to the actual by a process of differentiation, creation and novelty, altering both the virtual and the actual-to-come in infinitely indeterminable ways (Deleuze, 1994). This in turn implies that the fundamental dimension of time is the future.

When the virtual is actualised, it differentiates itself from itself and produces something new, something beyond the usual sequential chain of associations. Disconnecting from normal ways of thinking engenders new relationships. Moreover, when someone actualises a virtuality or resolves a problem, the problematic structure does not disappear. The next moment still has this problematic structure, but it is now modified by the actualisation that has just occurred. Change therefore is never predictable, because were it so, it would not be new. For the same reason, neither can change be recognised as new. As change, becoming is always in the middle, never fixed, eluding the present, and always partaking of the past and the future (Deleuze, 2004b, pp. 1, 2). Deleuze says that conditions and the conditioned are determined simultaneously, and that conditions can never be greater than that which they condition. Just for this reason, every event is new, even though the new is never produced *ex nihilo* (and always fits retrospectively into a pattern, called “character”).

“Choos[ing] to choose” (Deleuze, 1992a, p. 114), affirms a trust in a potential positivity beyond present circumstances and comprehension. Assuming new forms of subjectivity can be as small (and as large) as a shift in attitude and thinking, a different regard of, and attitude towards the social and political world that one inhabits, and a corresponding shift in the meanings which are attributed to concepts of the social, the political and the world. For the women in this study, this means rejecting the oedipal model as being not only prescriptive but also constrictive (Driscoll, 2000, p. 67). This is what is significant about personal relationships: their capacity to bring into existence concepts of the “social” and “political” that shift notions of thought about them.

This curtailment of thought in the interests of the dominant class legitimises reproduction of that class’s power in the name of rationality, common sense and objectivity. Its imposition conveys a separation from the immanent reality of desire and a distortion of human values. In the extreme version of an intimate couple’s dysfunction, a Stockholm-syndrome-like situation emerges where desire begins to desire its own repression.<sup>155</sup> But in its positive aspect, dissociated from patriarchal representation, power can be configured as affirmative, exploratory, affective, and creative (Deleuze, 2008a, pp. 3-4). De- and re-constructing the

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<sup>155</sup> “Desire stretches that far: desiring one’s annihilation or desiring the power to annihilate. Money, army, police, and State desire, fascist desire, even fascism is desire” (Deleuze, 1987, p. 165).

traditional power-desire nexus, freeing action from the negating straitjacket that domination has imposed, is, as many of the women in this study demonstrate, the necessary requisite to opening up experience to new, light, riant ways of becoming, “beyond recognition, and beyond autonomy” (Colebrook, 2005a, p. 248), towards “self-determination” (Mikaere, 2013, p. 218). It is to radically cut the given images and choose another image that “will induce an interstice *between* the two” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 179, emphasis in original).

Early feminist researchers like Dobash & Dobash (1979), believe masculine violence is directed towards women simply because they are women; these authors suggest that men use violence as a way of subduing and dominating women within an historically constructed and highly regulative patriarchal and capitalist system that rigidifies, reproduces, and reinforces gender inequality, and power difference. Violent coercive control (aka intimate terrorism), can take many forms and involve a plethora of tactics, including physical assault, sexual insistence, intimidation, shaming and belittling (Campbell, 2002; Clements & Sawhney, 2000; Stark, 2007).

Further researchers outline the numerous negative emotional consequences of tyrannical non-physical abuse, “similar to the consequences of violent coercive control” (Crossman, Hadesty & Raffaelli, 2016, p. 455), including posttraumatic stress disorder (Anderson, 2008), extreme fear (Sackett & Saunders, 1999), and depression (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Kirkwood, 1993). A difficult thing to understand about IPV, its aspect of control and coercion, is that it is often coded and therefore hidden, private, and unrecognised. Perpetrators typically organise the smallest details in their victims’ lives, reinforcing positions of dominance and subordination, and “deepen[ing] the fear of resisting or attempting to escape, and leav[ing] victims trapped in a situation that amounts to an intimate form of terrorism” (Sparks & Gruelle, 2017, p. 13). “Gaslighting”<sup>156</sup> (Abramson, 2014), is one such tactic of control, often passing unmentioned in the IPV literature. It consists in a projective displacement, deliberately or unconsciously

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<sup>156</sup> The term ‘gaslighting’ comes from the 1944 film, *Gaslight*, in which Gregory attempts to make his wife Paula lose her mind by manipulating her, her friends, and her physical surroundings. Gregory’s aim is to have Paula incarcerated for mental instability in order to gain her inheritance. The light finally dawns on Paula when a policeman tells her that he too sees the gas lights dimming, as she believes, despite Gregory’s aassertion to the contrary.

Kate Abramson gives an example of the pernicious effect of gaslighting from Simone de Beauvoir: “Day after day, and all day long, I measured myself against Sartre, and in our discussions I was simply not in his class. One morning in the Luxembourg Gardens, near the Medici fountain, I outlined for him the pluralist morality which I had fashioned to justify the people I liked but did not wish to resemble; he ripped it to shreds. I was attached to it, because it allowed me to take my heart as the arbiter of good and evil; I struggled with him for three hours. In the end I had to admit I was beaten; besides, I had realised, in the course of our discussion, that many of my opinions were based only on prejudice, bad faith or thoughtlessness, that my reasoning was shaky and my ideas confused. “I’m no longer sure what I think, or even if I think at all’, I noted, completely thrown” (Abramson, 2014, p. 4).

designed to eliminate the very possibility of disagreement – to have the offender’s sense of the world not merely confirmed but placed beyond argument. The sure way to achieve this is for there to be no source of possible debate – no independent, deliberative perspective from which disagreement might arise. So, the perpetrator gaslights: he aims to destroy the possibility of disagreement by so undermining his partner that she has nowhere left to stand from which to disagree, no standpoint from which her words might constitute genuine disagreement. Women like Julie, who are undermined in this way feel empty, exhausted, nobody, without substance; they experience “emotional loneliness, despair, guilt, confusion, diminished self-esteem and identity, and anger” (Matheson, et al, 2015, p. 562). They suffer “panoptical” scrutiny, (Cascardi, & O’Leary, 1992), mockery, “emotional abuse [that] generates fear and anxiety” (Jewkes, 2010, p. 851), “emotional exhaustion and a sense of erosion of the self” (Matheson, et al, 2015, p. 564), and a “changing self-concept and loss of self” (Smith, et al, 1995, p. 179). A prison-like atmosphere dominates existence, resembling what Erving Goffman (1969) terms “the total institution”, where victims “go through a process of shame, loss of self-respect, damage to the self, diminished ability to cope as a free adult, and a distancing between self and sources of help and support” (Smith, et al, 1995, p. 174).

This kind of language is common among targets of gaslighting. It’s in the same category as de Beauvoir’s, “I am no longer sure *what* I think, nor whether I can be said to think at all” (1958, p. 292, emphasis in original). It’s language that speaks to a sense of having lost standing as deliberator and moral agent; it results in self-silencing in order to maintain the relationship (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Jack, 1991). And victims’ language mirrors the canonical language of gaslighters. That is to say, gaslighters charge their targets with being mad, hypersensitive, paranoid – and their victims come to believe these nominations. “I thought, oh, I’ve failed my marriage”, claimed Julie, and she accepted it when Mark said, “. . . you’ve brought nothing into this marriage so you can leave with nothing”. “And . . . he told me, he said: “I’ll fight you in court and take you for every cent you’ve got”, um, so he threatened me around taking what, or asking for what was my share, so I was actually frightened of him, I was so desperate to get away and be independent, I didn’t want his money”.

What such language effects is a way of accusing someone, with being not only wrong or mistaken, but also as being in no condition to judge whether she is wrong or mistaken. The



accusations are about the victim's basic rational competence – her ability to get facts right, to deliberate, her basic evaluative competencies and her independent standing as a rational moral agent. When gaslighting succeeds, it seriously undermines those aspects of a person's independent standing. The internalisation of its effects for Julie occurred continually throughout our interviews: "I mean, every day I would try. I would think, I must work harder, I must be better . . . I felt I was [pause] becoming more and more invisible . . . Mark would say terrible things, and in my head, I would say, Stop, stop right there because you are killing me, and then, and I could feel myself slipping away and slipping away, and I knew that I'd either slip away by my own hand or that I needed to leave, and the other very strong thing was that I needed to show the kids that you can't treat women like this, and I knew, for years and years and years, I knew I should leave, and I knew I wanted to leave but I had no money, nowhere to go; I didn't have a car. I couldn't leave if I wanted".

Like Mouse Singer, like a "child in the dark, gripped with fear" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 311), Julie comforted herself by rehearsing the soothing and stabilising refrain of love and comfort she had long sought, and found in her in-laws. "So, is it singing at all? Is it not perhaps just a piping? . . . being delicate or weak" (Kafka, 1952, pp. 305, 306). But "perhaps the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 311). As Deleuze and Guattari maintain in "Of the Refrain" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 310-350), "home does not pre-exist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space . . . [where] the forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible and the interior space protects the germinal forces of a task to fulfil or a need to do" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 311). Maintaining a home, sustaining self-regulation, allows an individual the space to "sustain the comfort of familiar places" (Lorraine, 2005, p. 162), and that requires "repeating refrains that have become familiar" (p. 162). But new events demand the capability, like Josephine's, to improvise new refrains that not only bear resemblance to the old tunes, but importantly, carry the capacity to evolve into new rhythms and tempos of living, "making a ceremonial performance out of doing the usual thing" (Kafka, 1952, p. 306).

Conventionally, normative modes of living tend to sustain through performing a style of becoming-other. This means conforming to a totalising whole of coordinates that synthesises

the interactions of the modes socially sanctioned by society with the heterogeneous milieu of the individual caught up in its various trajectories and speeds. By contrast, and in DeleuzoGuattarian language, those theorists champion the construction of “lines of flight”, the better to experiment with virtual connections and innovative mutations that might be enfolded into new realities, new planes of consistency,<sup>157</sup> rather than finding continual expression of subjecthood as unthinking sub-jection to the inversion of the past. These might currently be imperceptible to the individual, but every “assemblage” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 130, and elsewhere), including the assemblage of a person, comprises constellations of expressions, qualities, energies, and behaviours that possess the productive function of creating novel ways of being. Nomadic deterritorialisations of thinking and behaving have the power to create novel formations of behaviour – brought into existence by the very movements of thinking and behaving, the actual traversals of space and time by virtue of improvisation and shifting connections. The individual who is able to supersede static personal identity by keeping herself open to virtual relations in defiance of conventionally actualised subjectivity, must perforce perceive as well as act differently, must express the potential to act otherwise in different situations and different lines of connection. “Finally, one opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, or else goes out oneself, launches forth . . . One launches forth, hazards an improvisation . . . One ventures from home on the thread of a tune . . . on ‘lines of drift’ with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 311-2).

Julie’s talk of values was in striking contrast to those she claimed Mark professed. His talk was of abstract virtue, rules, and duty, where hers was of affection and relationships. Like Sayers (1982), she challenged the inherent subordination embedded in her relationship, and ceased conforming to the prevailing conditions, transforming herself,<sup>158</sup> her engagement, and her concomitant values in the process. For some individuals, oppression, domination, and injury are the factor that propels the process of self-transformation in the production of ever more viable strategies whose success may be measured by the changes of self-overcoming that are made. Power generates resistance, which transforms power, which initiates resistance.

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<sup>157</sup> A plane of consistency (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 17, 25, 30, and following), is the material level at which life unfolds. In Deleuze & Guattari’s ontology, there is nothing beyond or outside this level.

<sup>158</sup> Deleuze explains the “subject” as emergent in an immanent process of differentiation, which never stabilises as a unity, but is always differing from itself, both within and without the body (Deleuze, 1994, pp. 245-48).

A particular state of affairs obtains when bodies interact or otherwise collide. They affect one another in ways that exclude other bodies and other connections, but that which is excluded nevertheless remains *in potentia*, in virtual relations, as a source of acting otherwise. Deterritorialisation provokes the individual towards different self-sustaining forces, leading to dynamic flows of process that alter old patterns into becoming-other, though it is not a matter “of simply opening oneself to all the forces of the universe, but always of creatively evolving one’s powers to affect and be affected by life in concert with surrounding forces” (Lorraine, 2005, p. 163). Vital among the forces impacting upon human life is language as an arena of virtual possibilities which become actualised in the linguistic expressions of particular individuals. Specific meanings, interpretations and propositions come into existence according to the context of the event, certainly, but other meanings always inherently insist, quietly in the background. The same signifiers can open up quite different, relatively stable signifieds, not just attendant upon the situation, but also dependent on the relations and agencies, times and tempos of movement and rest, the wills and energies, and unifying and structuring powers of the bodies in the interaction (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 260-309).

When a process reaches a critical threshold that thrusts it into another course of activity, certain modes of behaving that were previously virtual become actualised, and the power to affect and be affected changes as well. This is analogous to the distinction between “intensive” and “extensive” spaces that Deleuze describes in *Difference and Repetition* (1994). Extensive spaces extend up to a border or limit as areas that confine and define human social and biological identities. On the other hand, intensive spaces are less well defined, not so obvious; these are “zones of intensity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 274), also bounded but differently, “the limits of one zone marked by *critical points* . . . points defining abrupt transitions in the state of the creatures inhabiting those zones” (De Landa, 2005, p. 80, emphasis in original).<sup>159</sup> The indivisibility of intensity means that for two intensive quantities to change, there needs to

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<sup>159</sup> The concept of an intensive quantity comes from thermodynamics where it is used to discriminate between separate bodies. For example, two litres of water at 18°C, when separated into two one-litre lots, will not have their temperatures reduced to 9°C each (as contrasted with *extensive* measurement, where quantities can be separated, in this case, yielding half the original volume for each.

“Far-from-equilibrium thermodynamics” allows that a “final” state of equilibrium to which a system tends is already present prior to its actualisation and acts as an attractor, as a structure of a space of possibilities, guiding processes towards a definite outcome, a zone of higher intensity, where difference-driven morphogenesis and matter become active agents, not needing the imposition of form from outside. Only in this zone of intensity can extensity be created, together with its identity-defining borders” (see De Landa, 1998, 2002, pp. 30-38; 2005, pp. 80-88).

be a change in the degree of intensity, which emerges spontaneously to offer a productive difference:

Everything which happens and everything which appears is correlated with orders of difference: differences of level, temperature, pressure, tension, potential, *difference of intensity* (Deleuze, 1994, p. 222, emphasis in original). And this quantitative distinction is no mere appearance, but an internal difference, a difference of intensity . . . Individuation is, in Spinoza, neither qualitative nor extrinsic, but quantitative and intrinsic, intensive (Deleuze, 2005, p. 197).

This is what Deleuze and Guattari glean from Spinoza: life just is desire and striving, with no stable being beyond ceaseless movement. So then, where matter meets itself, encounters or relations refer to desire as intrinsic powers to differ. Every relation has the potential to engage in other relations, “such that a field is not a distribution of points so much as the striving of powers to become, and that become as this or that quality, depending upon, but never exhausted by, their encounters” (Colebrook, 2005b, p. 198). Life, in its power to differentiate, to engage this affect or another, just is the desire to act and to rupture without regard to end, and without recourse to any lack (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 377).

Mark had become irritable and aggressive when Julie or his father asked for anything beyond the basics, and he “wouldn’t get groceries on his way home from town. I would have to drive all the way back to Hamilton to get them”. He began taking “more and more for himself. He would take money for his studies, he would buy his lunch, and coffees. I didn’t have a car and he wasn’t prepared to look after the kids”. If the children needed money for a school camp or trip, Julie said, he would say that it was just a waste of time. The children responded by stealing, and by adding up the money they had earned working on the farm and writing the sums in a ledger. Mark would then deny he owed them anything. He told Julie she was a “financial liability and [that she] didn’t work hard enough to earn [her] board and keep.” “. . . Once the fridge blew up . . . I had some sausages in it and I put them in the cupboard. I saw maggots on them but that was the only food we had, so I cooked them. Adam saw the maggots, but the other kids just said, eat them anyway. The kids just took that sort of thing as normal”.

Deleuze is a philosopher committed to the task of challenging conventions, at the same time conceptualising the productive vitality of the new.<sup>160</sup> Such an event occurred to Julie, in her “becoming-active”, rather than reactive (Deleuze, 2006a, p. 72). She describes it in her narrative: Mark went on a business trip, and she took his chequebook and bought a new fridge. Feeling overwhelmed by this memory, she spoke in a mix of the personal and the abstract: “It was like a double-whammy, you [the universal “one”] know you don’t work hard enough for me [Mark] to keep you [Julie] but you [“one”] can’t anyway”. From de Beauvoir’s perspective, writing in the 1940s, everyone has freedom to act and choose, but the constraints that (double) bind<sup>161</sup> women in subordination can make it almost impossible to exercise this freedom. Notwithstanding Julie’s ambiguity about her moral responsibility for the failing relationship, the shame and confusion she felt over her part in the abuse, her acceptance of Marks’s account as the accurate one, she nevertheless found the strength, in the affirmative act of buying a fridge, to create a different narrative, “to confront her trauma” (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glase & Glaser, 1988, p. 240).

“Deciding for oneself” (Phillips, 2008, p. 99), associated with the freedom to separate from others, and accepting responsibility for not taking all the responsibility had begun. Julie’s idiosyncratic use of language (anacolutha, ellipses, lacunae, hesitations, and velleities), had been worked into a performative influence that acted on her behaviour and helped to change the former behaviours of what seemed to have been a lifelong grimace of self-control and false selfhood in which she claimed even her walk and posture had become stiff and unnatural. Whatever Mark had said to her was always unbearable, and Julie’s assumption of responsibility for his displeasure and her acceptance of guilt, and her sense of loyalty silenced her from

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<sup>160</sup> Deleuze valorises the “conditions of the new” (Smith, 2012, p. 235), as the ethical principle guiding emerging modes of life in all their blooming, complicated multiplicities. Difference envisaged as difference from itself —as the driving force in the becomings of bodies, as creative novelty, most clearly seen in the endeavours bodies undertake to “organize encounters” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 280), is valued as the highest ethical good (Jun, 2011b, p. 104), because it liberates the forces of those becomings and because it is capable of granting “an amplification, an intensification of an elevation of power, a growth in dimensions, and a gain in distinction” (Deleuze, 1993, p. 73). This organisation demands creative experimentation of actions, connections and affects so that the most “compatible relations” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 262), for extending a body’s power of action may be realised.

Patton, in *Deleuze and Politics* (2008, p. 182), observes that it is Deleuze & Guattari’s “movements of deterritorialisation and lines of flight within a given social field that provide the impetus and direction for change”. Deterritorialisation provides the conceptual apparatus for following lines of flight and the disruptions and breaks that occasion “creative transformation and metamorphosis through which individual and collective bodies may be transformed” (Patton, 2008, p. 83). But the overarching endorsement of novelty that Deleuze and Guattari privilege is at risk of assuming an unexplained normative – and therefore *transcendent* – value, the new being assessed as valuable come what may. Certain it is that novelty for novelty’s sake can lead to some very unhappy outcomes.

<sup>161</sup> Gregory Bateson, et al (1956), describes double-bind situations as ones where the victim receives contradictory directives or emotional injunctions which are impossible to fulfil.

talking of the non-physical violence that was occurring (Towns & Adams, 2000, 2016; Towns, Adams, & Gavey, 1995).<sup>162</sup>

Shortly after her purchase of the fridge, Julie left the relationship. CYFS had picked up her youngest son, Adam, for theft, and the CYFS team said they had arranged for her to stay at a women's refuge. Julie declined:

I said, you're kidding me, I don't need to go to a refuge but then this little part of my brain was saying, you need to think as to why they think that . . . I thought, I knew the situation was bad, but when other people that you don't even know say they've got a place in a refuge for you, you think, ok, maybe it is bad. But also, when you're on a farm, you've got the responsibility of stock, dogs and sheep and cattle, and all sorts of animals. If you just walk away, not to mention human welfare, but you've got animal welfare issues as well. You know, I had to take my dog with me, and you know, and all those sorts of things. It's just not you . . . a farm is a whole unit, you know. I had my father-in-law, my husband and three kids, and all the animals and everything, so you're not just leaving a man, you know, you're leaving a whole lifestyle. I mean my kids are fourth generation. When you say leaving home, it's home and home and home, it's the land and the creek and the streams and all the trees and everything that's gone on.

Assuming blame (le *non du père*),<sup>163</sup> is likely to impact on a victim's ability or willingness to speak of domestic violence, and in that way "contribute[s] to the social and psychological cost to her and her children" (Towns & Adams, 2016, p. 498; see also Jack, 1991, 1999; Woods, 2010). Jack (1991, p. 104), using feminist viewpoints and CB theories of depression, explores the way women are silenced in gendered fashion and trained to be "good women" through yielding to a submissive morality based on "love, family loyalty, and unselfishness". "Where there is a history of male dominance and female passivity, the "over-eye" assumes judgement accordingly, critically appraising the women's resistance to traditional gendered beliefs or "good women" standards" (Towns & Adams, 2016, p. 499). "Patriarchal domination through force" (Dobash & Dobash, 1979, p. ix), "is still supported by a moral order which reinforces the marital hierarchy and makes it very difficult for a woman to struggle against this and other forms of domination and control because her struggle is construed as wrong, immoral, and a

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<sup>162</sup> As these authors note, a strong sense of redemptive nurturance is common in women's discourse of abuse. Doubtless linked to conventional constructions of women as selfless instruments of care and love, and rehearsed in children's stories such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *The Frog Prince*, some women come to believe that violence is simultaneously a sign that they are loved (their man is jealous), and that they are not loving enough (all will be well if only they love better).

<sup>163</sup> "*Non du père*" is of course, homophonic with Lacan's '*Nom du père*', the ambiguity playing on the link between paternal authority and prohibition.

violation of the respect and loyalty a wife is supposed to give to her husband". Despite this, women do struggle against their partner's oppression as well as against the forces that silence or blame them for their men's violence. Women do resist the cultural ideals that require them to submit to the treatment their partners consider appropriate and against the policies and responses of those social agencies that maintain those values by providing direct or indirect support for the husband's authority and his use of violence.

Julie went to live with her youngest child's (Adam's) grandmother,<sup>164</sup> leaving the two older children, the farm and the animals with Mark. Her father-in-law supported Julie but was powerless to demand she receive any share from Mark. She went on the Domestic Purposes Benefit (DPB), where she claimed, "It wasn't that I didn't feel I was entitled to the DPB; I knew I was entitled and knew that it was extreme measures that made me get it, but I felt that for my own pride, that if I worked for it then I was entitled to it. It was more about me wanting to earn it rather than feeling guilty that I got it". By then she felt that Mark could not hurt her any more, no longer demand anything of her. He could no longer comment on her defects or compare her unfavourably with other women, nor make her a participant in his plans without her permission, nor make her feel inadequate or stupid or ugly. Especially, he could no longer make her feel like a thing. Julie had written herself out of the preordained, unified, structure of subjectivity where woman is "merely a mirrored reflection of the self" (Conley, 2000, p. 19). Opposed to the oedipal molar constructs of patriarchy, she opened up to connections and change, rejecting the imposition of impinging social signifiers that caged her and which stunted the opportunity for real becomings, liberating trajectories and true desires from occurring. Julie had realised that her mode of existence had moved from the morality of asking, What must I do? to the more distinctly ethical question of What *can* I do? (Deleuze, 1994, p. 37).

Julie nursed Adam's terminally ill grandmother until her death. Then, after she died, Julie moved into a small house in Ngaruawahia, paying the board for two sons away at high school from her DPB as well as the fees for Nick, the oldest, by this time studying at tertiary level. Able to find some voluntary work which provided her with petrol vouchers, she said, "I felt like I was earning my money [the DPB] so I felt really proud of myself. I had never ever felt so wealthy in my life".

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<sup>164</sup> Julie's marriage produced two sons. Later, Mark and she whangaiied (adopted) another boy from Mark's extended family.

Then she obtained a training incentive allowance (TIA) and commenced training in TESOL.<sup>165</sup> Halfway through the course, a position became available for a teacher of numeracy and literacy with a private training provider, which she eagerly accepted. The three children came to live with her, she bought a house, “and I just kind of lived here, really frugally”. After three years, the children left, and Julie moved to Raglan:

I started to think more like on a social than intellectual level. I mean all my life, I'd just kind of worked hard, got stuck in and done the graft without really thinking too much. I started thinking about the social side of living rurally, and I thought, why do I, or why do I expect myself to think that a job is something you do in Hamilton? I knew there was no work in Raglan for somebody like me at my age. You know, there's café work and that sort of thing, so I thought well, what can I do to work and live and socialise and trade in my own community? . . . [W]hen I did come back, I was utterly amazed by how many people came up to me and offered me their support and said that they thought Mark was a fuckwit and how I took it and all that sort of thing, whereas, I thought, oh, I've failed my marriage. In the hindsight of several years, when I came back, I think it's like, wow, you're amazing, you did the right thing and, he was such an arse. It doesn't actually help much. I don't like to hear all the negative things about him for his sake, but it does reinforce what I was feeling was correct and [that] I made the right decision. . . with the whole Catholic thing, too, you know; it's of course, life's hard, of course, you have to suffer, of course you've got to graft. You know, and just, I used to think that how could I work harder, how could I be a better person. . . [E]very day I would try.

Accepted cultural beliefs include widely accepted gender schemas and roles (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004), and so Julie declaimed, “I would think I must work harder, I must be better, but then, one day, but then one day, I don't know where it came from, I just thought, love can't fix this, because I did still love him for a long time, and I thought, you know I just can't fix this, it takes two to make a marriage and only one person to . . .”

Following Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the psychoanalytic, and of the negative interpretation of desire and the unconscious as lack (coming later than Deleuze's earlier rendering of self and desire in *Difference and Repetition*), people's sense of their anxiety and despair compels a representative and doctrinaire view of sanity from which any deviation or private doubt is seen as individual and pathological (Miller & White, 2003; Stark, 2007). Our basic experience of subjectivity is that of the authority of our inner life, but present-day

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<sup>165</sup> Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.



accounts fuse the cultural and societal with the personal, stifling creativity and immanent desire or “will”, and evoking dread of, and fear over any attempt at transformation or escape. So it was, that at one stage, Julie said she feared she was on the brink of insanity, startled at seeing her reflection in the mirror. Pence and Paymar (1993, p. 3) provide an illustration of the emotional abuse suffered by women under these regimes in their “Power and Control Wheel”. Tactics include: “putting her down, making her feel bad about herself, calling her names, making her think she’s crazy, playing mind games, humiliating her [and] making her feel guilty”. Intimidatory tactics include: “making her afraid by using looks, actions, gestures, smashing things, destroying her property, abusing pets [and] displaying weapons” (Pence and Paymar, 1993, p. 162).

Not all men dominate their partners, even though all men have been socialised in a system that privileges their sex and valorises those cultural messages that reinforce cultural beliefs of aggression, mastery, and status. Perhaps Mark believed his behaviour and attitude towards his wife and children was both justified and appropriate.<sup>166</sup> Perhaps Mark’s own narrative provides an alternative explanation for the harsh treatment that Julie endured in their marriage.<sup>167</sup> After all, the notion of narrative subjectivity has many interpretive perspectives: the first person narcissistic-protective view, that person’s external social-symbolic identity, the subject’s reality as constituted in the utterance, the opacity of the speaker’s insight into his real motivations, the inevitable ironic reversals due to the gap between statement and enunciation, constative and perlocutionary – all juxtaposed with the actual, verifiable deeds authenticated by independent observation. But the limitless capacity of the mind for self-deception, as Dennett (1992), Edelman (1992, 2004), Schore (1994, 2019), and others have shown, and as the obscene behaviour of SS-Obersturmbannführer Maximilien Aue in *The Kindly Ones* demonstrates, the flagitious hypocrisy of a justificatory righteousness inhering in a fragmented mind’s consciousness is no excuse for gratuitously evil action. “You shall know them by their fruits”, states the *New Testament*; the truth is to be found in what people do.

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<sup>166</sup> Johnson (1995, p. 284), terms the systematic abuse of women in relationships “patriarchal terrorism: men’s right to control “their” women” . . . [with] “the pattern of violence rooted in basically patriarchal ideas of male ownership of their female partners”.

<sup>167</sup> Biographies of such men are often stories of childhood abuse, inadequate love and nurturing as children, and witness to adult misogyny, alcoholism, and social deprivation. This was not Mark’s experience.

Julie's parents were supportive of her leaving Mark, but they claimed that she wasn't ready to listen to their thoughts, that she was just too "prickly". "I had a girlfriend and I used to talk to her and complain to her and then one day, it occurred to me that, you know, I was saying the same things again and again, and I couldn't actually do that, I couldn't expect her to support me when I wasn't doing anything myself, so I stopped using her as a sounding board and just started to try and be more constructive about it."

So, for a while, I had a job at a little shop in town, it's not there now, and I'd got quite interested in the food business. I liked baking. So I did the research which was really hard as we were on dial-up and started thinking about . . . One really important thing to me was not to compete with anybody or to be in conflict with anybody. I went to the other cafés to see if it was ok that I set up a little lunch bar, and they said, yeah, we don't care.

Julie applied for and received an enterprise allowance from WINZ and set up her lunch bar. She claims the biggest obstacle was overcoming her own conviction that she needed to be in an urban environment and work for wages. When she and Mark had divorced, he had said he'd fight her in court if she pressed for any part of the marital property: "He threatened me around taking what, or asking for what was my share, after 20 years of marriage, so I was actually frightened of him. I was so desperate to get away and be independent. I didn't want his money. And I thought that if I left the money in the farm, he would look after the boys better".

The thought didn't translate into action. Her father-in-law, Mark's father, "had worked so hard to freehold the farm and struggled all his life to be freehold. I couldn't bear to take that away from him, so I didn't". Julie sought advice from a lawyer, asking him to devise a document stating she had no claim on the farm. When the lawyer protested, she insisted and duly signed the paper he reluctantly drew up. "Mark was really happy with it". Years later, and in a new relationship, when she and her partner developed an asset protection plan to secure his large farm and Julie her house, she was shocked to learn that her previous lawyer had written a document that wasn't legally binding (no witnesses or dates). So "he [the lawyer] had worked for me in the long run".

Notwithstanding, Julie made no claim on her previous husband's property: "I said if it's all so important to you, you keep it; I can make my own way". She went on to say that most people would regard it as crazy to walk away from a justified share of Mark's and her property, but "it

actually felt much better to me. I felt like you've got everything you want, so have it, and I felt free from him . . . I knew I had to leave for quite a few reasons really. One is that I was [pause] becoming more and more invisible. I actually remember seeing myself in the mirror one day, and a thinking [sic] a crazy thought and thinking, oh my god, I'm there. I always expected to not see myself". Concurrent with becoming, Julie's personal identity was slipping away; her identity disappearing (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 3).

In a way, Julie had become dispossessed of her symbolic substance, and, crucially, the event focused on the issue of her subjectivity and gave energy to a creative reconceptualisation of a new becoming beyond the strictures of representation.<sup>168</sup> "[A] new persona is only possible if something occurs in a text that marks a threshold and requires a reorientation in thinking: awkwardness is essential if thinking is going to be more than the free flow of easy conversation, or the war of one body against another" (Colebrook, 2008, p. 7).<sup>169</sup> Assumption of a specular identification precipitates the subject into a fetishistic "social psychosis" (Lacan, 2006, p. 480), where she "assumes an image" (p. 76), destined to project a paranoid and illusory (rational, homogeneous, heteronormative, paternal, habitual, impenetrable) coherence on to the world, a world perfectly rational and coherent provided one ignores that its very foundations – incest prohibition, kinship rules, patriarchy, valorisation of the same – are irrational practices favouring one group. When she can no longer recognise herself within the conjurations of a system, both the system and the subject can be considered as acute symptoms of dissolving and (mis)taken representations of a pathological culture.

"From the beginning", say Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Œdipus*, ". . . we have maintained both that social-production and desiring production are one and the same, and that they have differing regimes, with the result that a social form of production exercises an essential

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<sup>168</sup> Deleuze criticises representation and its inherent negativity thus: "Difference and repetition have taken the place of the identical and the negative, of identity and contradiction. For difference implies the negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained. The primacy of identity, however conceived, defines the world of representation. But modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical. The modern world is one of simulacra. Man did not survive God, nor did the identity of the subject survive that of substance. All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect' by the more profound game of difference and repetition. We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative" (Deleuze, 1994, p. xix).

<sup>169</sup> Colebrook draws here on Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*, in which events are shown as two-sided, introducing change and novelty, multiply coursing through bodies, codes and (virtual) structures, involving many processes and selecting changes and impacting both the series as well the event itself so that they are never quite the same again (in a sense).

repression of desiring-production, and also that desiring production – “real” desire – is potentially capable of demolishing the social form” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 116). Social repression is delegated to the nuclear family, where it appears as originating from and through the (mis)representations of the Œdipus complex (p. 118, and following), and where the family does the work of repressing desire (because it’s harmful, disgusting and shameful), thereby “domesticating the unconscious” (p. 121) and warding off “desire’s potential for revolt and rebellion” (p. 120). If, the authors say, “*psychic repression did bear on incestuous desires*, it would thereby gain a certain independence and primacy . . . in relation to social repression, which would then concern only the returns of the psychically repressed in a constituted society” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 113, emphasis in original). Social repression would then be seen as a “natural” or secondary extension of that prohibition in order that society might arise and maintain a certain stability.

So thought Freud. But Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalysis reverses the process, showing that “psychic repression is a means in the service of social repression” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 119), and that anti-production (a term borrowed from Artaud, 1947), and which psychoanalysis terms the “death instinct”, is necessary to mobilise the BwO away from fixedness in repetitive and stultifying connections in order to enable the production of other forms of organ-isation.<sup>170</sup> “Organizations of forms, formations of subjects . . . “incapacitate” desire, they subjugate it to law and introduce lack into it” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 96). In society conventionally, stability and custom are the accepted positions, solidifying reproduction over the creation of new experience, cementing recognition of, and correspondence to external “truth” over experimentation, and plastering representation over difference. Even “the self” is conceived as a representation. But where the dominant order ruptures,<sup>171</sup> as in Julie’s description of herself becoming invisible, the schism provokes a “reflection” which offers the possibility of both evacuating the “self” from “actual” customary representations, and of uniting it and the world more convincingly in a process of co-

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<sup>170</sup> The benefits of the BwO are elaborated in Plateau Six of Deleuze & Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, “How Do You Make Yourself a Body Without Organs?” There, the authors make a plea for expression: “[H]ow can we unhook ourselves from the points of subjectification that secure us, nail us down to a dominant reality?” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 160).

<sup>171</sup> “[Y]ou can no longer stand what you put up with before, even yesterday; the distribution of desires has changed in us, our relationships of speed and slowness have been modified, a new type of anxiety comes upon us, but also a new serenity. Fluxes have moved, it is when your health is at its best, your riches most assured, your talent most manifest, that the little cracking which will move the line obliquely starts to happen. Or the opposite: things go better for you when everything cracks on the other line, producing immediate relief. Not being able to bear something any longer can be a progression . . .” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 126).

construction, one in which new subjectivities might be fashioned, less connected to cultural mores and more attached to an æsthetic of novel, immanent creativity, one more engaged in life as desire.

The destiny of a person depends upon the ability to develop the means of subtracting parts of herself so as to enable the least and fewest restrictions on the creating of new capacities. Julie still operates her small shop. Independence suits her; she likes her life.

I am rooted, but I flow  
(Virginia Woolf, 2014.)

**Mel** had a happy childhood in the 1930s, brought up in a small country town where most of her relatives were Scottish: playing in the bush, spending all day building huts and having picnics with sandwiches and a bottle of water, the Waikato River as the backdrop to her life. She would ride on one of the smaller boats with her uncle to Mercer, and she recalls tugs, and the paddle steamers, the larger ones dropping their funnels to pass beneath the Huntly bridge. When she was 12, her younger sister, Varvra, drowned in the river.

Because of her sister's death, Mel missed a lot of days off school. She was held back in primary school an extra year. When she left primary school, she went to work in the "lounge tearooms" where her mother also worked. She left that job to work in a local hotel as a housemaid waitress, and, moving to a country village further out because of her father's job on the County Council, Mel, 14, met her future husband, Tiny, who drove a workers' bus. Tiny took her to the dance hall: ". . . it was very dilapidated; it needed a coat of paint. Before you could start dancing, you had to go in and chase all the birds out that were nesting in the hall. You'd have to clean up all their mess off the floor, and then they'd bring a band in". Tiny was a good dancer, Mel's parents liked him, and the pair married in 1949. Then, quickly, "it was like, "aha, got you now, I'm the boss" ".

When their son was born, Tiny started coming home from work later. Mel's mother remonstrated with him over this, pointing out that he was the baby's father and needed to share the responsibility of looking after the child. "Tiny said, "Yeah, I'll do what I bloody well like" . . . mum looks at me and looks at dad". Thirteen months later, the couple's daughter was born. Shirley was a month premature, "and she was so tiny when I brought her home, I was supposed to go to Karitane<sup>172</sup> which was down in Wellington, and because I was married and Tiny was my husband, he would not give his consent, so . . . no, he wouldn't let me go, even for three weeks . . . I could not bath my baby until she was a month old, and I used to have to lie her on very soft gauze and she had soft gauze all over and around her, and she was not able to

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<sup>172</sup> Karitane hospitals (1906-1979) developed as a result of Dr Truby King's concern over the number of babies failing to thrive. The hospitals provided a safe and nurturing environment for mother and baby.

wear a nappy, and she, the only place we could find that was safe for her to sleep in was the top drawer of my tallboy”.

While she was at home caring for the children, Mel undertook contract sewing and knitting for local people. Tiny would search the house until he found the money, so she asked her clients to provide material instead, and with that surplus, she sewed clothes for her children. State houses were being built at the time and Mel applied for one: “I telephoned a man by the name of Mr George, told him who I was. I said, “I used to go to school with your daughter and I would like to ask you a question”. I said, “How come outsiders [from out of town] are granted state houses and I’m not granted one?” and he said, “Oh, I’m sorry Mel, I never realised about that.” And I said, “Well, my husband has applied for a state house,” and he said, “Yes, that’s right,” and he said, “Yes, but he was born in New Plymouth,” and I said, “Yes, that’s right,” and he said, “Oh, we’ll have to look into that”, and then about 2 or 3 days later, I get a phone call to say “We’ve got a state house for you” ”.

Trouble began. Working as a bus driver, driving men to and from the mines out of Huntly, Tiny would finish by 4.30. Six o’clock closing of hotels was the rule at that time and Tiny would go to the hotel until it closed, drinking as much as he could in that time. “[M]y son [Tim, 2½] would watch for his dad and if he was pushing his bike, he used to want to go to the bedroom . . . he was like, “I take Bubba [Shirley] to the bedroom, mummy,” and he’d say, “Come on Bubba, come with Tim . . .” He [Tiny] never ever touched the children. He used to yell at them, and they would cry, and Tim used to take his sister by the hand; she walked very early. She was so tiny and light and he would try and pick her up, but she was too heavy for him to do that, so he used to take her by the hand and pull her up, and she’d hang onto his clothing and the pair of them used to go to the bedroom, and I’d hear him pulling something across the door once he’d got in . . . but if his dad was riding his bike, he’d say, “Daddy come from work, mum”, and everything would be ok”.

When he was drunk, Tiny would hit Mel. At first, he used merely to threaten and hold his fists up in front of her face: “I would go, “Don’t even think about it”, but he was so drunk one night, he started”. She was so ashamed of the incident that she did not confide in her parents, though her mother used to comment on the bruises on her arms. “I’d say, “Aw, I must have banged into something”, but it was, he would hold me, either arm, and shake, you know . . .”.

Resistance is likely to escalate tension, and the logic of assemblage suggests that events of breaks engendered by abusive events lead to “redistributions of desire, such that when something occurs, the self that awaited it is already dead, or the one that would await it has not yet arrived” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 198-9). Retrospective thought alone cannot cut through the kinds of molar lines of rigid compliance that prevailed in New Zealand married lives in the 1950s, but Deleuze and Guattari’s contumacious insistence on the plasticity and openness of our bodies<sup>173</sup> provides an appreciation of the opportunities that an intelligent insightfulness can offer for altering trajectories and to folding future joy into a life. The lines of flight that sunder molar paths are frequently the sudden blows and catastrophes coming from outside that retroactively divide a life into “before” and “after”, although real personal transformation does not come from these obvious calamities. “[T]he important breaks are the subtle shifts of feeling or attitude which distance the person from his or her former convictions” (Patton, 2000, p. 86).<sup>174</sup> Critical episodes “involve molecular changes in the structure of a person . . .” (p. 86). To the extent, then, that certain events have the effect of opening up some paths and closing others, and to the degree that the individual’s capacities to affect and to be affected change as a result, they are invitations to becoming (p. 85), and for Deleuze and Guattari, the loss of the Lacanian *petit objet a* is not a cause for grief and a resultant search for an imagined fullness of being, but *should* be rather, a joyful release from the imposition of a stultifying set of affairs. On this view, critical episodes are those that shape a different, albeit impermanent, identity, with a continually renewed set of pathways now available. Quoting Fitzgerald, Patton goes on to say, “a person does not recover from blows of this sort . . . he [sic] becomes a different person and eventually, the new person finds new things to care about” (p. 86).

One such event occurred when Tiny came home drunk again. The children were in the bedroom and Tiny walked past Mel: “I didn’t think I was going to get hit and he punched me about here

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<sup>173</sup> Many of the cells in our bodies are completely changed after seven to ten years, but this knowledge is ignored by our common-sense conviction that we have continuing, stable identities. (Source: Adam Cole. “Does Your Body Really Refresh Itself Every 7 Years?” *NPR Shots*, 28 June, 2016).

<sup>174</sup> Patton draws on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s essay, “The Crack-Up”, published in *Esquire*, February, March and April, 1936. Scott Fitzgerald’s essay begins: “Of course all life is a process of breaking down, but the blows that do the dramatic side of the work – the big sudden blows that come, or seem to come, from outside – the ones you remember and blame things on and, in moments of weakness, tell your friends about, don’t show their effect all at once. There is another sort of blow that comes from within – that you don’t feel until it’s too late to do anything about it, until you realize with finality that in some regard you will never be as good a man again. The first sort of breakage seems to happen quick – the second kind happens almost without your knowing it but is realized suddenly indeed.”



[her breast]. I thought, you shit, that hurt. I said, "How do you like it?" and I closed my fist and whacked him as hard as I could. And he said, "Don't you dare hit me", and he just came up and hit me, and my breast was so sore, and I thought, I'm going to fix this once and for all, and he pushed me and I was going backwards and I looked around for something to hit him with, and the only thing I could see was a frying pan which was sitting on top of the stove, one of those light frypans, and I picked it up by the handle and whipped around, and I said, "That's the last time you hit me", and I got him on the side of the head, and I thought, oh God, I can never use that again, so he put his hand up and he goes like this, and he said "Blood!" and he fainted on the floor".

Hearing the commotion, a supportive neighbour from across the road rushed over. Mel phoned her mother ("He's hit you again, hasn't he?"), "threw some gear into the car, got the kids' clothes, and that was it". Some days later, representing her husband, a lawyer sent a man and a woman to verify her story:

Mum said, "What! You want to make sure her claims of persistent cruelty are valid? Look at her face, look at her black eye!"

"Oh, yes, but she could have walked into something."

My two kids were through in the bedroom, so mum said to me, "Take your housecoat off", and I said, "Mum, I haven't got anything on underneath," and she said, "Do as you're told, take your housecoat off, drop it."

So I took it off, and the man had to go outside, and she [the woman] practically fainted, I was black and blue. I didn't even know I was so bad.

At the court proceedings, the judge ruled in Mel's favour, supported by her doctor. With her parents, Mel moved to another small town. Tiny had access to the children, although Tim was reluctant to visit him, and at Tiny's firm's Christmas party that year, Tim refused to go. Shirley, their daughter, went and returned with gifts of a doll and sweets. Mel said: "Tiny brings a cricket set out of the car, some sweets and something else, and he said to Tim, "I'd like you to take a good look at this because this is what you could have had but as you never came to me, you're not getting it" ."

Physical violence in the home is not an unusual event in contemporary and historical society, nor is it uncommon that the use of force is systematically and disproportionately directed against women. And considering physical violence abstracted from its social context, focusing instead on the individual personalities and biographies of the perpetrators is unlikely to elicit

understanding of causation (Toch, 2017; Bandura, 1997). Even investigating the prevalence and reality of domestic violence depends on wider social and political contexts; i.e., how a society regards the denigration, silencing and abuse of women in intimate relationships, what is recognised as sufficiently aberrant to justify investigation and prosecution, and with what measures against which idealised standards.<sup>175</sup> As well, alcohol-related violence also needs to be viewed as an effect of separate configurations of affects and relations, including the cultural norms prevailing in a particular assemblage at a particular time.<sup>176</sup> To the argument that battered women stay in relationships because they derive some form of pleasure from their subjugation, Deleuze's analysis in "Coldness and Cruelty" indicates the error of conflating sadism with masochism. He points out the necessary consensual ritual of masochism, which abnegates sadism (sadism and masochism are not opposites). Sadism requires an unwilling victim, and a masochist is hardly that. Furthermore, a masochist is always in charge, despite her supposed surrender. Battered women do not give their consent and they are victims of men's violence for those men's reasons. At best, women tolerate abuse because of an unreciprocated love for their perpetrator.

Some five years on, advertising for, and gaining work (in a grocery shop), seeking to buy a section and build a house for herself and her children, Mel applied to the court for a divorce. This was granted (by the same judge), and within a few days, she "felt free and I didn't have to look over my shoulder anymore". A woman in the town sold her a section, allowing her to pay for it as she was able. That land had years of slurry from the cowshed and a hollow at the bottom which was filled by truckloads of soil donated by truckdrivers in the community. "It was really great. They did a great lot of work and they said, no, we've known you ever since you've been this high, you don't pay us for that. Just make us a couple of batches of scones and we'll be happy with that".

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<sup>175</sup> In *Anti-Œdipus* (1983, pp. 42-68), Deleuze and Guattari argue that the nuclear family provides an exquisite training camp for the development of asceticism and explains why people desire their own repression. Under capitalism, "subjectivity" is reproduced by the family in capitalism's image, repressing the child's desire for those closest to it. The multiple objects and roles of desire that exist in society at large are thereby reduced to three: mother, child, and father (object of desire, subject of desire, and castrating mediator of desire between the two), perfectly mirroring the structure of capitalism: commodities, workers, and capital (object of labour, subject of labour, and prohibiting mediator between the two). The mediator (capital/Œdipus), subjugates productive life enjoyment and gratification, deferring these 'til death.

<sup>176</sup> Beyond the limits of this thesis, a differently focused approach might regard alcohol-related domestic violence as an emergent property of many distal factors of the assemblage: economic, technological, consumerist, relational, societal, historical, geographical, political, etc., as well as their infinite components, dimensions, performances, and differentiations. And of course, each case presents uniquely.

Many people helped Mel. Her lawyer asked her where she was getting the money from to build a house, and he proposed tapping into the pool of money set aside for returned servicemen for that purpose. "I said, but I'm not a returned service person, and he said, leave it to me, I'll write a letter. So, he wrote a letter and a few weeks later, I get a letter from him, saying, Congratulations, you are the first single mum in New Zealand to be granted a returned serviceman's loan". Then, when the building inspector refused to accept the proposed siting of the house because it encroached on the neighbour's property, Mel's builder successfully negotiated a compromise; as well, adjusting the footing and including an extra linen cupboard, another storage cupboard, and some shelves in the laundry. When the house was built and ready to be painted, a neighbour phoned her at work to get over and see what the painters were doing:

I had a pushbike but my boss said to take the van and get over to your house, and I got over there . . . and they had a big 44 gallon drum and they were mixing up finishing paint, gloss paint and undercoat, and stirring it around in this big drum, and they were going to paint it on my house. And I said, "What in Hell's name do you think you're doing?" "Mind your own business," he said, "we're painting the house". And I said, "That's not going on my house". I said, "This is my house", and he said, "We're going to put whatever we like on your house", and I said, "Is that right?" And I went up to the drum and put my foot against it and I tipped it over. And of course, I got sworn at.

The same neighbour phoned Mel's builder who came around, saw what was happening and fired the two men on the spot. "So that was it, we finally got the house all finished and moved into it. I'll never forget the price of my house; it was before decimal currency and to build that house, it cost me £2345. Where could you get that now?"

Shortly after, Mel's father, Claude, due to retire, noticed that a small piece of land at Port Waikato was available for sale. Together, Mel and her parents bought that section and had a small house built on it. Mel's parents duly retired there.

I managed to save enough money to buy myself a little car and I'd get home from work on a Friday night and I'd be tired, and Tim would say, I made you a cup of tea mum, and I'd say, Oh thank you Tim, and Shirley would say, And I tried to make some scones, and I had a look, and I said, Well, they look as if they'd be edible, and she said, Yeah, but we haven't tasted them yet. . . . And I said, Why are the bags packed? And Tim said, Well, we thought if you weren't tired after work, we thought we might go down and surprise Nana and Pop at

Port Waikato, and I looked at their faces and the stuff all packed and the place all nice and clean, and I said, Ok, we'll have a cup of tea, and then we'll go very slowly to Port Waikato. So, we always used to stop at Pokeno at the garage and we knew the owner there. His name was John and he had only one arm, and we always used to get some petrol from John and have a talk to John and buy a pie and set off for Port Waikato and sneak in through the big gate and I had a car that just went cho cho cho cho cho, didn't make a lot of noise, and we'd get right up to the door and Tim would knock on the door. And my mother said, Claude, I think there's someone at our door, who the Hell would be at our door at this time of night? Because by that time it was probably 9.30, 10, when we'd get to mum and dad's, and we'd all be standing at the door, and dad would open the door and he'd say, Good God Almighty, mum, come and see who's at our door; you'll never guess. And she'd come out, and she'd say, Oh, my God, what a wonderful surprise, come in, come on, come on, come on, Father, help them in.

Mel led a very contented life at Ngaruawahia. Tim played rugby for the local team, mother and daughter cheering from the sideline, and the team and their coach would come to Mel's place after the match with "fish and sausages and chips and bread", coach allowing "two bottles of beer and no more . . . and you all respect Mel's house, and I'll tell you something else; there's not to be any bloody swearing!" Before the boys left, they would vacuum and mop and polish the kitchen floor with "socks on their feet".

Subjects may be described, and perhaps explained, by their emergence in immanent processes of differentiation, which never settle into stable identities.<sup>177</sup> For Deleuze, the constitution of subjectivity (following the pre-individual he terms the "dividual"), arises from formerly passive pre-individual elements tenuously formed by, and coalescing into particular active and reflective capabilities as a result of encounters with the environment and through embeddedness in social structurations "as the result of a process of folding and as an internalization of an outside that no folding can ever exhaust" (Boundas, 1994, p. 113). Subjectivity is continually being constructed, dismantled and remade from the web of events, affects and relations in which it is sited. And while it is uncommon, indeed, to have the experience of being made up of various parts, it may be more obvious to regard oneself as acting differently within specific social contexts and being part of a different, larger nexus, particularly where there has been a rupture within an established context. Such structural

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<sup>177</sup> See Hume's *Treatise*, Bk I, which argues against the "fiction of identity".

relations are the products of encounters, just as encounters and the perceptions they engender, produce relations. Relations need to cohere sufficiently in order to be understood as ideas; as such, an individual's construction of the world is a necessary component of her experience of it, rather like constructing a plane at the same time as flying it.

Mel embodies Deleuze's concept of subjectivity with exuberance. Every event is a wound, Deleuze insists, that we are born to embody (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 169). But this is true "only of the free man [sic] who grasps the event, and does not allow it to be actualized as such without enacting *the actor, its counter-actualization*" (p. 171, my emphasis), and, "Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to us" (p. 169). People become worthy of whatever befalls them, in other words, by "counter-actualising" events instead of succumbing to resentment, negative resignation or passive acquiescence; instead, giving the events different meanings, intensities, speeds, and energies: "Thus, the actor delimits the original, disengages it from an abstract line, and keeps from the event only its contour and its splendor, becoming thereby the actor of one's own events – a *counter-actualization*" (p. 171, emphasis in original). Every individual carries then, a self-organising and affirming openness to expression and to a vital, processual potentia of sense that aspires to a Spinozan enhancement of activity and development of connection, never outside relations with other modes, but capable of learning to alter the quality of encounters. Freedom.

Counter-actualising events means constructing new meanings and novel affects about this event and this body, presented by the past and guided by the future, aleatory and changeable it is true, but accepted as challenges to the present self. The constant interrelational flux of self and society<sup>178</sup> demonstrates that change is possible, and that new ways of thinking and feeling, in conjunction with the breaks of de-individualisation, can be realised, "an affect of self on self"

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<sup>178</sup> "Transcendental empiricism" (Deleuze, 1991a), is the term for that which Deleuze describes as the individual's capacity for acting upon the world and herself, as well as being acted upon. This astonishing concept gets around the problem of the individual's being considered *wholly* transcendent: if it were, no interaction with society would be possible. Transcendental empiricism offers a "solution": individuals are both formed by the social environment and are capable of manipulating – transcending – that environment to some extent. No circumstances, be they ever so dire, are decisive in constituting subjectivity: "Ideas do not account for the operations that we perform on them, and especially of the relations that we establish among them" (Deleuze 1991a, p. 101). This suggests that the relations found between ideas are not inherent in those ideas but are part of "human nature" (p.101). Said another way, the *subject* is constituted in the given but is able to transcend that given because the relation between the imagination and the "principles of association" (p. 15) are dynamic. Constancy and uniformity occur in the way these associations are connected in the imagination and, via appropriative reflection, i.e., active synthesis, acquire the agency of subjecthood.

(Deleuze, 2006b, p. 101), effecting a release from the limits of old ways of being: in a word, becoming. Deleuze and Guattari's striking conception of the future, understood as opening up the way things are expected to be to the potential for alternative futures, constitutes the ground for change.<sup>179</sup>

Through association – the connection of use-value (of cultural and social institutions and mechanisms) to desire – the passively-synthesised individual becomes active through particularising the universal in ways that lead to liberation by turning the normative conventions constraining usual existence to individual use, expressing the everyday as a set of dynamic and interconnected relations<sup>180</sup> between existing forces and current usages (i.e., between passive modes and active modifications). Living in a determinedly striated space,<sup>181</sup> Mel, like Josephine in Kafka's fable, resisted the allure of "The One, the Same and the Necessary" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 115). Battling others' low expectations, striving to escape unfreedom, yearning to embark on a nomadic voyage of self-affirmation, Mel aspired to that appropriation of the given where active forces dominate over reactive ones, thereby actively transmuting them and living in accord with her own desires.

Eschewing custom in her vision of freedom, Josephine, the Mouse Princess, extends the limits of her ability with the sublime conviction that her art is exquisitely perfect. For both Josephine and Mel, the transformation affirms the Multiple, the Different, and the Fortuitous (Deleuze, 1994, p. 115). For both, the fundamental striving for *more* – conatus – that Deleuze locates in Spinoza's *Ethics*, is exemplified in Mel's positivity, expressed in Nietzschean terms of "forces in thought that elude obedience as well as blame, and fashion the image of a life beyond good and evil, a rigorous innocence without merit or culpability" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 4), so as "to act according to virtue is nothing else . . . than to act, to live, and preserve our being according to

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<sup>179</sup> Such movements toward the extremes of self-determination are consistent, of course, with the excesses of American-style capitalism. Regulation-free capitalism, like schizophrenia, is akin to the "Body without Organs", BwO, (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983).

<sup>180</sup> A *Bildungsroman* exhibiting self-formation against oppression through resistance is illustrated by James Jones' character, Jack Molloy, in *From Here to Eternity*. A prisoner in the army stockade in Hawaii, Jack views the guards as condemned to lifetime sentences of hard labour in their efforts to break the rockpile of his intransigence. Transgressive activity is thereby transformed from a product of the legal system to Jack's construction of the stockade as his domain.

<sup>181</sup> Deleuze & Guattari (1987, pp. 474-500). Striated spaces are the overcoded, gridded lines and cells of regimentation, rules and order (in opposition to the "smooth spaces" of self-determination, nomadism, and the uncertainties of aleatoricism).

the guidance of reason, on the basis of seeking what is useful to oneself” (Spinoza, 1910, p. 158).<sup>182</sup>

Accordingly, having a cup of tea in Hamilton one day, Mel saw a cruise advertised around the Pacific Islands, joined that, and there, met her second husband, Phil, an American opal trader living in Australia. Mel married Phil, moving to Australia because he refused to live in New Zealand; meanwhile, her parents occupied her Ngaruawahia house to care for the children who were now young adults. After nine years, missing her family, Mel decided to pack up and come back home. Eventually, she and Phil divorced (“. . . he said, I was the best thing that ever happened to him and he was too stupid to see it”). Back in Ngaruawahia, she started dating Al, an old dancing friend from between her marriages from the Starlight Ballroom, whose own marriage had recently broken up: “I said, Look, I’ve been married twice before, I’m not going to make any mistakes this time”. To her mother’s disgust, enlarging her “scope of activity” (Röllli, 2016, p. 239), and experimenting with relationships, “we lived together for a couple of years”.

Mel did marry Al however, and they bought a house and lived contentedly in Hamilton for 15 years, moving briefly to Huntly on Al’s promotion, then back again to Hamilton, and from there to Raglan, where they built a house on a section in a sought-after area.

Like Nietzsche and Spinoza, Deleuze values creativity very highly, seeing in it the power that enables transformation of the individual from the tendentiously passive homogenisation of society, and one which hews a genuinely heterogeneous subjectivity from the desubjectifying rock of the One, the Same and the Necessary. As Hume has said, the mind becomes a subject as a principle of combined action and contemplation (Deleuze, 1991a, p. 26). And just as real effects produce the subject, the subject is real – if transient – because it produces real effects – if temporary. Refusing the denial of difference and the logic of identity, Deleuze and Guattari insist on the creativity of the new as a way of harnessing the potential of a subject’s becoming. This demands continuing commitment to de- and re-territorialisation, ongoing experimentation with life, its affects, associations and relationships, in such ways as to “extricate [her]self from chance encounters and the concatenation of sad passions, to organize good encounters, combine [her] relation with relations that combine directly with it, unite with

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<sup>182</sup> For Spinoza, a being’s capacity for action is enhanced by the strength of its *conatus*: “The mind, as much as it can, endeavours to imagine those things which increase or help its power of acting” (Spinoza, 1910, p. 94).

what in nature agrees with [her] . . . all this in such a way as to be affected with joy” (Deleuze, 1992a, p. 262). Sometimes, says a character in the recent Netflix drama, *Your Honor*, “life . . . line[s] up just perfectly and walk[s] you right in to your future”. Of all the women in this study, Mel was most surely open to these life forces. She swam with the flow. But it was her surge, her willing, and ultimately, her direction.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> At the time of the interviews, Mel was in her 80s. She has since died. Al survives her. Mel’s daughter is happily married and lives in Australia. Mel’s son, Tim, has never married.



I don't feel that it is necessary to know exactly what I am. The main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning (Michel Foucault, 1988).

No life ever follows a linear trajectory, but **Sally** has experienced a life more uncommon than the usual. Born in 1976 and growing up in middle-class Aberdeen, Hamilton, her father was seldom home (“... he was kind of in and out. He had affairs and things. I think he fully left when I was about three. But I mean, she [mother] still sleeps with him now. She loves him. And I don't have anything to do with him now, I've got a new dad who I like”). Sally, and her sister Helen, 18 months older, would visit the car yards where their father worked: “He would just chuck us in the back of the vans and get drunk in the car sales yards, you know. It was just, just, couldn't be stuffed, you know. Palm us off on whatever woman he was with, you know. No interest in kids, you know”.

One of her early memories of her childhood is the noise of motorbikes. Men would pick up her mother when the children were primary school age, “and leave us at home for days... I just used to sit on the front stairs. [W]e used to put a brick in the door, and the door didn't shut”. If people came to the house, they would remove the brick, and then the girls wouldn't be able to get in, so “I had to smash the toilet window and then I'd get into trouble for it”. Neither girl could operate the stove so they would eat from cans:

... the thing that pissed me off was cold baked beans. Not being able to use the stove. I hate baked beans now or spaghetti... And we used to steal all the neighbours' milk money. And mum used to, “mother tax” when she got home, right, three quarters of it. She didn't give a hoot that I stole the money. She told them to go down and stand at their letter boxes and wait for the milkman, then when they did a moan, she goes, “Do another street, will ya”.

For such a life, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of stratification is useful in examining Sally's narrative:

Dismantling the organism has never meant killing yourself, but rather opening the body to connections that presuppose an entire assemblage, circuits, conjunctions, levels and thresholds, passages and distributions of intensity, and territories and deterritorializations measured with the craft of a surveyor (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 160).

Said otherwise, there are links and movements that might be established among connectivity, complexity, and autonomy, “the whole aspect of machinery, the production of desire” (Guattari

in Deleuze, 1995, p. 16), that strongly enlarge a person's potential for action. Positioned between the creased smooth-space activities of the drug underclass and the strongly stratified hardworking ethos of the catering industry, Sally's story elaborates the thesis of her in-between life, creating opportunities and constructing connections that for the most part eluded, but interacted with both the majoritarian society's (the police, the business world, traditional family organisation, conventional sexual mores) constrictive demands, and the minoritarian evasions of undergroups (the drug scene, white supremacists, alternative social groupings, different sexual choices), at the same time flowing with the available lines of flight that presented, and that suited her. Her rhizomatic flights transformed her life in ways different than in earlier times, potentially revolutionary for personal change. More was to follow.

Freed from customary affiliation and stability by precedent and through experience, Sally left school as soon as she was able, at 15, and got a job at Goodies', a local catering company, working there for three years while living off and on with Mike. She spent three years with Mike, an Outcasts' Motorcycle Club associate, whom she had met drinking at one of the car yards, and who had other girlfriends while he was with her. When they first met, she submitted to Mike's declared intention to have her: "I was *claimed*",<sup>184</sup> she said. Mike went on to buy her cars and give her expensive gifts, looking after her so that she "felt quite safe, I suppose, yeah, except from him, but you know . . .". To this day, Mike is a constant presence in her life, despite his volatile nature and unpredictable violence.

Being organised, subjected and signified (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161), are not the worst things that can happen to a person, but neither are these containments easy to cast off. It is difficult, if not impossible, to "unhook ourselves from the points of subjectification that secure us, nail us down to a dominant reality" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 160). People need to retain as much of these stratifications as are necessary to respond to the "dominant reality" and at the same time to be able "to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to" (p. 160.). Too much stratification; i.e., staying immersed within one stratum is as injurious as is swinging wildly between strata: "you will be killed, plunged into a black hole, or even dragged into

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<sup>184</sup> My emphasis. The action of being "claimed" by a man is not unusual (and often not unwelcome), among Sally's reference group. It declares that the woman is in some way desirable, and it affords a degree of protection against other men's predations.

catastrophe” (p. 161). What is required is to “[l]odge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, causing conjugated flows to pass and escape and bringing forth continuous intensities . . . Connect, conjugate, continue . . .” (p. 161).

Significant situations, such as Sally experienced, often initiate deterritorialisings, dissolving previous forms of identity, draining a body of its creatural coherence and integrity, yet opening up spaces of affects and hæcceities, more (and more real) than things or attributes, provoking a degree of potential that was always available, virtually. The body without organs. Adding to an already overdetermined internal mapping and an external network of contradictory relations is this force of undetermined events, contingent and invoking alterative trajectories. Yet in a self-relation that strengthened resistance, challenged control, and turned bare existence against powerful forces, Sally adopted (variable) rules for living that make her existence an æsthetic as well as an ethic, expanding and inventing new possibilities of life.<sup>185</sup>

Identity, like thought, is never stable, but constantly in motion as it is being transformed or modified in passing from one problem to the next. The novelty of the process lies not in the rejection of a situation but in the nature of the hesitant new identity temporarily adopted. As Deleuze and Guattari observe (1987, p. 249), “the self is only a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities”. One night, working late at Goodies, the boss “tried to grab me and grope me and I quit there,” smashing her escape through the back door. At the same time, she was kicked out of home and lived for a while with Ken, a man she speaks of with admiration, a few streets away. She secured another job shortly afterwards, working for a catering company, and, living with that boss and some friends, she was shocked when he “[got] down in front of everybody . . . asking me to marry him”. Although she wasn’t in love with him (“he was like a fatherly [sic] figure to me”), she was even more surprised, coming home after work one day, to find him dressed in her lingerie: “I decided to get the hell out of there [and] I chucked all my lingerie out”.

Soon after that incident, she moved in with Mike, staying at one of his mother’s flats. The violence began immediately. Sally knew Mike was violent before she started living with him,

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<sup>185</sup> Understanding that subjectivity has little to do with being a person. In Deleuze’s philosophy, “it’s a specific or collective individuation relating to an event (a time of day, a river, a wind, a life . . .)” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 99).

and she feared harsh treatment. For example, Mike had attacked a young man living in one of the flats, hanging him over the balcony by his feet when he “got on Mike’s nerves” by making too much noise. He was also aggressive towards his father, sending him to hospital at one point after he threw something at him in his father’s workshop. However, his wealthy parents continued to support him. Despite his aggression and constant beatings, Sally felt safe from the attentions of other men: “He used to do crazy things, like they were coming to pick me up in the work van, and next minute he’d jump in it and ram it into, like he used to break the van. Rammed it into the car sales yard and drove through the car sales yard for no reason”. Sally admits to feeling frightened. “Well, shit yeah, he’s bloody scary. Shit yeah, I was scared alright. He cut my hair off and I thought he was going to slice my throat, and when he gets violent, he’s blank and there’s just nothing there. So whatever he’s doing, you just gotta run”.

One day, Mike mayonnaised and tomato-sauced her bed, cut up her clothes, and wrecked the flat. When Sally asked him what she had done to provoke this, he replied that he was “teaching [her] a lesson”. Not long after that, at a party at the Outcasts, “they saw what he had done to my hair, gave him a hiding for that, and then the next day, they gave him another one and burned his car and his tools. And that was the first time I’ve ever been stuck up for”.

Sally left Mike and returned to her mother’s; however, her mother ejected her when a vengeful Mike set fire to the corner of her house. Mike subsequently dragged Sally back to their flat. They lived together for 3 years, ending when he went to jail.<sup>186</sup>

During Mike’s imprisonment (for 18 months), Sally moved into her friend, Julie’s, house, and commenced an intimate relationship with her, at the same time working in a massage parlour in Hamilton. This ended when she opened the door to see her father standing there, and, “[y]ou know, I wasn’t really making money. The tax thing came in where they would tax you at the parlour and I thought, I’m not going to take my clothes off if you’re getting taxed for half of it. Especially when I was working . . .”.

Sally subsequently started working part-time in an Auckland massage parlour, returning to Hamilton for the weekend. Then Mike, newly released from prison, began terrorising Julie’s

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<sup>186</sup> Mike had stolen a large quantity of ham and pork, secreting it in his parents’ freezer. Acting on a tipoff, the police raided his parents’ home and found the food, as well as a cache of drugs.

place, ramming his car into the front of the house, “. . . like he claims you back . . . and he will make everybody’s, every person around you life’s hell, until, you know . . .”. Sally recommenced her relationship with Mike, receiving beatings and accepting his sleeping with other women, until he was sent to prison for a second term, this time for a violent offence: Kate, a woman he was sleeping with, had offended him, and he had pursued her (and her three children) over the Raglan Deviation, shooting at her car. When the police caught him, they found drugs and he was charged with possession as well as violence. While he was waiting for his trial, Mike married Kate, believing that if they were married, Kate wouldn’t be obliged to testify against him. Kate did testify against him and, according to Sally, his declared intention is to kill her when he is released from prison. He is currently serving time “for different things. He got 9½ years last time, did 6½; this time he got 9½ and he’ll do 6½”.

Sally was with Mike for some 15 years, although she wasn’t always living with him, and had other lovers throughout that period. During this time, Mike would visit her sporadically, and if he was having difficulties with his current girlfriend, he would discuss that girlfriend with Sally. Sometimes, when he was angry with a girlfriend, he would smash Sally’s belongings or beat her. Mike would “still come round and bash me, ’cause his girlfriends would play up or had pissed him off. He’d come ’round and break into my house and take my stuff, so that I would ring him and talk to him and it would be about one of his girlfriends”. Mike would “bring them in and let them choose what they wanted from my clothes . . . He was up to a lot of stuff, things yeah, and then he’d give away a lot of things, he’d give away my stuff. He smashed all the windows in his parents’ flat. Gave away all my clothes . . .”. Sally keeps in regular touch with Mike now and says she still loves him.

Despite characteristic discrepancies between attitude, belief and action, Sally’s trajectory concurs with Deleuze’s notion that the “conditions of the new can be found only in a principle of difference” (Smith, 2012, 235). If this is indeed the case, then novelty and creativity are to be considered as the motivation for a heterogeneous life that develops these conditions. Novelty and a life that is “reasonable, strong and free” (Deleuze, 2005: 262), follow from the efforts an individual makes to “*organize its encounters*” (p. 261, emphasis in original).<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> The passage continues: “. . . there is a great difference between seeking what is useful through chance . . . and seeking to organize what is useful . . . Only the second type of effort defines *proper or true utility*” (Deleuze, 2005, p. 261, emphasis in original).

Another significant relationship was with Basil. Sally had saved enough money to buy a small house in Aberdeen. Her long-time friend, Janet, came to live there with her, another friend and her lover, and then Basil. An old friend of both Mike and Sally, he became her next partner, his adult children also moving in. Eighteen months later, she threw him out. "I had people living on the floor. It was only a two-bedroom house. I had people everywhere, you know. It was, he'd go and do organics, and he'd bring everything home. There was not anything that he wouldn't bring home, so the whole lawn, it was only a tiny lawn, and it was covered, you know, anything, he'd just bring anything, you know, like just junk . . . Basil destroyed the whole home". Finally, it got too much for Sally. There were so many people there, "and I had to pay for everyone. Well Fred, [a mine owner who supported her financially] paid for everything". First, she found Basil a place in Morrinsville to move to and then she evicted everyone. Basil started shooting at her house, Sally went to the police, ". . . and when I tried to get the police to put a non-trespass order, they came back three months later and turned round and asked me to serve it on him myself. And I went, he's shooting at me, you stu- . . ."

Mike's advice, from prison, was "to get a slingshot and lie up on the roof and fire slingshots at him. Yeah". Eventually, Sally moved to Auckland, staying at a friend's motel, and reasoning that "if my mate called the cops and said someone's shooting at my motel, the cops would come very, very fast". Whenever a shooting did occur, her friend would phone the police and they responded every time, though no arrests were ever made. It "took six months up there before he bugged off".

Next, Sally lived with Tom briefly on his farm at the back of Huntly, milking cows and looking after his children, aged 18 months and 3 years. She liked country life, though the farm was remote and Tom overbearing, not wanting anyone to visit her. After some 8 months, she was desperate to leave. She contacted Mike and asked him to take her away before Tom discovered her absence. For six weeks then, she moved "to the same flat where [Mike] smashed up all my stuff".

Leading an erratic life and waiting for tenants to move from her house in Aberdeen, Sally fell suddenly sick:

All of a sudden I wasn't feeling very well and I didn't want to go to mum, but I did, and I said I'm not feeling very well, you know, and we ended up getting on the internet and we ended up drinking a whole bottle of sherry and you don't realise, I didn't realise what was wrong. I just thought I was coming down with something. . . . About 5 o'clock that morning again, I just said, take me to hospital and then next minute I was wrapped up in tinfoil on a helicopter and I took off. And it was that quick. And then they tried to tell me that I have to have a liver transplant and, um yeah and then and was taken first to Waikato Hospital and then flown by helicopter to Auckland Hospital.

Fred, her "sugar daddy", came up to Auckland and visited her daily as well as her newly-discovered half-brother, while her mother paid her a fleeting visit on the way to Sky City Casino. Sally declined a new liver despite being informed she would live for only six months without it, because "I turned around and actually said, who did it come from and you know, it might be from a black person and I might come out saying, "hey bro', so that was . . ." Some ten years later, Sally refuses to stop drinking alcohol nor take much of her prescribed medication because the latter "make[s] my head hum", and, because the "antidepressants don't make me feel good".

Following her two months' hospitalisation, Sally moved back into her Hamilton house which her mother and her new husband had occupied while she was in hospital. Fred, her wealthy friend, has cared for her over the years, paying many of her debts, and Janet looks after her as well. Meanwhile, Graham, her new partner, whom she has known for as long as she has known Mike, is sorting out replacing the hot water cylinder ("we haven't had any hot water for over a month . . .") and replacing a broken window on the side of the house. Mike seems content with this arrangement because he has avoided damaging property or inflicting violence on her or Graham. Sally and Graham want to move to the beach: "I want to sit on the balcony, and I want to open the doors so the dogs can go for a run, and sit on the balcony and watch them". Sally phones Mike regularly.

Our concepts of ourselves and the ways we might live our lives otherwise are rarely questioned and change only very slowly and reluctantly. The consequences of these ways of being: of convention, habit and entrenched attitudes, tend to the consolidation of dogma and specious stability, leading to staleness, stultification and frustration. What change that does seem to occur presents images of re(dis)covery, rearrangement and reproduction, rather than genuine discovery, original production, alternative relationship, or novel creation. In an already existing

system of thought, ideas and other things may look new but inside the packaging is the same old set of tired platitudes, hoary certitudes and reactive behaviours. Any criticism is bound to be perceived as uncomfortably irregular, unworkable or scandalous, even sacrilegious, because the status quo is aligned with steadiness and the natural order of things. Seeking to question the positioning of persons at the centre of these tensions provokes the paradoxical notion of persons reflecting upon themselves, tantamount to the eye seeing itself or the ear hearing itself. Thinking from the inside of ourselves about ourselves, touches upon the very idea of what it means to think and upon the nature of subjectivity. Said otherwise, the way things are is acutely dependent on the way they are represented. And how can representation be accurately represented? In our time, indeed in all times, the structuring of ideas cannot be separated from a general orientation, which is already the result of an “objectively determined” social subject (yet, how is that possible?).

This does not imply that a philosophy might be translated, reduced, to its historical context, however; on the contrary, to understand the creation of a new way of thinking as the conscious mapping of different points and variable relations within an organised “plane of consistency” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 73) requires that the philosophy rises above its manifest terms, challenges conventional signifier-signified connections, and frees itself from its epistemological commitments to become more than the sum of its component parts within different ontologies. One way Deleuze and Guattari do this is through their notion of “double articulation” (p. 40),<sup>188</sup> borrowed from Hjelmslev’s<sup>189</sup> schema of “expression” and “content”, replacing Saussure’s signifier/signified binary. Both expression and content are composed of form and substance, where the first articulation correlates form and substance of content, the second connecting form and substance of expression: First, a set of heterogeneous elements is brought together; next occurs “intercalary oscillators” (p. 329), acting as connectors between two or more elements; finally, the amalgam becomes a new entity, capable of

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<sup>188</sup> Deleuze describes this double articulation thus: “Strata are historical formations, positivities or empiricities. As “sedimentary beds” they are made from things and words, from seeing and speaking, from the visible and the sayable, from bands of visibility and fields of sayability, from contents and expressions. We borrow these terms from Hjelmslev, but apply them to Foucault in a completely different way, since content is not to be confused here with a signified, nor expression with a signifier. Instead, it involves a new and very rigorous division. The content has both form and substance: for example, the form is prison and the substance is those that are locked up, the prisoners. . . . The expression also has a form and a substance: for example, the form is penal law and the substance is delinquency’ in so far as it is the object of statements. Just as penal law as a form of expression defines a field of sayability (the statements of delinquency), so prison as a form of content defines a place of visibility (“panopticism”, that is to say, a place where at any moment one can see everything without being seen)” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 41).

<sup>189</sup> In Holland (2013) p. 57.



relatively stable self-generating behavioural patterns, cutting through striated space and opening up to diverse conjunctions, new configurations, new multiplicities, and new desiring machines. The result is the BwO, rhizomatically separated from its fixed role in contemporary organisation.

In understanding persons and their motivations, surely the most original in the 20th century is Deleuze and Guattari's radical theory of desire, which runs counter to the Western tradition of the rational (and transcendent) Cartesian subject but also challenges the Freudian/Lacanian legacy of persons as the knowing subjects of their worlds and the guiding agents in the politics of affective engagement. Until Deleuze and Guattari came along, epistemology had become inextricably entangled with ontology and dominated it, engendering an unquestioned symptomology that assumed subjectivity emanated from the stable human being and that portrayed representational thought as the unremarkable true and primary description of reality. These writers refute what they consider to be the illegitimate yoking of representation to subjectivity, which entanglement invokes a dualistic vision of knowledge. Once this bondage is accepted, inequalities and structures are hypostatised and begin to appear as the natural order of things. Melding subjectivity with representation as a given co-constructive entity provokes the cultural and social organisations that seem natural and obvious. Everything makes sense. But Deleuze and Guattari's thought, which involves the invention of concepts that captures becoming instead of describing arrested being, which follows flows rather than delimits essences, and which denies identifying desire with the lack announced by Lacan's understanding (via Freud, and Kojève's interpretations) of Hegel, thinks desire and difference as positive rather than negative forces, and examines the often-promulgated but seldom-examined division of the subject into a knowing and a doing being. Desire produces reality, even though social representation may cast that reality as aberrant: "Desire produces [and] its product is real" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 26).

Investigating non-representational thought leads away from the limitations and restrictions of conventional subjectivities. Such an exercise, situated between Marxist determinism and Kantian transcendentalism, while not attempting to exorcise the spectres of the former (Derrida, 1994), but nevertheless denying the fantasies of a universal subject of history by way of a subject-object equivalence to its triumphant teleological conclusion, is of much interest to

feminist theory, particularly where it is concerned to develop a positive ontology of desire and becoming. For some feminist theorists (e.g., Grosz, 1994a; Le Doeuff, 2007), there may be epistemological concerns about using male thinkers but, at the same time, Deleuze and Guattari's concept political of desire has been a focus of interest for those feminist philosophers (e.g., Olkowski, 1999), who are aware of the and theoretical significance of their philosophy of difference.

Feminist writers<sup>190</sup> like Elizabeth Grosz do adopt Deleuze and Guattari's project in arguing that the body without organs (BwO) can offer a "volatile body" that resists traditional patriarchal stratifications, becoming "freely amenable to the flows and intensities of the desiring machines that compose it" (Grosz, 1994a, p. 168). This concurs with Seligman's notion of learned optimism,<sup>191</sup> and Sparrow's (2008), description of external, unstable and specific attributions. Sally, like most of the women in the study, embodied these attributional traits, being quite unsubordinated to stable identity, fully rejecting internal responsibility for negative events, and fluidly evoking her own knowledge, accounts of herself and the workings of the world, always celebrating her "capacities and desires" (Stark, 2007, p. 26), "producing ever-new alignments, linkages and connections . . . meandering, creative, nonrepetitive, proliferative, unpredictable" (Grosz, 1994a, p. 168). "It was kind of like move, move, move, move, and um, I didn't really have a place I lived in. I just carried round a suitcase".

In their last co-authored book, *What is Philosophy?* (1994), Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy as an articulation of concepts. These concepts, they claim, enter mutual relations with other domains like art, logic, science, even medicine (Deleuze and Guattari, 1996, p. 173). One such concept, "ethics", as opposed to a set of regulating moral rules, is concerned with, and evaluates what persons do, think, feel, and say:

There is not the slightest reason for thinking that modes of existence need transcendent values by which they could be compared, selected, and judged relative to one another. On the contrary, there are only immanent criteria. A possibility of life is evaluated through itself in the movements it lays out and the intensities it creates on a plane of immanence: what is not laid out or created is rejected. A mode of existence is good or bad, noble or vulgar,

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<sup>190</sup> Other notable feminist writers who engage with Deleuze and Guattari include Moira Gatens, Claire Colebrook, Rosi Braidotti, Dorothea Olkowski, Tamsin Lorraine, and Camilla Griggers.

<sup>191</sup> See Peterson, Maier, and Seligman's *Learned Helplessness* (1995).

complete or empty, independently of Good and Evil or any transcendent value: there are never any criteria other than the tenor of existence, the intensification of life (Deleuze & Guattari, 1996, p. 74).

New occupations, requiring new skills and arrangements of time and technique may emerge, but these are largely predicated on representations of previous models and differ only slightly from historic modes and relations of production. Our legal, political, and social systems profess a sexual neutrality and propose a genderisation of abilities which is a more subtle and more formidable concealment, and accordingly, more difficult to challenge. And the institutions of oppression, drawn from representation and involving not just the obvious domination of the symbolic capital of patriarchal power (including the conjugations of feminism and psychoanalysis) persist, despite the collapse of the grand narratives (Lyotard, 1984), and the postmodern fragmentation into multiple and heterogeneous styles of being. Then “the conservative forces of resistance”, writes Guattari, “oppose themselves to all change” (Guattari, 1995, p. 13). In opposition, “becomings are always specific movements, specific forms of motion and rest, speed and slowness, points and flows of intensity: they are always a multiplicity, the movement of transformation from one “thing” to another that in no way resembles it” (Grosz, 1994b, p. 204). Yet Sally finds it hard to change:

- S. . . . they said I would only live six months without a liver and they had one that was compatible and everything, but I said no.  
G. Will you get another opportunity?  
S. No.  
G. Why?  
S. 'Cause I'm older now and I still drink alcohol.  
G. Do they check?  
S. I don't lie or deny what I do, no.

Beneath “the shout, or silence, or stuttering . . . speaking in one's own language” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, pp. 22, 23), is, despite her weakening liver, an affirmation of defiance in living. Sally's desire is a conscious creativity and struggle against domination, opposed to facile reactivity or resentment. It's *her* life.

You always have to realise that you're constantly in a state of becoming, you know?  
(Bob Dylan, 2005).

Kim, 69, says she is 90% Scorpion and 10% Libran, which she declares, “makes as much difference as anything else that makes a difference to people”. And she’s right. In Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology, a “person” is an *hæcceity* of assemblages of particular sorts: of longitude and latitude,<sup>192</sup> “figures of segmentarity, the binary, circular, and linear . . . bound up with one another, even cross[ing] over into one another, changing according to the point of view” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 209), whose intersections offer only temporary stability before fluctuating flows and intensities sweep to different, itinerant points. Within, and on, the actual living bodies of human beings, Deleuze and Guattari’s principle of overcoding as a conceptual formation, channels materialities and experience into compartmentalised social signifiers by which the state apparatus possesses and territorialises. That which it cannot hierarchise, binarise/dualise, and incorporate, it displaces as “dysfunctional” and regulates – reterritorialises – into manageable compartments such as depression, or wantonness, or medicalisation, or victimisation. Kim fits into none of these categories.

Following her parents’ divorce in her early childhood, when she was seven, whenever her father came around to the house, Kim’s mother would phone the policeman, her lover, to eject him. Consequently, Kim never got to know her father or his side of the family. Her mother would “go out on the alcohol all the time and leave us at home by ourselves. And she brought men home”. Kim, then aged nine, and her brother Paul, seven, were placed in an orphanage, although Kim maintains that her mother tried to keep the family together by doing housework, “and all the sorts of things that women did in those days, but it just didn’t work . . . ’cause there was no money and no Domestic Purposes Benefit, and my father didn’t pay any money and she wouldn’t allow him to see us”. Kim says she hated the time she spent in the orphanage but

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<sup>192</sup> According to Spinoza, a thing can be neither defined by its form, its organs or functions, nor as a subject or substance. Rather, the “longitude” of a body refers to its relations of speed and slowness, motion and stillness. “Latitude” is the set of affects which inhabit the body at a particular time, i.e., the states of particular forces. Longitudes and latitudes together constitute the plane of consistency (or plane of immanence), always changing, decomposing and recomposing through the actions of individuals and collectivities (Deleuze, 1988, pp. 122-130). Deleuze, referring to himself in the third person, describes *hæcceitus* as “a term frequently used in the school of Duns Scotus, in order to designate the individuation of beings. Deleuze uses it in a more special sense: in the sense of an individuation which is not that of an object, nor of a person, but rather of an event (wind, river, day or even hour of the day)” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 169, n. 9). Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Plateau 10), explains that *hæcceity* arises from the need to account for all the factors – often appearing unrelated or irrelevant – involved in objects and events which are subsequently realised in producing identifiable forms. It is impossible to isolate all the forces and elements involved in an event, of course, but the approach has the salutary effect of guarding against the unwary use of proper nouns to designate continuing processes and the reductive and simplistic interpretations offered by Lacan and Freud for complicated issues (e.g., *objet a*, and “little Hans”, respectively). And the notion has crept into our linguistic practices: traffic incidents are less often termed “accidents” now, but more frequently as “crashes”.

insists that it was much safer than living in the house where her mother “was having men in the house and getting drunk and all that sort of thing that often women do when they first break up from a horrible relationship . . . [C]hildren are supervised the whole time [in the orphanage] so there was no violence as such. There was no loving but there was no violence”.

After four years, her grandmother took the two children from the orphanage. Kim spent two years with her nana, who lived with her second husband, “a lovely man and I loved him dearly, but he was a drunkard”, and their “spastic’ child” who endured life in a wheelchair. Then, on her first date at 16, Kim became pregnant with Sue-Allen, after “a virgin rape”:

. . . we were very, very sheltered for that whole six years of growing up and I really didn’t know anything about life, and I don’t think I even knew what rape was and I grew up in a time where if you put yourself in a position where something happened, it was your fault. It wasn’t rape.

The practical world of life and work is lived through the ideas and ideologies and accompanying values that have a seemingly timeless naturalness. Personal disruption, however, has the power to provoke and challenge the unquestioned life in favour of experimenting with processes that are open, fluid and provisional. Flows of desire just have the positive motivational energy to produce different, productive, and multiple relations, positionings that can transform life. Returning home, Kim was expected to provide for her mother because “I had had a good education and I could work and make more money than she could in a factory”. Then, having met another man and becoming pregnant, after “four years of never having anything to do with anybody except working . . . mum and I brought the two girls up together and that was ok and they both turned out very lovely young women”.

At the time of the baby, the newly available DPB enabled Kim’s mother to stay at home and look after both of Kim’s children while Kim continued working (“. . . his [the second child’s father] mother decided that she really didn’t want grandchildren, thank you very much, so she didn’t get to know her father, either [laughing]”), as she could make more money in office employment, “to keep the three of us going, or four of us, ’cause my brother was still at home”. The child’s father being uninterested in any further relationship, Kim’s mother also adopted this second daughter.

Repression of past trauma deforms action in the present, according to Freud, but for Bergson and Deleuze, conscious action in the present requires repression of the past, a “becoming imperceptible” in order to initiate behaviour that is other than instinctual or habitual. As Deleuze says, the past is the unconscious (2004, p. 29) which emerges into consciousness in the contemplative space between perception and action. But even where that space is bridged by reflective consideration of personal utility, decisions leading to (partial) satisfaction are always tempered, transformed, and sublimated by social and institutional determinants:

. . . human utility is always something else than mere advantage. The institution sends us back to a social activity that is constitutive of models of which we are not conscious, and which are not explained either by tendencies or by utility, since human utility presupposes tendencies in the first place (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 20).

Kim began volunteer work at the Women’s Centre in Hamilton. It wasn’t until she started working with battered women that she acknowledged that her earlier sexual experience was rape <sup>193</sup> “. . . but anyway, I ended up with the most amazing young woman in my life; she was absolutely beautiful”. That child (Sue-Allen) died in her 30s of a heart attack: “[She] was a beautiful woman. She should never have died. . . She worked for social welfare, she was a social worker, and she took everybody’s problems home and I think the stress became too much”. Kim attempted to maintain a relationship with Sue-Allen’s partner, “but I think it was just too hard. Because every time I saw Rose, I saw Sue-Allen. We really did try, but it just didn’t work, which was really sad.”

Kim had four children altogether, all to different fathers. As her mother was sharing the responsibility of child-rearing, she had gained some freedom, and out on a date, she met her future husband. Living together for a year, they decided to get married: “I think I wanted to be married, so we went through the whole white wedding and the whole lot. And that didn’t last long because he was”:

Well, looking back on it, it was really, really sad. He was brought up by his mother. His father I really liked, but his mother was a strange woman, really strange woman, and you know, we know now that what the parents are makes the children become. And he was just . . . He had no self-awareness, no self-

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<sup>193</sup> “[A] new persona is only possible if something occurs in a text that marks a threshold and requires a reorientation in thinking . . .” (Colebrook, 2008, p. 7).

esteem. Anyway, the marriage lasted for about three or four years, and then I took off.

Kim's husband did not usually assault her: "he only ever hit me once and pushed me", but that was sufficient for her to submit to his domination. From then, she "was too frightened ever to do anything and I did everything I was told, and he abused me the whole time, told me how stupid I was, that I couldn't do anything, um, I worked the whole time, and he took all the money and I wasn't allowed any money at all. It was not a nice time".

Kim left that relationship after five years and had a "wonderful time for a couple of years", enjoying some "young person's time", going out with a different person "every night", then becoming pregnant with her third child, Rob ("I get pregnant if I look at a man"). This man wanted nothing to do with his son, who proved to be as strange as his father, "sadistic from the time he was born", and the child psychologists she approached provided little understanding and less help. Rob "got into relationships, abused his own children and ended up in prison". Troubled by his behaviour, quite unlike that of the other three, Kim "did a lot of work after that to try and find out why. I took psychology, I did the battered women's group, but I just, I don't know why . . .

But he left home, thank God, very early, and ended up in prison for pædophilia . . . I pick them well, I tell ya . . . a very strange young man. And ended up to be a really nasty, nasty, grown-up. And he ended up to be a bully and he ended up to be a pædophile, and he's in prison now. Well, I don't know if he's still in prison. I have no idea. He wrote to me when he was in prison, and I wrote back and said, I don't want anything to do with you. I don't want you in my life, you hurt my grandchildren. And I don't see my grandchildren because of him. Well, I do, but that's not the same relationship I have with the others."

Matthew, her fourth child, "has been the love of my life from the time he was born. And he has been mine, and you know, there are some children that are more yours than the others are, and yup".

In the process of becoming, the legitimisation of the "desiring-machine" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, pp. 1-49), in late-stage capitalism functions as consumer desire, reproduced continuously in the production of subjectivities as socio-cultural states of being. But while Deleuze and Guattari's molar lines of composition express a certain prescriptive tracing of conventional forms and structures, they also invite a turbulent exuberance of expressive molar

lines, and lines of flight. The first of these – molar lines – appear as pre-ideological absolutes, imprinting sense and value above and before encounters and connections. A unique, unchanging identity, together with an unshakeable notion of what it means to embody this identity and reproduce it through predictable actions, as well as the dogged societal policing of this identity, entrench an unforgiving stasis to which Deleuze and Guattari respond by advancing the movement of “becoming-imperceptible” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 278), away from molar containment, eschewing the usual confinements of institutions (e.g., marriage, patriarchy, market forces, the justice system, education, etc.), in lines of flight that foreground relations over material being, identity, or essence, in interactions with others that are both initiated and received.

Certainly, becoming minoritarian, Kim fought against these molar repressions. Determinedly, she established new connections and new conjugations of deterritorialised elements in her construction of new assemblages, “in opposition to the conjugations of the axiomatic” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 473, emphasis removed). “Becoming is always a matter of relation and connection with otherness. It is thus, in a sense always “intersubjective”” says Gilson (2011, p. 74). So too, becoming is always directed toward creating new directions of living, “oriented towards experimentation, towards inventing more fulfilling, enlivening, and intense ways of thinking, feeling, and relating” (p. 74). Relevantly here, Deleuze distinguishes “morality” from “ethics”, and terms the latter “facultative” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 101). On his approach, an “æsthetic existence” (p. 101), may be realised where one result is “*a relation which force has with itself, a power to affect itself, an affect of self on self*” (p. 101, emphasis in original). Persons always “have the beliefs, feelings and thoughts that [they] deserve, given [their] way of being or [their] style of life,” he claims (2006a, p. 1), “[t]here are things that can only be said, felt or conceived, values which can only be adhered to” (2006a, p. 2) on condition of being weak, debased or in servitude; and contrarily, there are things that can be said only from a position of freedom, strength and life affirmation. Deleuze calls this the “method of dramatization” (2004a; see n. 77, above), where actions are just so many symptoms expressive of the agent’s mode of existence, her *puissance*. The significance of dramatisation is in its ability to create worlds in which new and multiple perspectives are encouraged to unfold (Barker, 2016, p. 100). The ethical task then, is “an amplification, an intensification of an elevation of power, a growth in dimensions and a gain in distinction” (Deleuze, 1993, p.73),



and an “intensification of life” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 74). What we think and say is what we are, and what we do is how we think and feel.

Bergson’s thought (1944, 1988, 2001), much embedded in Deleuze’s work, is relevant here. In his writing, there are two senses of experience: the plane of intelligence in which everything unfolds horizontally in space according to the everyday logic of representation, and the contrasting aspect of intuition or deep emotion, positioned vertically and situated at different levels, following a different duration and accepted by the organism as such. Enlarging on this idea in *Difference and Repetition*,<sup>194</sup> Deleuze goes further, critiquing the difference between desiring-production and social production. Both are equally real, interdependent, and both have real effects.<sup>195</sup> The two are emanations of a single energetic field (Bergson’s *élan vital*, Nietzsche’s will to power), yet under capitalism, they are split so radically into separate private and economic spheres that their power is diminished and controlled. It is Deleuze and (particularly) Guattari’s genius to conceptualise the way “schizoanalysis” has the potential to break through the illegitimate borders dividing desiring-production and social production, which latter so distorts and crushes desire, in order to release the full creative – and destructive – forces that liberate life from subservience, deferred consummation (the word means both “consummation” and “consumption” in French), and docile subjectivity. Situated on the “plane of intelligence”, then, the unharnessed forces of heteroclitic desiring-production are able to provoke capacious and novel changes in agency, reflective thinking, and behaviour.

I believe this is what Kim, and the other women in this study, achieved. The positivity that ensues from affirming life, come what may, constitutes that only freedom we may claim, confirming and enhancing *potentia*, “a source of long-term energy at the affective core of subjectivity” (Braidotti, 2006, p. 135), which sets the determination for enduring into the

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<sup>194</sup> “Presents succeed, encroaching upon one another. Nevertheless, however strong the incoherence or possible opposition between successive presents, we have the impression that each of them plays out “the same life” at different levels. This is what we call destiny. Destiny never consists in step-by-step deterministic relations between presents which succeed one another according to the order of a represented time. Rather, it implies between successive presents non-localisable connections, actions at a distance, systems of replay, resonance and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions. We say of successive presents which express a destiny that they always play out the same thing, the same story, but at different levels; here more or less relaxed, there more or less contracted. This is why destiny accords so badly with determinism but so well with freedom; *freedom lies in choosing the levels*” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 83, my emphasis).

<sup>195</sup> “There is only one kind of production, the production of the real . . . We can say that social production, under determinate conditions, derives primarily from desiring-production: which is to say that *Homo natura* comes first. But we must also say, more accurately, that desiring-production is first and foremost social in nature and tends to free itself only at the end: which is to say that *Homo historia* comes first” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 32).

future. Territories, essences, and identities are descriptors of repetitive behaviour, but in repetition, nothing is really the same, because each iteration is different. Molar lines cannot be fully reproduced, nor can they be explained by their posited ends or goals, because in experimentation there are a myriad forces, events and relations, and potential actualisations which determine these same goals and ends. Kim's life moved in ways that went against the grain: expressive of the projective forces channelling her energy. Her ex-husband died intestate and because he hadn't made a will, Kim, still married to him, inherited his money and his insurance, providing sufficient capital to buy a house (which subsequently burned down after 20 years; the insurance allowed her to purchase another as well as to give a large sum to her ex-husband's mother, "so she was able to pay their mortgage and live independently"). Kim's voluntary work in the Citizens' Advice Bureau and for the Women's Refuge Centre in Hamilton, was the opportunity to realise, like Julie, an obligation to "give something back" because she had received the DPB ("Women are brought up to have to pay back, I think, women have a stronger social conscience, maybe. I dunno, but I couldn't take it without giving something back"). Engaging in these areas awakened her to acknowledging the actuality of the violence in her past relationship, contrary to her belief that "in those days . . . you walked into a door. You didn't get hit". As well, her work helped to develop her confidence and she went on to train as a teacher in early childhood education, receiving her diploma in early childcare and working for Hamilton Child Care for ten years. She rose to managing the Centre, eventually retiring at 65.

Certain kinds of movement are fundamental in Deleuze and Guattari's ontology: becoming minor as a deviation from majoritarian domination; lines of flight or deterritorialization; nomadic wanderings and rhizomatic connections; and the constitution of new assemblages. At the time of the interview, Kim is living contentedly with Matthew, her younger son, and his partner, regularly seeing her daughter, Jennifer Anne, and her grandchildren. Alex, her adopted sister, is moving to be closer to her. Speaking often and affectionately of her children, and with great sadness of Sue-Allen, her daughter who died, she showed anger and resentment only once: when she spoke of Rob, her first son. She has nothing to do with him.<sup>196</sup> Like Josephine, she sings her own, full, song.

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<sup>196</sup> Kim has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. She repeats herself frequently and sometimes confuses her daughter's children with her own.

## Conclusion

The past and present wilt – I have fill'd them, emptied them.  
And proceed to fill my next fold of the future.

Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*, 51

Deleuze maintains that “we miss our finest encounters<sup>197</sup> [and] avoid the imperatives that emanate from them” (Deleuze, 2008b, p. 19), when we accept the imposed stasis of recognition over the opportunities arising from becoming-molecular. “[A] plurality of ways of being present in the world” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 203), a universe of limitless divergence, joyous disruption and impossible multiplicity beckons where forces lose their customary centres of fixed reference and, instead, become free-floating processes, attracted to other forces. The understanding that “the people are missing” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 219), announces a minor politics and a plea for a radical deterritorialisation. Insofar as the political figuration of “the people” is dead, still-surviving majoritarian attractors, such as patriarchy, serve as identitarian representation where there seems no space for desiring relations that might challenge phallogocentricity, or that might particularly offer oppressed women full participatory rights on terms of equality with men. From this beginning, Deleuze and Guattari elaborate how minoritarian modes and techniques of engagement challenge traditional modes of being through a rhizomatic approach that transforms previous relations into collections of assemblages whose experiments with compositions of various kinds offer fuller living. Kafka is one privileged model for their assertion, because that writer’s life and opus, from a “cramped space” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 17), confirm, in content and expression, the continual de- and reterritorialisation of identity and plenitude. Just like Josephine, the Mouse Singer, who “renounces the individual act of singing in order to melt into the collective enunciation of “the immense crowd of the heros [sic] of [her] people” ” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 18), production is an immanent principle of desire (Deleuze & Guattari, 1985, pp. 5, 7, and elsewhere).

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<sup>197</sup> The transcendental empiricism that Deleuze developed in *Difference and Repetition* (1994), states that “[s]omething in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. . . It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering” (p. 139, emphasis in original).

“A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language” assert Deleuze and Guattari, “it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” (1986, p.16). And the tradition of majoritarian singing that the Mouse People have long held gives no clue to the enormous power that Josephine, their minoritarian singer, has over her people. This is, at first reading, surprising, because, despite that Josephine’s singing is no better than the others, “nothing out of the ordinary” (Kafka, 1952, p. 306), and because the Mouse People do not especially care for music – “we are not in general a music-loving people” (p. 305), they are nevertheless “carried away” (p. 305) by Josephine’s singing. It’s as if the Mouse People sing without being aware of what they are doing, whereas Josephine sings consciously, perhaps to remind the Mouse People of their “precarious existence amidst the tumult of a hostile world” (p. 315).

Regarding the present as fundamentally resulting from the past invites the framing of futures as formulated and enclosed by the confinements of history and previous responses. But fixating on accepting the status quo in this way retards growth and change, and binds persons in rigid and stultifying, if predictable, self-enclosures. Excluded from curiosity, experimentation, and productive transformation of the world by the paternal Law, minoritarian people (non-male, non-adult, non-white, non-heteronormative, mouse-people), develop habits of self-same, low-intensity stability through the repetition of individualised patterns of acting and thinking, resulting in a diversion from the immanently/imminently satisfying desiring-production of those machinic connections that might multiply connect them to the flows that, sustained by future actualisations, liberate their capacities, and enhance their development. People can opt for living actively, dangerously, precariously, ultimately indeterminably. There are no guarantees.

People flourish when they surpass themselves, “thrust[ing]” beyond the “crust” (Bergson, 2001, p. 169), and in that destructiveness, in that human dislocation of perception from immediate reaction (Bergson, 1988, p. 32) create themselves anew, re-wiring cognitive structuring through patterns of recurrent action quite different from (yet ultimately connected to) rationalised representations. The result is typically joy, expanding power, advancing freedom of action, and promoting greater functional performance. People are free, according to Deleuze and Guattari, only when they live according to their own trajectories, and act

according to their own determinations. Rhizomatic trajectories and linkages, “connect[ing] any point to any other point” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 21), “bring[ing] into play very different regimes of signs . . . composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion . . . [having] neither beginning nor end, but always a middle from which [they] grow and which [they] overflow” (ibid), readily describes the movement of the women in the study. And in *Dialogues* (1987), Deleuze explicitly celebrates encounters, because, in these ways, “we attain the “desert, experimentation on oneself [which] is our only identity, our single chance for all the combinations that inhabit us” (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. 11). “[O]pening sociality to new configurations beyond the asymmetries and allegiances of commonplace living” (Sotirin, in Stivale, 2011, p. 125), affirms the opportunity of becoming otherwise, “of affirming difference itself” (ibid), through introducing “new pathways down which thinking and living can travel” (May, 2003, p. 151). Colebrook (2000, p. 12, emphasis in original), suggests that such rhizomatic meanderings “might provide the way of thinking new modes of becoming – not as the becoming of some subject, but a becoming towards others, a becoming towards difference, and a becoming through new questions”.

The women in this study act this way. Schizoanalytic events sever conventional ways of being, supporting different thinking and affirming the primacy of affect in decision making, motivating connections between disparate things, people and places. Women’s minoritarian and rhizomatic resistance, rebellion and flight– deterritorialisation – do not come into existence from an external position outside the existing system of hegemonic practice but emerge from the ways in which they reconstruct their experiences from within a molar system of dominance and conflict. As constitutive subjugated structures in the framework of present-day patriarchy and capitalism, the flight from/fight against their precarious roles as wives and partners of men requires not simply a reformulation of dominant discourses but also a radical rupture and the production of alternative thought, social groupings, and behaviours – and new, albeit temporary, identities. Contextualised against the backdrop of normative social structures and behaviours, women’s struggles are not commonly accepted or even noticed. But, as in minor literature, “everything . . . is political” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, p. 17), and “the family triangle connects to [and is reaffirmed by] other triangles – commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical – that determine its values” (p.17). Personal conflicts “become all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it” (p. 17).

In his last book, Deleuze wrote: “Modes of life inspire ways of thinking; modes of thinking create ways of life. Life *activates* thought, and thought in turn *affirms* life” (2001, p. 66, emphasis in original). I believe the stories in this study are inherently valuable to the understanding of our selves as expressive living forces because they show, under precarity, how forceful women create new subjectivities. Precarity serves customary frameworks as the insecurity and fear it engenders encloses all of life, infecting the veins of diurnal doings, the body, modes of subjectivation, ways of living. Precarity means living with the unforeseeable, with contingency and heightened alertness. But, as Isabell Lorey says (2015, p. 1), it can also “open up new possibilities of living and working”.

“[F]or a life to be lived freely, it cannot fully exorcise the impulse towards or desire for power,” assert Edwards and Reid, (2013, p. 1), and the proper actualisation of human life occurs when, in its power of self-surpassing, it becomes more alive through its determined reconfigurations of the economies and logics of sustainability, need, and acquisition; and where potential expresses *its* power when it expresses a counter-tendency that challenges the strictures of organisation. Accordingly, a minor psychology takes subjective narratives of experience seriously where it attempts to account for the ways in which the struggles of oppressed women connect to areas of social systems that valorise (or diminish) their worth as human equals. Through their *dis*-organisation, *dis*-order, their imagination, deviance and defiance, the women, in their flights of self-expansion, are propelling the social, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions of their existences – away from masculine domination, away from socially determined, fascist and familial repression, away from rigid, codified identities, towards a celebratory **precariousness** of multiple, relational, creative, and heterogeneous other-becomings, where “the power of transformation, the Dionysian power” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 42), is daily, ethically, performed as the essential force animating affirmative, affective, and joyous living. In these acts of self-overcoming, will and desire fuse, and a genuinely novel subjectivity emerges, along with the “eruption of collective life, and . . . the creation of new forms of politics, new modes of living”.<sup>198</sup> It is at once a programme and a cure. These women show the way. They are the forerunners of “a people [yet] to come”.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Grosz, (2011), p. 19.

<sup>199</sup> Deleuze & Guattari (1987), p. 345.

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## Appendices:

A	Information Sheet	261
B	Participant Consent Form	264
C	Authority for the Release of Transcripts	265



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

## Precarious Feminine Identities

### INFORMATION SHEET

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. My name is Guenivere Weatherley and I am undertaking this research as part of my PhD. I would like to invite you to participate in this research by telling me about yourself and your experiences of domestic abuse. This sheet will give you more information so you can decide if you would like to participate.

#### Project Description and Invitation

This project is part of my PhD research. I want to hear your story and the stories of other women who have been victims of domestic violence. I want to investigate how you left the situation, what support you may have had and continue to have, and how you and your family are coping now. My goal in the project is to find ways of developing new interventions and new ways of supporting women to live free from violence. This may sound simple; however, I appreciate that recounting painful events may be difficult for you and so I'm happy to answer any questions as we begin and throughout the process. Should you request it, I will provide you with additional support through referral to a counselling service.

My phone number, which is at the end of this sheet, will be used only for this project. I understand that your time is valuable, and I am happy to speak with you whenever and wherever you decide. I will also reimburse your travel with petrol vouchers if you need to travel to our meetings, help with childcare (to a maximum value of \$100 per interview). My supervisors are Professor Mandy Morgan and Dr Leigh Coombes who are both experts in the domestic violence area and will oversee my work. Should you feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any time during the interview process I will take steps to ensure your safety.

Should you choose to participate, your decision will only be known to me and my supervisors.

#### What is this study about?

The idea for this research came about because I believe that a study of the effects of intimate partner violence on women's lives and how these women view themselves is important for several reasons. Members of my own family and extended family and friends have found

themselves in similar situations and I have watched them struggle to achieve safety for themselves and their children. Accordingly, the study is directed at the effects of intimate partner violence on *your* life. The study intends to provide support and encouragement for women who have been victimised by allowing the women's own voices to be heard. It is hoped that the study will add to the burgeoning literature on the treatment of debilitating and sometimes overwhelming personal trauma, and additionally, invite an examination of current approaches by workers in support agencies through the engagement of alternative empowering conceptual and practical strategies for purposeful action leading to more positive outcomes for the women. Equally important, I believe there needs to be investigation into why many New Zealand women feel they cannot leave unsafe environments, thereby exposing themselves and their children to further abuse. I want to hear your stories so that I might piece together an approach that provides the knowledge, both conceptual and practical, to assist women in building happier and more successful lives for themselves and their children.

#### **What does your participation involve?**

If you agree to participate, we would meet 3 or 4 times for up to 2 hours each time, although we can meet less often if you prefer. Your interviews will be audio-recorded and then transcribed by me. Your participation in the interviews will be confidential and each interview will take place at a time and location that is safe and convenient to you.

To protect your privacy and confidentiality, the recorded interviews will be destroyed once they are transcribed. Your name, and any other names or identifying material mentioned in the interview, will not be included on the transcript or in the written research report. Transcripts will be stored electronically on a password-protected computer and will only be accessible to me and my supervisors. It is important that you are aware that while your privacy and confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed, they will be protected as far as possible. If you disclose ongoing abuse, we will need to discuss your resources for support and safety planning, so that an appropriate referral can be made to support you.

It is important that your participation is safe and treated with respect. I am a trained social worker and have considerable experience interviewing people about sensitive subjects, including domestic violence. If you find the interviews distressing, I will be able to refer you to someone who can assist you.

#### **Your rights as a participant**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question,

- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview,
- withdraw from the study at any time before the transcript is signed off by you,
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation,
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used,
- be given a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

#### **About me**

I have participated in a number of research projects over a number of years. I have worked in the community and have been a CYF's social worker. I have also managed all the support services in a tertiary institution. Finally, I would like this research to contribute to helping women live lives free from violence.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. If you would like to participate in this research or have any questions about it, please do not hesitate to contact me.

#### **Contact details**

Guenevere Weatherley

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*This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 15/76. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Rochelle Stewart-Withers, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 350 9099 x 83657, email [humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz)*



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### **Precarious Feminine Identities**

#### **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being audio taped.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_





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### Precarious Feminine Identities

#### AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name - printed \_\_\_\_\_