The Supervisory Assemblage: A Singular Doctoral Experience

by

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This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.
In this thesis, I apply Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s ontology of becoming to my own learning, thinking and writing. The adopted method - nomadic inquiry, is derived from the philosophising of Deleuze, whose concepts function as pedagogic values that I mobilise throughout my writing and perform – not merely explain, to problematise common perceptions of the thesis, supervision and doctoral experience. Deleuze resists models that inhibit context-specific creativity, yet I can readily identify the defining features of my own supervision: resolutely student-centred, facilitative of free experimentation, supportive of my becoming as an academic subject and the writing through which this was achieved. Non-teleological nomadic writing does not preclude strategic intent. Hence, the thesis records the process of my learning but equally functions as a crucial resource for additional and post-doctoral writing. It was conceived as a ‘body without organs’ – a surface of inscription for affective learning processes arising in a supervisory assemblage where rigid distinctions between self and other proved unsustainable. Contra characterisation of doctoral research as solitary scholarly activity, the heterogeneity and relationality of learning emerges through my writing and in the areas to which I am drawn in my theoretical engagement. I consider former academic experiences and characterise my current supervisory assemblage as *rhizomatic* - a complex relational space where connections are continually made, but not fixed, in the knowledge-seeking process. Such connections are not wholly undetermined but reveal processes of stratification and destratification. I seek to show that the creative potential of the *rhizomatic supervisory assemblage* lies in the tensions thereby generated. I also lay bare sedimented resistances that arise as I mobilise the concept of theoretical assemblage and connect with writers like Butler and Cixous. This thesis defies the ascetic ideal pervading normative accounts of doctoral experience, academic textual production and theoretical engagement. It embodies my desire to embrace an ontology of becoming and its pedagogic corollaries.
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N.B. The symbol [ ] is used within some quotations to indicate that words have been omitted without altering the sense of the original text. Citations appearing as, e.g. (1980 / 2004) indicate the date of original publication followed by the edition cited.
Acknowledgments

It is surely an impossible task to identify every reason for undertaking doctoral research. Or to name everyone who has inspired and supported me and enriched my thinking about pedagogic, philosophical, theoretical and autobiographical matters throughout my doctoral research. In Deleuzian terms, it was completing a professional accreditation course in teaching and learning in higher education at the University of Plymouth that functioned as an intensity or switch point in my academic life, and which culminated in my enrolment at the same institution’s Faculty of Education. I had been encouraged to view critical reflection on practice and self-reflexivity as an integral and important facet of teaching. And this led me to think critically about my own learning in varied educational settings and to engage with the literature on doctoral pedagogy and the doctoral experience. I was determined that this thesis would actually perform the pedagogic principles to which I had come to subscribe, but became rapidly aware of tensions in my thinking which I attributed to the diversity evidenced in my academic and professional background. These tensions resulted in what I considered to be an uncharacteristic lack of focus on my part throughout the earlier stage of the doctoral process. I therefore owe especial thanks to my Director of Studies, Professor Linda la Velle, for her patience and ability to negotiate two contradictory imperatives, those of providing the guidance that optimises the likelihood of timely and successful completion whilst simultaneously fostering what is often referred to as independent scholarship. I should also acknowledge here that my commitment to such scholarship led me to be somewhat dismissive of suggestions that the pastoral aspect of the supervisory role mattered. Ironically, it was precisely this aspect of supervision that became extremely important to me following an unanticipated relocation overseas, and as I neared completion. The concept of independent scholarship is hardly unproblematic however. I find it highly seductive and powerfully emotive. Yet it fails to convey the complex relational and affective dimensions of learning, and it certainly seemed to contradict my growing conviction that learning is a collaborative process. Within the doctoral pedagogy literature, critiques of collaborative models of supervision – or indeed any model that foregrounds relationship, are readily available. These models focus upon power differentials that purportedly militate against any meaningful reciprocity in the learning process, and were cited in my earlier doctoral writing and discussed during supervision meetings. Neither these, nor metaphoric counter-models designed to emphasise reciprocity, seemed particularly relevant to my own experience of supervision and doctoral study. Consequently, I came to question the value of developing models. Not only because of their potentially normative function, but primarily because I could not make sense of my own experience through them. The questions which then drove my reading and thinking were very simple ones: how are my supervisors involved in my learning and what is this thing that I am calling my doctoral experience? This is not to suggest that I
intended a phenomenological study since I had already registered my reservations about this perspective when writing about ethical research practice for my supervisors. I attended many workshops and seminars around this time and developed an interest in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze. This was fortuitous since my own faculty includes Dr. Ken Gale who has published extensively on the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari to pedagogic practice within higher education, and engaged in collaborative projects with Dr. Jonathon Wyatt and others. My sense that I would find the answers to the pressing questions that, at this stage, I was struggling to articulate was largely intuitive. I consider myself very fortunate that Dr. Gale consented to join my supervisory team and offer my profound thanks for the guidance that he has consistently provided. I would also like to thank the third member of my supervisory team Dr. Phil Bayliss for his insightful questioning, and his observation that I was failing to theorise concepts, like authenticity, despite my readiness to deploy them in my writing. My Deleuzean turn has also permitted a re-conceptualisation of collaborative learning that does indeed capture my doctoral experience and mode of learning. Those who are familiar with the collaborative writing of Deleuze and Felix Guattari will understand why I prefer to think of collaborative learning at doctoral level as machinic learning within a supervisory assemblage where rhizomatic connections are multiplied and affective intensities form a necessary part of that process. For those who are not familiar with these concepts, I am pointing to the non-linear development of my thinking, how supervisory questioning and discussion influences the direction(s) of that thinking, and to the numerous other influences that condition the doctoral experience. With the latter in mind, I also wish to thank: Kip Jones – whose seminars helped me to understand how the writing of my thesis might perform the doctoral process rather than merely display its outcome; Helen Knowler – for inviting me to participate in projects that perform shared pedagogic values; tutors on the University of Plymouth’s professional accreditation course in teaching and learning in higher education - for their thought-provoking introduction to pedagogic theory and the complexities of pedagogic practice; Zoë Fitzgerald-Pool – for introducing me to collaborative audio-visual performance; and Robin – whose request over three decades ago, that I write bravely of my experiences, was never forgotten. Finally, I would like to thank Richard, my husband, for understanding my determination to complete and for his unwavering support of this ambition, and my viva examiners – Professors Jane Speedy and Joanna Haynes, for their interest and advice.
Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

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Introduction

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) distinguishes the direction of contemporary research across a diverse range of disciplines (Reggio 2007: 145), and it is certainly the case that my most recent doctoral experience would not have been the same without him. I have come to think of the supervisory relationship in Deleuzean terms, or more accurately, through concepts or figures provided by both Deleuze and by Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1930 - 1992) in their collaborative writings. The latter conceive texts as productive of affects in the reader and inviting multiple readings rather than as self-transparent vehicles of authorial intent. Following Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004), both the text and the supervisory relationship can be viewed as assemblages. Assemblage is the first of many neologisms that will be encountered in this thesis given the productive nature of their collaboration. I shall therefore offer a preliminary outline of the concepts adopted in the thesis title for orientation purposes.

The assemblage is a constellation of forces or entities that varies in its spatio-temporal scale and in its effects. It should not be thought of as a static structural unity or as a self-reproducing functional whole because it lacks an organisational or structuring principle, and this is precisely what permits disparate elements to be drawn into the body of any particular assemblage and the variability of its effects. Nevertheless, assemblages imply varying degrees of spatial and temporal identity, and therefore in Deleuzean terms, they spatially and temporally territorialise. Conversely, they deterritorialise when they break down and lose that identity. The concept of assemblage is linked to an ontology of becoming in Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.). Our becoming within an assemblage is the movement through which we are constituted as subjects and
becoming therefore refers to a continual process of individuation. Accordingly, the doctoral student may be viewed as a singularity generated through the play of forces within the supervisory assemblage rather than as a pre-existent unitary subject who participates in that assemblage and remains fundamentally unchanged by the doctoral experience. The concept of multiplicity is also relevant in this context as it indicates that the qualities of parties to the supervisory assemblage are not fixed, and that there must always be something unattributable or vague about what has happened, and what will happen, within any supervision as it is precisely this vagueness or multiplicity that allows the new to emerge. It is about the play of free differences within a whole conceived as open and complex – differenciation rather than categorical difference; hence it is a constructivist logic that is proposed. Any sense of continuity derives from the fact that singularities are iterable or repeatable, but it is important to note that attempts to define them will concomitantly change the nature of the open-ended system in which they manifest (Rajchman 2000: 58). Deleuzean singularities are consequently better thought of as impersonal or sub-individual points that exist prior to fixed predicates – hence the logic of sensation preferred by Deleuze (1981 / 2005) and the possibility of unforeseen lines of flight – lines of creative becoming (Deleuze and Guattari ibid.). It is a logic that is evocative of the Bergsonian emphasis on qualitative, not quantitative, multiplicity as creative evolution, and as Rajchman states, the continuation of a multiplicity means entry into a zone that invents through the power of difference and not one that is logically pre-determined (ibid. 59).

If the assemblage is conceived as an open and complex system, then it is not possible to identify any obvious start or end point as in a linear succession. Instead, we should expect a system whose continuity lies in its
starting over from different and unpredictable points. I have sought to reflect this principle in my writing here. And it will also become clearer what I mean by 'experience' since, following Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009), I am not implying a phenomenological version of lived experience that presupposes the body as a bounded and already-existent object of that experience, and a subject-object opposition. In this first volume of Capitalism and Schizophrenia, a theory is outlined as to how we come to experience ourselves as embodied (or otherwise), and this involves the interruption of flows and the body-without-organs. The latter is implicated in all individuating processes where it operates as a limit, or the unattainable point at which all the flows which constitute the world would flow freely. The following quotation where Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 4) are describing the book as an assemblage brings together the concepts mentioned so far and suggests how this thesis might be construed as a body-without-organs:

‘there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds constitutes an assemblage. A book is an assemblage of this kind, and as such is unattributable. It is a multiplicity—but we don't know yet what the multiple entails when it is no longer attributed, that is, after it has been elevated to the status of the substantive. One side of a machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless make it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a subject; it also has a side facing a body without organs, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity’

Like many other Deleuzean and Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts, the body-without-organs is deployed differently across texts. In presenting my thesis in these terms, it is the version above which functions as an ethical and life-
affirmative political imperative to experiment that I particularly value from a pedagogic and personal perspective. What Deleuze and Guattari are doing here is dismantling the concept of the body as a unified entity - an organism, and rejecting the notion of a hierarchical organisation of organs or parts. The body, accordingly, is viewed as an intensive physical reality that is continually affected by other bodies in a fluid relational space that is also impersonal; affect moves across and between bodies in affective relations that defy any characterisation of subjectivity as exclusively about consciousness or the mind of a self-contained Cartesian subject. The body-without-organs can be thought of as a non-stratified or non-organised process directed towards endless becoming and a defiance of ossified concepts and organising frames that define, judge and therefore limit, productive desire and thinking.

The body-without-organs also reveals the paradoxical nature of freedom or autonomy in that complete escape from organising principles or stratifying fields such as subjectification and signification is simply not possible. There must always be some reference to systems of stratification or we risk either obliteration or an imposed reterritorialisation; hence the ever persistent tension between smooth and striated space. My writing here should therefore be construed as a surface of inscription where the flows that were freed within a specific supervisory assemblage, and often inhibited by my own sedimented assumptions about academic writing, are laid bare and negotiated. I show or perform these tensions in an experimental writing practice that eschews a strictly linear style of argumentation and unadulterated theoretical exposition. There is an element of linear succession for readers who desire one as the plateaus were written in the order in which they appear here, but there is equally a layering process that allows them to be read out of sequence. The
conclusions were produced retrospectively as they would be in any traditional logical exposition; but so too was this introduction and the italicised paragraphs that open each plateau. I initially resisted supervisory requests for their inclusion. However inappropriate this reaction at the time, I had immersed myself in a sustained intensive temporal flow of reading, learning and writing; and through that process, the thesis had acquired a sacrosanct status. It was witness to my efforts and felt inviolable. I am particularly grateful in retrospect that my introduction did not win supervisory approval immediately. Its production, and subsequent refinement, meant that I had to acknowledge a hitherto lack of attention to strategic dissemination. Just as I had dreamed of a proliferation of citational support for script-defying (MacLure 2006) postgraduate writing – a writing that spoke of free experimentation and thinking differently, my supervisors had imagined a day when I would contribute to such support by lending readers who were unfamiliar with my sources a helping hand. I can now readily articulate those features of a post-identitarian doctoral pedagogy that were so enabling and affirmative for me. This was not always the case. I am therefore even more grateful that my need to write first and ask questions later – much later, was understood and supported. I did not quite know where I was going until I had been supported in getting there. Such deviations from conventional research and supervisory practice inevitably demand an inventiveness that a more logical linear organisation of the doctoral process can preclude.

I follow Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004) here in using the term plateau rather than chapter in order to indicate the affective dimension of the writing process, and how each piece of writing operates as a site of intensification within this particular supervisory assemblage where supervisory
questioning and discussion inevitably generated a body-without-organs that I would scurry across and invest a considerable amount of desire in, as I sought to grasp and refine my understanding of Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari. As the latter suggest, the body-without-organs cannot be taken for granted but must be created. To do so requires a doctoral pedagogy that is a delicate balancing act of meeting institutional imperatives and related systems of stratification whilst simultaneously ensuring a body-without-organs that sustains a dynamic relational and affective learning process. I write to learn, and learning - like any life-experimentation, is both a biological and political process. It is the affective that matters. Experimentation is investigative, and here in this thesis – through my writing, I am attempting to learn more about how the supervisory assemblage functions, and indeed how I function as a component within it. I strive to know more about its structures, flows and connections – ‘what it does and what is done with it’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 180).

I revisit an earlier doctoral experience in the mid-1990s, from which I withdrew. Hence references to my recent doctoral experience are to the doctoral programme in a faculty of Education that I began in 2008, and to my current supervisory team, or more accurately, to the team by which I have been supervised since 2009 following the withdrawal of one member and inclusion of another. The latter substitution inevitably altered the nature of the supervisory assemblage and it is consideration of the differences between these three experiences that affirms one proposition implicitly defended here - that supervisory assemblages vary in their capacity to generate and support experimentation and therefore learning. This most recent doctoral experience is evocative of Deleuze’s description of his teaching practice as participation in a ‘research laboratory’ (1990 / 1995: 139). The freedom to experiment – to
unpack impasses in my thinking in novel ways, has enriched this most recent doctoral experience. It has enabled a level and breadth of theoretical engagement that would not have been possible had my latest supervisory team prioritised overt and rigid conformity to pre-scripted linear research narratives over the creative negotiation of institutional guidelines. It has been an extraordinary (ad)venture that has moved my learning on – taking that learning in unpredictable, yet highly productive, directions. Where I initially feared that free experimentation might delay completion – however fierce my determination to exercise my nomadic tendencies, I know now that my completion was hastened by this freedom. Angst induced by epistocentrism (Deleuze ibid. 53) was displaced, and replaced with joy and excitement when I no longer felt obliged to position myself as a knower, but instead, as someone who – in Deleuzean terms, was supported in their not quite knowing and their powerful desire to understand. The papers which were penned shortly before and following submission are testimony to the truth of Richardson’s (2005) observation - that fostering experimental writing can serve to enrich a student’s thinking, enhance their subsequent academic writing and develop their capacity for informed criticality. All of this speaks to a distinction between productive and mimetic pedagogies (MacLure 2006); and to Bourdieu’s (1990: 54) insistence that the habitus should not be construed as mere rule following. It is far easier to write of contradictory imperatives than to embrace them as lived bodily realities and articulate the tensions that the doctoral experience might invoke - between seemingly contradictory 'partial identities' (Haraway 1991: 154). I imagine that the Deleuzean figure of the supervisory assemblage as research laboratory may assist other part-time postgraduate students who, like me, are mature enough to sometimes feel that they have too many backgrounds that vie
for attention, and a hard-won professional or personal persona that resists admissions of not knowing.

The pedagogic import of key figures found in Deleuze and his collaborative writing with Felix Guattari (1930 - 1992) is outlined by Gale (2007). The term figure indicates that conceptualisation is conceived by Deleuze and Guattari (1994) as a dynamic and creative process which is situated within a logic of sense, event and multiplicity (Deleuze 2004), and which therefore differs markedly from the predicative relations of a formal logic that strives to determine falsity or truth (ibid.). Gale refers to the 'contingency and ambiguity' that characterises learning and pedagogic practice, and it is argued that figures derived from Deleuze, and Deleuze-Guattari, can support both inquiry into 'incommensurate areas of thought' and an approach to practice that is 'tentative and curious' (ibid. 473). Contra Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that concepts are not 'waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies' (1994: 5), this insistence on the tentative or exploratory nature of learning, and by implication of doctoral research practice, was precisely what I had been searching for and waiting to find during the earlier phase of my most recent doctoral experience. The promise of a philosophy that might be mobilised in support of a thesis that actually performed this representation of learning was affirmative and energising. And the prospect of reconciling incommensurate areas of thought through such a philosophy spoke to a longstanding intellectual dilemma that I had not resolved prior to enrolment as a doctoral student, and which was consequently discussed at length during initial supervision meetings. I once welcomed Bruner's (1986) identification of two apparently incommensurable modes of knowing - logico-scientific and narrative, given the diversity of my academic background. But I had become increasingly dissatisfied with the
consequent uneasy co-existence of my varied academic interests which include sociology, animal behaviour and theories relating to trauma; hence the epistemological conundrum to which I refer throughout this thesis. So began my theoretical engagement with Deleuze, Deleuze-Guattari, and related others (e.g. Gale and Wyatt 2006, 2009; Braidotti 1994, 2005 / 2006; St. Pierre 1997a, 1997b, 2004; Colebrook 2002, Protevi 2001, 2009). And so ended a challenging period of prevarication (2008 – 2009) during which I replaced one research method with another and failed to commit wholeheartedly to any specific theoretical perspective.

Braidotti (2005 / 2006) is correct to suggest that there is a difference between theoretical and methodological anarchy, and the radically immanent nomadism proposed by Deleuze and Guattari. And Deleuze (2004) insists that even the nomadic must sometimes remain in the same place if they are to defend their position. Paradoxically however, my desire to heed this advice from Deleuze (ibid.), and to show the exploratory process of inquiry and learning advocated by Gale (ibid.), has taken my reading and thinking to places that I had not envisaged going. So although this thesis lays bare my engagement with Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari, that very engagement leads me to consider Nietzsche, Foucault, Butler, Cixous and others. Each can be located within a radical tendency in contemporary political thought that has profound implications for doctoral research practice. Deleuze (ibid. 253) credits Nietzsche with marking the ‘dawn of a counterculture’ that is concerned with biopolitics and which initiates the ‘political orientalism’ evidenced in Foucault’s genealogy of technologies of self and Barthes’ political minimalism (Luisetti, undated). The nomadology and new politics outlined in the politicised philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009, 1980 / 2004) are derived from the second essay of
Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals (1887 / 1966) where a contraposition is posited between territorial States and nomads, i.e. between the bureaucratic machine and the nomadic war-machine.

Deleuze (ibid. 259) maintains that Nietzsche has created a counter-philosophy – a different type of discourse that is 'first and foremost nomadic' and whose utterances would not be produced by a rational administrative machine but by a nomadic war-machine. Philosophies which support the former are dubbed the 'bureaucrats of pure reason' (ibid.). Nietzsche depicts Christianity as a life-negating force that promotes 'ascetic ideals' and that privileges reason and truth whilst concomitantly denigrating 'physiological conditions'; individuals are consequently deprived of ethical self-responsibility (ibid.). The Nietzschean oriental dispositif (Deleuze 1992) of Foucault is evidenced in the preface to Anti-Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009) and elsewhere (e.g. 1990a: 57 - 58) when Foucault opposes the intensification of pleasure in an oriental ars erotica to a Western scientia sexualis that makes truth claims about sex. And there are echoes of Nietzsche's 'art of life' (1968: 58) when Cixous writes of the 'art of keeping alive' (2007: 15), and in the polemical, performative and nomadic tendencies manifested in her writing. Nietzsche's affirmative counter-philosophy is articulated through conceptual characters that offer an alternative language of life-forces, a parodic deployment of the history of religion, and a counter-memory designed to dissociate the reader from reified Western frames (Luisetti ibid.). This device prefigures the performative tendency evidenced in Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004) and also their concept of conceptual personae (1994). The latter refers to the divergent modes of knowing and associated conceptualisations of subjectivity that have been posited throughout the history of philosophy. Divergent
epistemologies raise distinctive ethical issues and in Gale (ibid. 474 – 475) ethical practice is linked to the evaluative, and therefore to the fostering of awareness of the 'inherent value orientation of language'. Reflexivity becomes one dimension of ethical research that is sensitive to representational practices (ibid. 475).

Gale mobilises the figure of the fold (Deleuze 1988) to challenge the rigid dualisms of subject-object in postpositivist research practice, and cites St. Pierre (1997a) who drew on the same figure in describing how the boundaries between herself as researcher and her research subjects were infinitely more blurred than methodological orthodoxy suggests. The fold is evocative of many of the key concepts developed by Deleuze-Guattari and captures a key aspect of their ontology of becoming. This ontology opposes the presupposed unity and stability of the liberal humanist subject. Relationship is not conceived in terms of a phenomenological binary of self and other, but rather, as involving an inevitable becoming-other through participation in a limitless number of assemblages. Folding relates to processes of individuation in Deleuze (ibid.) and implies synthesis and emergence of new qualities where ‘folding in’ produces multiple layering and intensification (Gale ibid.). The title of this thesis is intended to convey a similar process which can be summarised thus: singularity through relationality. And my current supervisory assemblage is conceived as a fluid constellation of forces - a polymorphous formation implying symbiotic relations. It is the site of my becoming a doctoral student and indviduation as an academic subject in a process that is unique, yet unpredictable and changeable. I emphasise the singularity of the doctoral experience because one cannot know in advance quite what may emerge from a supervisory assemblage where, as I have already suggested, all parties must
negotiate processes of stratification (e.g. pressures to conform to institutional imperatives and to sedimented assumptions as to what a doctorate is) and processes of destratification (lines of creative production that defy such imperatives and assumptions).

Before describing another key figure introduced by Gale (ibid. 477) – the rhizome (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004), I should expand on what Braidotti (ibid.) means by a ‘radically immanent nomadism’. Deleuze (1968 / 2004) rejects the Kantian argument that reason should be contained within its own principle, i.e. be limited to what it can do in terms of good or common sense (Colebrook 2005: 180). Sound distribution for Kant means that reason, art or feeling and morality each have a proper domain, whereas for Deleuze, nomadism permits the maximum extension of principles and powers, and there is no law outside of thinking that limits what can be thought (ibid. 37). Nomadic distribution contains its principle within itself – there are no external or transcendent criteria; hence we should judge immanently, for example, valuing a text for what it does and the novel territory that it creates rather than its conformity to pre-existent forms or usefulness to other territories. Deleuze’s univocity, whereby everything emanates from one substance, means that there cannot be a hierarchy of beings within which mind over matter or actuality over potentiality are privileged. Such subordination of selected differences to others is, as Colebrook (ibid. 181) points out, consistently related in Deleuze to the agrarian question - the political orientalism referred to earlier: the territorial State divides, distributes and hierarchises space according to some law, logic or voice (logos) that is outside or above what is distributed. In contrast to this sedentary and striated space which is what it is and then distributed, nomadic space is
produced through its distribution and it is smooth in that it lacks intrinsic properties that then determine relations (ibid. 182). It is nomos.

Smooth space is produced through movement and involves the creation of concepts and styles of thought that open up new differences and paths for thinking (ibid.). It would be difficult to overstate just how powerfully this approach to thinking resonated with my own trans-disciplinary tendencies, and the relief that I experienced at the prospect of finding some resolution to my epistemological conundrum through this concept of univocity. Nomadic thought precludes reductionism or determinism of any sort and develops a third space in which pervasive binaries are dismantled and the connections between their poles theorised. I was intrigued that so many of the philosophical concepts and figures mobilised by Deleuze and Guattari derive from biological and mathematical sources, and by the apparently divergent readings of their work. And I appreciated the fact that such readings are positively encouraged. Nomadic inquiry (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005, Gale and Wyatt 2009) promises a freedom that arborescent thought (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004) by definition simply cannot. It is the freedom to make rhizomatic connections and pursue avenues of inquiry as they arise in the flow of thought. The rhizome is a pivotal figure in Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of becoming and explains their irreverence towards epistemology. Rhizomatic thinking functions as an open-ended and decentred productive configuration – a moving matrix, where affective connections generate intensities that in turn create bodies; and this is how the world operates too (Colman 2005). The body of my thesis is a case in point; connections are made throughout the writing process that create networked patterns of association which permit the identification of themes such as freedom, madness, narcissism, asceticism, corporeality. These
themes are approached in rather different ways within each plateau as my grasp of Deleuzean and Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophical concepts, figures and images increases. I endeavour to show the tentative and exploratory nature of my own engagement with their philosophy by laying bare the rhizomatic connections that were made between autobiographical events and theoretical issues during that process. As Colman (ibid. 233) suggests, rhizomatic writing lacks a stabilising function as there is no attempt to manufacture a whole from dispersed parts; rhizomatic writing should instead reveal the multiple ways in which any thought, activity, or concept can be approached – the multiple and varied ways of 'entering a body, of assembling thought and action through the world'.

The figure of the rhizome is equally applicable to thinking about the supervisory assemblage. When functioning rhizomatically, such an assemblage – by virtue of the contact of its components, will generate new affects, new thoughts and ways of thinking, and new bodies (ibid. 232); it becomes a site or \textit{milieu} of transformation that entails a very different way of valuing academic production and theoretical praxis. It feels important to clarify here that, although Deleuze (2004: 78) refers to the 'private thinker', he is not implying a flow of thought that is reminiscent of the pre-given Cartesian \textit{cogito} and that occurs in isolation from others or outside of the affective connections within an assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 62). My own most recent doctoral experience is one of multiple and relational movements within a supervisory assemblage that has been highly productive of rhizomatic connections. I also write here in a rhizomatic manner about my aforementioned doctoral experience at a different institution in the 1990s that was far less supportive of thought that deviated from an arborescent model. The latter follows pre-determined routes.
and assumes an originary base from which all else follows. Like Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009), I take Freudianism as an exemplar of the reductionism that arborescent thought necessarily engenders. Social Darwinism is also raised in this context and contrasted with the Darwin that I know from my study of animal behaviour, and on which both Nietzsche and Deleuze and Guattari draw. Anyone familiar with concepts like genetic mutation will understand the distinction that is being posited here. The popular Darwinism critiqued by Nietzsche assumes a reified version of an orderly and teleological descent, and therefore, laws that function as external criteria and that deny contingency. Just as Nietzsche demanded an effective history that acknowledged such contingency, Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 12) insist that the rhizome is an ‘antigenealogy’. Nevertheless, Nietzsche writes of a ‘synthesis’ of difference through the repetition of elements (Deleuze 1962 / 1983: 46) and Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009: 38 - 40, 326 - 328) describe synthesis as an assemblage of variable relations produced by the movement, surfaces and relations of rhizomes that form bodies through the composition of chains of previously unattached links (Colman ibid. 233). Because the rhizome constitutes a non-homogeneous sequence, it can comprise causal, random and contingent links (ibid.). And as Deleuze suggests in his engagement with Hume (1953 / 1991), an association of ideas is produced and used where a body encounters socially, politically, or culturally determined forces.

In the nomadic inquiry presented in this thesis, I revisit papers that were of interest to me in the earlier phase of my second doctoral programme (2008 – 2009). But, as my writing progresses and I become immersed in the texts of Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, I begin to respond differently. As I show in my opening plateaus, these same papers were once used polemically to
express my antipathy towards postpositivistic research at a time when I believed that doctorates which foregrounded theoretical engagement were no longer permitted within the neoliberal managerialist higher education regime. Such was the strength of this conviction that it had not occurred to me that I should check out this presupposition when enrolling on the programme in 2008. So contra Gale (ibid.), my own questioning of the methodology with which I began my doctoral experience did indeed prompt a polemical and 'devoutly anti-positivistic' stance initially. I explore my ambivalence about postpositivism in a plateau that draws on feminist poststructural theory and writing. But I welcome Deleuze and Guattari's (1980 / 2004) insistence that we go beyond such rigid counter-positioning and binary logics, and Deleuze and Guattari's constructivist take on contemporary science (1994). Nietzsche also explicitly distinguishes between modern experimental science and positivism.

The figure of the rhizome can also be taken to describe the mapping of my most recent doctoral experience in the writing here, and of the theoretical, epistemological, autobiographical, and pedagogic issues that arose for me— that were my doctoral experience. It is the networked and relational thought which was produced within this latest supervisory assemblage that I am mapping. This leads me to suggest that the *rhizomatic supervisory assemblage* is a particularly useful way of thinking about this specific supervision and doctoral experience. The concept of heterogenesis (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 20) is pertinent here. It refers to encounters that are productive of novelty: something new is created in between two terms which retain their heterogeneity. In this instance, there were four terms or persons involved - three of whom had comprised the original supervision assemblage (2008 – 2009) including myself. The divergent academic specialisms - excluding my
own, which were represented (biological science, educational philosophy, adult and offender education) formed a \textit{milieu} in which the epistemological conundrum to which I have already referred could not be ignored. What ensued can be described as an encounter between the radical specificity of this supervisory \textit{milieu} and the plane of immanence of thought (ibid. 93).

My writing should consequently be construed as an experimental actualisation of what it means to cross a threshold when thinking is no longer viewed as the natural activity of a self-contained individual thinker (Stengers 2005: 152). As the latter, who is a former student of Deleuze, implies: such an encounter is better conceived as one between lines rather than between persons who exchanged ideas and accumulated knowledge in order to achieve consensus. That is, it was precisely the epistemological and theoretical divergences within my current supervisory team, combined with a non-directive supervisory strategy of questioning and discussion as opposed to telling, that created an exploratory space in which I was free to make connections and engage with Deleuze’s ‘neorealism’ (Semetsky 2009: 443). The plateaus presented in this thesis might also be viewed as events, ‘junctures’ or resting places (Morss 2000: 192) in a learning and conceptualisation process that is always provisional, ‘still in the making’ (Peters 1999a 7.4), and inextricably linked to the ‘physicality of affects’ (Semetsky ibid.). Coming to understand this neorealist orientation, in which the objects of real experience can be either actual or virtual, has enabled me to retain my interest in writing as inquiry without reproducing the privileging of language – and concomitant denigration of science, evidenced in structuralism (Peters ibid. 1.4). I have been influenced by the blurring of genres in academic writing proposed by Laurel Richardson (1997, 2005), and inspired by her references to stories that demand to be told.
even when we do not know how (Bochner and Ellis 2002: 167). Yet I find phrases like 'we “word the world” into existence' (Richardson 2001: 35) extremely problematic in their apparent support for a linguistic constructivism that is contradicted by the psycho-physiological realities of traumatic abuse (animal and human). Hence the recurring figure of the soothing breeze as a force that emanates from the natural world in all of its materiality - a site of respite from the generalised laws of structural linguistics and also the now pervasive poststructuralist orthodoxy that assumes the discursive construction of events. I allude, and explicitly refer, to familial abuse in this thesis. Such references serve many purposes within my thinking and writing and function as a rhizo-structural thread between plateaus. They are productive of thinking rather than emotionally cathartic and designed to encourage multiple readings of the text. The poetic functions in a similar way throughout the thesis – as a retreat from reductionism of any sort, as an emblem of the creativity and experimentalism involved in thinking against received ‘truths’ in all disciplines (scientific and otherwise), and as a site of epistemological ambiguity given the very physical sense of rhythm that often drove my writing and seemingly endowed it with a life of its own. I went with the flow(s). I pursued connections. And I relied upon my supervisors to assist me in operationalising what Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 177) dub the ‘art of dosages’. If supervision within the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage is not for the feint-hearted, it is because there are no set rules, no models, no master copies to consult in the rhizomatic production of novelty or the production of the new for the individuals concerned. As Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.) insist however, the objective of experimentation is not annihilation of all that is stratifying or constraining, but rather a working through the milieu (i.e. context) that demands some degree of caution and
strategic consolidation of the boundaries that have been pushed: consolidation as creation (Stengers ibid.).

This suggests that another type of evaluation is perpetually at play within the *rhizomatic supervisory assemblage*: a marginalist evaluation that seeks to determine limits or dictate pauses where supervisor(s) and student must each consider whether a specific deviation from accepted frames is a deviation too far that might jeopardise the entire project by inviting an imposition of stratification by external forces. Creative practices are not without risk for all concerned (Gale 2010: 307) but, when writing as a student, my sense of risk was two-fold: I experienced trepidation at the thought that my writing would be read as excessively transgressive of institutional norms. But equally, I worried that I was not being transgressive enough when I imagined a wider readership. From a feminist poststructuralist perspective it might be asked why there is only one textual irruption / disruption, in the final plateau, of what is otherwise a rather traditional academic exposition of the philosophical concepts proffered by Dead White Males? And those seeking an explicit detailed articulation of the import of Deleuze’s philosophising for educational practice – particularly postgraduate supervision, might ask how such a personalised account of the doctoral experience is relevant to the supervision practice of others?

My response to the second question would be: I feel that my own teaching and supervisory practice has benefitted from attention to what actually happened when, as a mature doctoral student, I was required to perform apparently straightforward tasks ('survey the literature', 'state your research question', 'select a research method', 'identify a theoretical perspective for analysis purposes', 'display criticality', etc.). And my response to the first question would be: I have actioned a feminist poststructuralist principle in laying
bare how I responded during the earlier stages of a doctoral research process that is presented to students as linear or logically progressive. A qualitative pilot study which I undertook in 2008 resulted in writing for my supervisory team that expressed my dissatisfaction with the hypostasis of data, and therefore subjectivity, and my selected phenomenological postpositivist qualitative methodology. I subsequently experimented with transgressive modes of dissemination but was unable to situate this work within a theoretical field that I felt wholly committed to. I then revisited literature on doctoral pedagogy and student experience that focuses upon power differentials between supervisor and student. And I wrote of theoretical impasses. Wellington (2010: 137) discusses the difficulty that postgraduate students can encounter in ‘getting started’ when writing. My own difficulties however did not concern writing specifically but instead derived from unfinished business of an epistemological, theoretical, political and personal nature which needed to be addressed. Jensen (2007: 489) has asked how the knowledge-seeking practices of professionals - as desire for ‘engagement and engrossment’ in and ‘enchantment’ with a continual learning process, might be sustained. The psychoanalytic conception of desire as lack found in Lacan (1974) is questioned, and Deleuze and Guattari’s (1972 / 2009) demand for a version of desire based on a more ‘life affirmative ideal’ (cited in Jensen ibid. 493) is endorsed. Jensen (ibid.) cites Knorr Cetina (2003) in suggesting that: ‘the motivation to learn does not refer to an increased search for unified truth and unambiguous solutions, but rather to the unfolding of multiple references presented through epistemic cultures creating and warranting knowledge’. The epistemic culture provided by Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari, provided me with a mode of inquiry that is an expression of ‘desiring-production’ where multiplicity ensures ‘an affirmation
that is irreducible to any sort of unity’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 42). I was free to let my writing become ‘experimentation in contact with the Real’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 13) and unpack the impasses. And I was able to cite my own experience in a subsequent troubling of the hegemonic linear research model and assert that more flexibility, given the needs of individual students, is generally required – particularly in institutions that have a widening participation or inclusive agenda. Despite my enchantment with, and engrossment in, works by Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, I was frequently frustrated by the proliferation of neologisms in their writing and an allusive style that demands extensive knowledge of the history of philosophy which I did not possess. Coming to understand their philosophising, and teasing out its pedagogic implications, became a self-sustaining affective and affirmative exercise which resonated with Gale’s (2007: 476) insistence on the tentative and provisional nature of knowledge. And this experience has confirmed my suspicion that many of the purported difficulties with writing may be symptomatic of other issues. The plateaus of this thesis reflect such a learning process. And although I was constantly aware of the supervisory reception of my writing, I have also written for imaginary readers, including: the student who is intimidated by theory or who rejects its relevance in the perpetuation of a theory-practice binary, the student who allegedly fails to meet the needs of the knowledge economy in their choice of discipline or academic specialism, and the student who judges their skill set against governmentally-driven criteria and finds themselves lacking. If some sections of this thesis require effort on the part of the reader, it is because I am making an important point about my own learning that, I believe, has a wider import. To select a theoretical perspective for analysis purposes is to trigger a potentially demanding and time-consuming
process of problematisation (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 99, 249; 1969 / 2004: 67) - where a problem is a complicated series of relations between questions crossing over with one another yet resisting organisation into rank or order of importance. The questions included in such problems are two-fold expressions of affect, or bodily and emotional transformation, and intellect, or consistency-seeking yet also creative thought (Williams 2005). Furthermore, this dual aspect means that a problem is determined not only by its questions but also by underlying tensions between ideas, affects and desires (ibid.). Williams (ibid.) highlights the tensions arising when our quizzing is inconclusive or when we struggle to articulate the problem as the coming together of related questions. I was reminded by this description of my quantitative research in animal behaviour (2003 – 2006) where formulating a testable hypothesis was a similarly affective process of problematisation accompanied by anxiety about the denial of multiplicity that clarity demands. I am showing here what unpacking these tensions, through a nomadic writing inquiry, entailed for me. And I intend the reading of this thesis to be as difficult at times as I initially found the intense style of Deleuze. The adopted strategy of allowing ambiguity, allusion and ambivalence to proliferate within the text was, in part, designed to facilitate multiple readings and generate productive affects. This will always happen however regardless of authorial intent. So I also did so because guidance manuals directed at doctoral students reduce such problematisation to a discrete stage in a linear process and neglect the sort of difficulty that may be encountered. It is for this reason that I decided to include the first three plateaus. I highlight affective responses to evocative autoethnography and poststructuralist self-writing in the first, rather than provide a theoretical exposition of differences and continuities between them. The latter precludes
appeal to shared experience or empathetic identification and emphasises the radical specificity of individual experience. I introduce the concept of duality however and a logic of and not or, and the suggestion of a continuum that we necessarily move within. I get side-tracked by mentions of sexual violence in preparatory reading for this plateau but then realise that, far from diverting me from resolution of my epistemological conundrum, this apparent digression is a connection that will assist my own process of problematisation. Consideration of physiological conditions, and related theoretico-political and ethical issues, becomes a rhizo-structural thread through which I articulate and explore how the materialism-idealism dichotomy complicates my thinking. The therapeutic value of either form of self-writing, or otherwise, arises in this same reading and becomes the unfinished business that is pursued in the ensuing plateau.

Bleakley (2000: 13) has criticised ‘introspective personalism’ and a language of therapeutic empowerment in educational settings, so it seemed important that I broached such issues and began to do so through Nietzsche’s claim about the therapeutic value of philosophical thinking, the Spinozan relational ethics of Deleuze, and by critiquing a paper on Foucauldian ethopoiesis that uses a Freudian paradigm to discredit Foucault and invalidate his work. The same concept of duality is implicitly demonstrated here as my writing clearly evokes a phenomenological understanding of learning as the pursuit of missing pieces in an assumed whole (Jensen ibid. 492) – a search for those pieces, even as I explore and enact alternative conceptualisations of that learning. I avoid tracing continuities and discontinuities between Foucault and Deleuze in any depth as my doctoral focus is engagement with the latter. But the notion that ethopoiesis encourages narcissism is taken up subsequently in my refutation of charges of self-indulgence in the event of deviation from the evidence-based culture of
educational neoliberal managerialism. Academic freedom, as support for informed experimentation, emerges as another powerful rhizo-structural thread. I endorse the rejection of thinking by consensual evidence but concur with Stengers (ibid. 152) that this does not require mobilisation against a 'common enemy' or subscription to alternative orthodoxies.

In future research, I am likely to pursue Stengers' (ibid.) interpretation of the presentation of philosophy, science and art into separate domains in Deleuze and Guattari (1994) as a call to resistance of such rigid distinctions. Stengers (2009) asks whether the baby is being thrown out with the bath water when an ethico-aesthetic paradigm is pitted against a scientific paradigm, and argues that objectivism hinders every domain:

'The sciences are not a model. They are a very particular example of an original production of subjectivity occurring when a situation makes a fold, in other words, forces those it rallies to think, imagine, create. The question of experimentation is situated at the level of the meso'

Stengers' (ibid.) concept of mesopolitics will be pertinent to any future consideration of the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage because it specifically concerns practice. The meso shifts the focus away from the macro and micro levels of Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004). And it is Stengers' (ibid.) familiarity with the milieu-specific folding of 'biological macro-molecules' that leads her to question these authors' distinctions of molar-molecular, and macro-micro:

'It's a molecule-milieu history which obliges us to think through the “middle”, through the milieu (par le milieu), as Deleuze would say. I like to bring up the biological macromolecule because I am afraid that if we
content ourselves with the opposition between the molecular and the molar we are almost inexorably led to maniacal modes of differentiation where the issue is always designating paths of salvation or perdition. The question of how to go from the mode of description demanded by water molecules to the molar mode of description, where it's a question of water that we can drink or swim in, is extremely complicated. It's an open problem, not an opposition'.

In writing about former academic experiences, including withdrawal from a doctoral programme in the 1990s, and changes to my present supervisory team in 2009, I continue to pursue two rhizo-structural threads - that of my relationship to feminist theory and politics, and that of the rise of neoliberal managerialism. I follow Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.) in insisting on a macro-level collective assemblage of enunciation (feminism) whilst hanging on to molecular-level dissolution of gender identities. Stengers (ibid.) is correct however to suggest that oppositional generalities do not readily translate into pedagogic strategies for practice settings; hence, the mesopolitical is 'everything that the macro does not allow to be said, and everything that the micro does not permit to be deduced'. The rhizomatic supervisory assemblage is mesopolitical in Stengers' terms because 'the questions that must be asked are utterly specific': What is this student's potential? What is happening for this student? What happens when we ask this? Will this or that work? How do we define success or failure? Stengers (ibid.) argues for an 'ethoeology, where the ethos of the molecule, that which it is capable of, cannot be dissociated from its oikos, from the milieu requiring this ethos'. In the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage, all parties to that assemblage experiment since the meso 'must create itself', create its own problems, create its own ethos, and engage in 'meso invention'.
(ibid.). It is political to the extent that those who participate in it experiment with, and experience, its fabrication - fine tuning it and feeling its affects and effects (ibid.). Contra Bleakley (ibid.), I would argue that this meso level creativity is indeed empowering precisely because such invention is student and milieu-specific (where the latter includes diverse supervisory specialisms); it is not about conformity to pre-existing guidelines but rather a working through that milieu. It is about the radical specificity of supervisory assemblages and their capacity for practical experimentation, for supporting experimentation, and for creating and sustaining a students’ desire to seek and produce knowledge. The writing which is produced through this process of supported experimentation in the final plateau is indicative of the plane of immanence or proliferation as Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 41) define it. It is a plane in which thought reveals itself as an affective process, but also one that, following Stengers, is manifested in the experience that every conceptual solution is a creation that generates new unknowns in a moving landscape. The proposition that I defend, by enactment throughout this thesis, can be expressed thus: a rhizomatic supervisory assemblage operates heterogenetically to support knowledge-seeking as an ongoing creative relational process. A moving landscape achieved through a moving matrix.
Writing autoethnographically on autoethnography...

The suggested abandonment of the writing-up period as a discrete final stage of postgraduate research (e.g. Wellington 2010) neglects one source of anxiety about getting started: do I know enough to write with confidence or authority? The writing below arose from supervisory discussion about theories of subjectivity given my reservations about the phenomenological frame I had adopted in 2008 and discarded in 2009. At this point in my engagement with Deleuze, I knew enough to know that I did not know enough to construct 'a' Deleuzean perspective on subjectivity (several conceptualisations are identified across Deleuzean texts in secondary sources). I needed a different entry point. So I started writing about writing about the distinction between evocative autoethnography and radically desubjectifying theories. I used this exercise as an opportunity to clarify my understanding of key Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts and wrote without a pre-planned structure or pre-specified conclusion. I wanted to experience lines of creative becoming not merely write about them. I concur that students should start writing at an early stage of their research; insufficient attention is given however to the implications for both student and supervisor.

January 2010

My intended strategy here was to cite varied autoethnographic texts in illustration of the divergent tendencies within this heterogeneous literature, and to construct a continuum: initially critiquing those closer to one pole - liberal humanist / unitary / arborescent model of subjectivity, before celebrating those closer to the other - posthumanist / rhizomatic / non-unified subjectivity. This would contextualise my subsequent introduction of a more modernist style designed to demonstrate those flows of experience, and that multiplication of connections, that indicate a radically different nomadic subjectivity. Contra Butler, I would not declare 'there is a person here' amidst my theoretical decentering (1990: xvii) and dilute the personal significance of rhizomatic thinking. I felt relieved, not alienated, when I encountered the decentred subject of an anti-essentialist Althusserian Marxism in 1978 (1969 / 1977: 13, 231). It promised the possibility of reconciling Marxism and feminism at a theoretical level. Both humanist Marxism that seeks to liberate a repressed human
essence, and the unitary self-transparent rational autonomous humanist subject exemplified by the timeless universal Cartesian cogito (that thinks and therefore is), imply a radical divorce between the social and the individual. Posthumanist theories challenged this disconnection but then stood accused of replacing essentialism with a determinism or relativism that effectively eliminated the subject as an agent of social change.

Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009) sought to integrate political and libidinal economy through the concept of ‘desiring-production’ and a subjectivity defined only by its connection with the ‘outside’; hence: ‘there is no subject, only collective assemblages of enunciation’ within historically specific social formations where language is always ‘a political affair’ (1980 / 2004: 144, 154). The unconscious ceases to be an ‘interior’ space within which the Oedipal drama is enacted, becoming instead, an active variable inextricably embedded production – embedded that is, in both the social and natural world, not hitherto unspeakable fantasies about ‘Mommy and Daddy’ (1972 / 1977: 7). The popularisation of psychoanalysis suggests one form of politically controlling arborescent thinking: we look to early familial, or powerful interpersonal, experiences as ‘root’ causes in our personal accounting rather than ‘uprooting’ this reductive image of a fixed and ‘deeply rooted’ identity. Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 13) advise us to ‘forget trees and think grass’ since the latter’s root system implies a rhizomatic subjectivity and mode of thinking that is not anchored at a single centralised point and hierarchically organised, but that multiplies connections in a horizontally organised open-ended network: it is the ‘logic of the AND’ that ‘nullifies beginnings, endings, and foundational assumptions’ (ibid. 20, 28). Rhizomatic connections are random and probabilistic, as in neural activity, so rather than ‘dig deep’ into our unconscious
through the prescribed entry point of familial relations, it is recommended that we think like ‘rats’ who fail to acknowledge the piped piper of Freudianism and enter or exit their burrow system at any of one of many available sites (ibid. 7, 17, 21).

Already my writing is permeated with dualisms – voluntarism v. determinism, social v. natural, conscious v. unconscious, rational v. emotional, despite my commitment to move beyond dualistic thinking and rigid social binaries – to desire differently (Hooks 1990), escape the forest of arborescent thought, and engage in nomadic transgression of social and academic expectation. This is the ‘problem of writing’ (ibid. 22 - 3) - that we can seemingly only challenge one dualism by invoking another. It is ‘the furniture we are forever rearranging’ in search of that elusive ‘magic formula we all seek – PLURALISM = MONISM’ (ibid. 23). Acknowledging this paradox does not mean however that presenting autoethnography as a continuum would be useful in the form of two static poles defined in opposition or presented as mutually exclusive. The arborescent and rhizomatic do not represent ‘two opposed models’ but instead, a constant movement between models perpetually ‘in construction or collapsing’; and the dichotomous arranging of the furniture should not obscure the fact that rhizomes can contain ‘knots of arborescence’ and roots can possess ‘rhizomatic offshoots’ (ibid. 22). Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.) ‘employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models’.

I suspect that my intended strategy stemmed from a failure to develop an autoethnographic way of writing that I could call my own; hence the resort to a convenient ‘tried and trusted’ formula for academic writing based on a Weberian ideal-type methodology dating back to my pre-university studies in sociology.
I was well-trained in the 'static writing model' (Richardson 1997: 87) and consequently find it hard to write without striving to demonstrate my capacity for critical and analytical thinking, for organising and structuring material, for performing a hegemonic version of the academic subject. I am also very conscious that the diversity of autoethnographic styles has expanded existing possibilities and provided invaluable citational support (ibid. 2002: 376). I want to experiment with different styles and it is precisely this awareness that others have already risked institutional opposition to achieve this multiplication of methodological possibilities that deters me from dismissing any specific autoethnographic approach. Autoethnography was my second selected methodology (2009) and the very fact that I portrayed my own experiences of doctoral study as data in a second project approval procedure is testimony to the pressure, real or perceived, to conform to a single hegemonic postpositivistic research model (St. Pierre 2004: 286).

Thinking back to my initial reactions – powerful gut reactions, to various autoethnographic texts, they had little to do with the construction of some typology organised around notions of subjectivity and associated epistemological presuppositions. I reacted strongly to descriptive details that resonated with, or offended, sacrosanct personal memories. I felt energised by some texts and deflated by others. I jarred at the apparently prescriptive character of some more methodologically orientated texts. And when reading published transcripts from a conference discussion (Bochner and Ellis 2002), I felt inexplicably angry. In 2008, I attended a master class given by one of the discussion participants. An excerpt from a seminal autoethnographic text (Ellis and Bochner 1996) was circulated (Ellis 1996: 140-143) – an account of an adult daughter caring for her elderly, fragile and dying mother. I was moved by
the tenderness and compassion with which each detail of a bathing ritual was related but repeatedly returned to the first paragraph. Did I need to know about the shit under her mother's fingernails? Why was this mentioned? And why did this graphic image prompt such quiet outrage? I had been vividly reminded of an elderly relative - a woman whom I revered as I grew up, and a woman who fought to maintain a sense of personal dignity as she died of a similar cancer. I articulated my concern that the elderly and dying should be permitted some dignity - whether they are alive or aware enough to register its violation in print or not. I accepted the author's explanation. A year later however, I still find this excerpt disquieting - it depresses and irritates me.

I do not suggest here that the author was unethical or morally reprehensible, as if there is, or could be, some universal transcendent value dictating what we should, or should not, include in our writing about others. Instead, I treat texts as encounters that are good or bad for me as a unique existent, as a middle-aged woman, as a reader, and as a researcher who is tired of jumping through institutionalised neoliberal hoops in pursuit of a sameness that masquerades as knowledge production. I follow Deleuze's engagement with Spinoza's philosophy in doing this: 'The good is when a body directly compounds its relation with ours, and, with all or part of its power, increases ours', and 'goodness is a matter of dynamism, power, and the composition of powers'; I am thinking here of 'relational composition' or 'relational decomposition' - whether the power to act is enhanced or diminished by a particular encounter (1970 / 1988: 22, 23). Is this encounter energising? Will it facilitate experimentation and transformative becoming? (Gale and Wyatt 2009: 36). Does it offer an 'intensification of life'? (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 74).
When first encountering Richardson's writing about a friend with cancer (Bochner and Ellis 2002: 372-376), I was confused by the Self-Other binary that appeared to inform it given her endorsement elsewhere of feminist poststructuralism (1997: 48-9, 165). But is that what I really care about? Or is it her determination to enter a 'zone of proximity' and produce a 'minor literature' (Deleuze 1997: 226, 228) in politicising her friend's story and speaking with, not for, those whose health status precludes collective agency - her ability to evoke the sense of a time that is yet to come (ibid.)? Would I prefer that she talked of an ethical 'mode of existence' (Deleuze 1962 / 1983: 75-77), and not a 'remoralization' (ibid. 375) where the latter implies a socio-political constellation of constraining rules that, historically, has not served the interests of the 'isolated' and 'disempowered' (ibid. 376) particularly well? And if I answer in the affirmative, am I not promoting another orthodoxy and contradicting my desire for a radical academic pluralism and for a similar heterogeneity within autoethnographic writing? Deleuze defines a 'minor literature' as writing that invents 'a people that is missing' and creates 'a possibility of life' (ibid. 229). It is writing with the oppressed or those whose voice is excluded from the public arena. To institute a 'zone of proximity' demands a self-effacement or imperceptibility where becoming is always 'between' or 'among' (ibid. 226); it speaks of an ethical de-individualisation (cf. Foucault's preface in Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: xiv).

At the same master class, triangulation as a means of verification of autoethnographic accounts was recommended where possible – a technique for validation critiqued by Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 963) given its assumption of a 'fixed point' or 'object' that can be triangulated. This recourse to a postpositivistic research model and concomitant suggestion, that a more
objective truth awaits us if only we triangulate hard enough, also dampened my enthusiasm. I was there to explore alternative models and avoid becoming an evidence-based lapdog of governmental intrusion into the academy (Lather 2004: 15). I was disappointed. Why then, only months later, did I feel compelled to present my prospective research in such postpositivistic terms – my own experience as data? Deleuze states: ‘We always have the beliefs, feelings, and thoughts that we deserve given our way of being’; hence our actions and utterances must be evaluated, following Nietzsche, as symptomatic of our ‘mode of existence’ (1962 / 1983: 1). A ‘noble’ life means ‘denouncing all that separates us from life’ and maximising those encounters that energise us through ‘joyful passions’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 74; Deleuze, 1970 / 1988: 26, 28). Even at proposal stage, I had adopted a strategy that I construe now as ‘looking both ways’, i.e. outlining a traditional postpositivistic qualitative study but electing for a multi-genre and therefore less restrictive dissemination vehicle. Davies is correct to suggest that fear is the currency of neoliberal managerialist higher education systems (2005: 3, 7, 11). In my case: fear that I would be refused entry into a doctoral programme, then fear of disbarment from the next phase. Richardson identifies postgraduate entry as one site where non-positivistic research and writing is increasingly viewed as deadwood that can be discreetly pruned from the tree of academic life (1997: 209).

On Deleuze’s account of Spinoza, the implied mode of my existence would undoubtedly be considered ‘bad’ and my actions evidence of a self-inflicted ‘enslavement’ to neoliberal methodological hegemonies (Deleuze 1970 / 1988: 20, 23). I was guilty of the Spinozan illusions of ‘final causes’ and ‘free decrees’ which translate here as: the system gave me no choice, therefore I chose to do this (ibid.). I had diminished my own power of acting. In the
immanent ethics of Deleuze and Guattari, ‘what must I do?’ questions are rejected as belonging to a moral order which relies on external reference points and fixed identities, and replaced with ‘what can I do, what am I capable of doing?’ questions that are ethical and derive from Nietzsche and Spinoza (Smith 2007: 67). My writing here is about finding out what I can do outside of the grid-lock of institutionalised postpositivism, and a neoliberalism that prefers ‘breakdowns to breakthroughs’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 1977: xvii) or ‘affirmative tokenism’ (Winefield et al. 2002: 9; Sklar 1980: 45 cited in Davies, Gottsche and Bansel, 2006: 311) to real heterogeneity. I was gently nudged – and sometimes pushed, towards asking that ‘what can I do?’ question by some autoethnographic texts I had encountered long before I understood and embraced the affective and ethical potential of Deleuze. Shortly after resisting the undertaking of a conventional analysis of transcripts, acquired during the earliest phase of my current doctorate, I read papers where Elizabeth St. Pierre (1997a, 2004) documented a similar reluctance and found the citational support that Richardson insists is so important when normative boundaries are transgressed (Flemons and Green in Bochner and Ellis 2002: 376). This strengthened my resistance as intensities and affects were multiplied to produce further possibilities for my experience. This is what Deleuze means by relational composition: these texts energised me, fed me, made me stronger (1970 / 1988: 22). I felt passionately that my decision to abandon the study and elect instead for an autoethnographic method was the ethically correct one.

the self is located as a reflexive physical presence in both text and performance. Conquergood's notion of 'co-presence' with the self as other is mobilised, and I found the sense of futurity and embodied agentic power within her writing to be thoroughly energising. The passionate refusal of victimhood and survivor status in narratives of sexual violence (1995) is strongly reminiscent of the defiant rejection of normative constraint which enlivened the feminist activity of my teenage years. And when I read Spry's powerful accounts of losing a child (2006: 339-46) and losing a mother to cancer (1997: 351-7), academic considerations of co-presence as a restatement of the Self-Other binary dissipated as my own body remembered the psychotic quality of profound grief and yearned to go there. Spry has consistently challenged the 'force of exclusion and abjection, [...] the abjected outside, which is, after all, "inside" the subject as its own founding of repudiation' (Butler 1990:3), and responded to the postpositivistic 'politics of evidence' by positing the body as a 'body as evidence' and performative autoethnography as an 'epistemic / aesthetic praxis' (2009: 603). The body functions as a privileged site for a critical reflexivity that can disrupt 'social strategies of abjection' and highlight the social contingency of purportedly universal ahistorical laws of subject-formation (Butler 1990: 190). It is not entirely clear to me whether Spry is following Butler in assuming that the body is materialised through language – that the materiality of the body is an 'effect' of discourse as a reiterative and citational practice, or whether the speaking and performing of the previously unspeakable is indicative of a natural bodily reality outside of its discursive production. This hardly matters. My encounter with Spry's writing leaves me with a sense that foreclosure – as the exclusion and marginalisation of particular narratives and identities, is infinitely more fluid than the term implies. I feel the affective
potential of her writing – on my skin and through my body, and the passions
induced are joyful. They empower me. I read Spry intensively. As Deleuze
(1990 / 1995: 7 – 9) explains:

‘There’s nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret.
It’s like plugging in to an electric circuit [ ] in contact with what’s outside
the book, as a flow meeting with other flows [ ] as a series of experiments
for each reader in the midst of events that have nothing to do with books’

Performance as a ‘way of knowing’ (Pelias 1999: ix; Spry 2009: 603) - as a site
of critical reflexivity and political agency, resonates with Deleuze and Guattari’s
theory of the Real (1972 / 2009) and their dismissal of an unknowable Real or
one that is perpetuated by Lacanian psychoanalysis.

Spry’s insistence that autoethnography must be more than the
production of personal emotional narrative (ibid.) echoes Deleuze’s comments
about an ‘infantile conception of literature’ as the writing of ‘ones memories and
voyages, one’s loves and griefs’ (1997: 227). But here Deleuze is objecting to
the role of psychoanalysis in privatising and Oedipalising experience under
capitalism, and the concomitant diminution of our sense of the ‘continual praxis
of identity’ (Spry 2003: 171). Deleuze suggests: ‘One does not write with one’s
neuroses. Neuroses or psychoses are not passages of life but states into which
we fall when the process is interrupted, blocked or plugged up’ (1997: 228). The
‘logic of sensation’ outlined by Deleuze (1981 / 2003), and the ‘clinical aesthetic’
that he proposes – which ‘has the advantage of not being a psychoanalysis’
(1981 / 2003: 31), allows us to rethink experiences of psychosis, depression,
and hysteria as the embodied realities of any life however singular its becoming.
I recoiled when reading that Ellis (Flemons and Green in Bochner and Ellis
2002: 116) advises her students to become ‘their own therapists’. Elsewhere in
this four part dialogue, Bochner (ibid. 169) talks of ‘destigmatizing therapy’. I imagined how I would feel if I was encouraged to supply details of a trauma in my life (ibid. 163) and subsequently advised to become my own ‘therapist’. Anger would be my first response; swiftly followed by the feeling that I was being manipulated and that talk of ‘destigmatization’ was disingenuous. The flipside of the immanent evaluative, affirmative and transformative ethic proposed by Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 74) is that we endeavour not to act thoughtlessly or enhance our own power to act at the expense of others: we inquire, we experiment, we bring into existence rather than judge (Marks 2005: 86).

Deleuze and Guattari summarise feminist responses to Lacan’s take on desire as lack in the late 1960s and 1970s as: ‘We are not castrated. So you get fucked’ (1972 / 2009: 68). My spontaneous reaction to a definition of autoethnography as ‘exposing a vulnerable self’ (Ellis 1999: 673) took the not dissimilar form of: I am not vulnerable. So you fuck off. In the feminist consciousness-raising groups I attended at seventeen years of age the unspoken ethos was: explore every nook and cranny of your vulnerability within the privacy of the group, but beyond it, avoid providing political capital to those who would stereotype you as passively feminine by concealing that vulnerability and going for angry defiance, self-assertion, and collective agency instead. There were heated debates about psychoanalysis and sessions where we experimented with co-counselling, feminist dream-interpretation and transactional analysis as exercises in empowerment through politicisation of the personal. We were moving on, becoming, not licking wounds. I imagine that Spry would approve: the self-exposure was ‘essential to the argument, not a decorative flourish, not exposure for its own sake’ (Behar 1997: 13-14 cited in
Spry 2001: 713). The sharing of details of distressing life events was liberating not stigmatising: we were dismantling an artificial interior-exterior divide (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 28), foregrounding the ‘back story’ (Goffman 1959 / 1971: 66), and finding a politics in all of our experiences. What am I saying here? I think that ‘vulnerable’ is one of those words that has acquired a taken-for-granted uncontested quality and I am drawn to autoethnographic texts that ‘trouble’ it (Lather 2007: 27) explicitly or otherwise. My recent reading of Spry (1995) worked to disrupt any sense of a shared post-feminist present. It was ‘untimely’ in its evocation of one era and its creation of another – here, now, for me (Colebrook 2002: 62 -3). So I worry about the prescriptive import of the definition supplied by Ellis (1999: 673). How vulnerable is vulnerable and who decides? Whose interests are served by individualising vulnerability?

Vulnerability remains a political issue in neoliberal higher education regimes where image management, competitive individualism (Davis 2005: 9) and institutionalised relational decomposition prevail (Sparkes 2007: 521-50). The issue of who decides arose in another context. In my original research proposal (submitted in 2007), I cited existing research into doctoral study amongst academics where memory-work had elicited accounts of ‘traumatic’ experiences; the authors had concluded that such experiences are a condition of production of the independent scholar (Lee and Williams 1999:23). This prompted one supervisor, who left my supervisory team in 2009, to presuppose the vulnerability of my research participants. Ironically, given my expressed epistemological and theoretical interests at the time, I responded by citing quantitative psychological research that assessed the risk of re-traumatisation of previously traumatised research participants in a lengthy appendix to a
mandatory two page ethics protocol. I outlined the shortcomings of hegemonic Kantian and utilitarian ethical principles, and proposed a pragmatic orientation involving empathetic identification. The Kantian categorical ethical imperative dictates that participants are viewed as ends in themselves not purely instrumentally but fails to generate practical guidelines. Utilitarian cost-benefit ratio calculation lacks an equivalence of terms for assessing cost and benefit, and the level of ethical analysis is ambiguous since the stated benefits of research to society in general, not individual participants, permits research where the individual costs are unacceptably high from a Kantian perspective. Despite my Director of Studies intervening and assisting me in securing approval, and support from my third supervisor, I subsequently wrote angrily of the infantilisation of both researcher and researched in ethical approval procedures and suggested that they are primarily concerned with policing methodological hegemonies and protecting institutional interests. I had also rejected the ethical philosophy of Levinas as it is difficult to see how a moral obligation to the Other is demanded simply by virtue of its presence (Moran 2000: 351). I find the implied rigid binary of Self-Other problematic, and for Deleuze, the concept of the Other is the paradigmatic concept of transcendence that works to separate someone from their capacity to act; it is 'the concept of impotence raised to infinity' (Smith 2007: 68). The affective potential of performance autoethnography lies not in a performer, conceived as a unitary Self, representing their experience to an audience, conceived as Other, but in the generation of impersonal affects that cannot be located in any one agent or subject: 'Life is a dynamic swarm of affects, of interactions, encounters or purely machinic connections and productions. It is from affects that distinct beings are formed' (Colebrook 2002: 61).
My declared intention to interview mature students and experienced supervisors was interpreted as highly risky from an ethical perspective by the aforementioned former supervisor, so I produced an interview consent form stating that I was gathering data not offering therapy even though this seemed insulting to my prospective participants. In that document, I emphasised that my interviewing style would be dialogical (Oakley 1981: 30 - 61). I was taken aback however when during one interview I was asked whether I had considered autoethnography. I immediately understood the implication: that my sense of ‘enslavement’ to a positivistic research model was concealing a cowardly refusal to make myself vulnerable, and far from producing a ‘collective story’ (Richardson 2002: 375), or contributing to a ‘minor literature’ (Deleuze 1997: 228), I must be desirous of my own repression given the protection from the vulnerability of self-exposure that it afforded. She was right. It had been easy until this point to locate theoretical rationales for my methodological ambivalence – my ignoble mode of existence: I was living the fragmentation of the subject across numerous language games that is our postmodern condition (Lyotard 1979 / 1984) or expressing the contradictory impulses of gendered socialisation – the simultaneous but conflicting desires to be ‘one’s own person’ and ‘the right kind of person’ (Davies and Gannon 2006: 158, 160, 181).

Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 259) talk of a ‘vast confusion of contradictory drives’. The subject is posited as a multiplicity of unconscious drives which are never purely individual and constantly change. Following Nietzsche, the idea that our reason or intellect determines which drive predominates in any given situation is rejected (ibid. 1994: 387); their relative strength varies as time elapses and depends on the encounters through which we are constituted, and the mode of existence we pursue. Desire is necessarily
invested in the social formation (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 29). But we can strive to maximise those encounters that are our singular becoming, and that promise creative transformation or ‘lines of flight’ which are formulated as ruptures, new beginnings, or novel paths to pursue (1980 / 2004: 4, 9-10). I became increasingly interested in poetic performances of autoethnographic material that combined vulnerable self with angry self, politicised self, impassioned self and self as becoming. At one master class event, where active participation was encouraged, I borrowed from a performance artist who has talked openly about his childhood abuse and self-injurious behaviour (Athey 10th November 2006). I felt empowered through this joyful relational composition and elected for autoethnography as my latest research method of choice. My attendance at such events was not a self-initiated self-help strategy. I am not my ‘own therapist’, but instead, recognise positive encounters and connection with others as assisting the process of troubling my reticence about public expressions of vulnerability. I was ‘aided, inspired, multiplied’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 4) by others. ‘True freedom lies in affirming the chance of events’ and ‘taking thinking, constantly, beyond itself’ (Colebrook 2002: 38).

I discovered the practical ethics of Deleuze and Guattari when seeking citational support for dissemination vehicles with performative potential, i.e. texts that disrupt expectations and facilitate thinking outside of familiar frames. At proposal stage in 2007, I proposed a ‘messy text’ (Marcus 1994: 563 - 74; Denzin 1995: 177 - 184, 1997: 17) where deployment of different genres would underline competing constructions of social realities (de Freitas 2007: 337; MacLure 2003: 80-81) despite nagging concerns about the ethics of such representationalist thinking. The use of ‘messy text’ techniques in autoethnographic accounts of abusive experiences (e.g. Ronai 1995) highlights
such concerns: does construction of the same event in multiple versions merely serve to strengthen charges of subjectivism or perspectivism, and thereby reproduce the invalidation that perpetrators invariably resort to in their public and psychological denial? Similar issues are evoked in a question that Wyatt poses to Gale about writing as the performance of a story: ‘does that mean that it didn’t happen? In the sense that there are myriad versions, not just one story’ (2009: 68). Gale responds: ‘of course, it happened!’ and then explains that the telling and re-telling of stories can reveal ‘(rhizomatic) complexities’ that change the teller not the status of the event (ibid. 74). This echoes Richardson: ‘If the person truly is writing an “is” story, an “isness” story, the person will be changed by the process of the writing’ (2002: 120).

It struck me that the adopted genre in Wyatt’s autoethnographic account of a physically punitive religious ritual is unequivocally realist (ibid. 2009: 227-9). I welcomed this narrative realism but was unnerved by my gratitude. The language of linguistic mediation has become my everyday tongue just as humanism is ‘the air we breathe’ (St. Pierre 2000: 478). I vehemently oppose postpositivism as a methodological monopoly and its preoccupation with veracity, validity, detachment, and objectivity, yet my thinking remains thoroughly realist where, and when, a personal truth matters. I find these divisions in my philosophical, theoretical and personal loyalties difficult to manage. I want to be consistent and it worries me when I am not. Like Richardson, I have enthusiastically embraced many poststructuralist writers during my academic history, but inevitably a deeply-seated sociological sensibility – or cynical feminism, makes me ask why particular theories or philosophies are taken up when they are: ‘it is really interesting and important to point out that that the author died exactly when women and minorities came to
voice' (ibid. 120). And, I would add, that all our bodies became docile, disciplined and punished, just as those who had experienced physical, psychological, and sexual abuse were seeking to end conspiracies of social silence. During my first doctoral experience of the 1990s, I was advised that sociological research into child abuse would be credible only if I explored how abuse is discursively, and variably, constructed. I felt then that the 'it', the 'isness', of any testimony could, under such circumstances, become the abject that might be conveniently ignored in this rejection of realism - that the 'collective story' (Richardson 2002: 375-6) would be eradicated.

I read Deleuze as 'ultimately a realism' (Shaviro 2009: 47) and as radically materialist (Braidotti 2005 / 2006) because I need to. I am tired of epistemological conundrums that go nowhere just as Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 17) are 'tired of trees'. Deleuze allows a 'me' that is the possibility of change, of movement, of relationship, of a radically decentred subjectivity (Mansfield 2000: 136). I follow Braidotti (1994: 5) and Gale and Wyatt (2006: 1118) in feeling the creative and political energy that is engendered when the traditional dualisms of Self and Other, mind and matter, real and represented, thought and feeling are abandoned. Others, like St. Pierre (1997b), read Deleuze somewhat differently - as fitting seamlessly into a web of linguistic constructivism. Deleuze and Guattari would undoubtedly approve of these varied readings: 'It's not about re-examining sacred texts which have been more or less interpreted; it's about taking a good look at the actual situation as it now stands' (Deleuze 2006: 88). I need my 'cerebral pessimism' to become affective or bodily 'optimism' (Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 37). I want my doctoral writing to convey the process of my learning, to function as evidence of that learning in its physicality, in its intermingling of personal and relational history and academic
product. I am conscious now that I intended an emphasis on affective response to specific texts, and the ethical issues evoked for me, to enliven the academic prose that I habitually produce. Instead I have drifted, rhizomatically, into darker waters. I have allowed this to happen. 'We will speak of freedom only when we pose the question of an act capable or not of filling the amplitude of the soul at a given moment' (Deleuze 1987 cited in Smith 2007: 73). Letting it happen is my academic freedom - my soul speaking through the writing. And this is my doctoral experience – its 'isness'.

Colebrook (2002: 95) explains:

"Transcendence is equivocal: positing a being that is – the outside world – and a being that knows or represents – mind or "man". Univocity posits one plane of becoming with no point being the ground or knower"

I understand univocity to permit the use of 'realist tales' and 'experiential author(ity)' (Van Maanen cited in Richardson 1997: 90) as more appropriate sometimes than 'experimental representation'. For these writers, poststructuralism facilitates a move away from 'science writing' to 'let us off the hook of science' (ibid. 88, 89, 91). Each is referring to postpositivistic research models and narratives - where I wholeheartedly support their position, while I am referring to writing of experiences where power and trust have been abused and issues of validity and invalidation are emotionally loaded. I am unsure about 'crystallization' however - the image of the crystal as an alternative form of 'validity' (ibid. 92). Deleuze promises, not another version of validity confining me to the same problematic or plane as postpositivism, but instead a way of having my 'it' and experimenting with it: finding intensities, reaching thresholds and being transformed, energised and politicised by them. Writing about
abusive episodes as realist accounts has affective potential; it is precisely the matter-of-fact style - given the events being described, that is shocking in Gale and Wyatt (ibid.) and that forces the reader to think. Crystalline validity is presented as a response to the 'crisis of representation' (Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 18) – a means of 'troubling' (Lather 1996: 525) postpositivistic notions of objectivity and the quest for a shared truth. But I worry that it perpetuates: 'the tripartite division between a field of reality (the world) and a field of representation (the book) and a field of subjectivity (the author)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 25). Richardson is seeking transgressive 'methods' (ibid. 166) that expose 'hidden assumptions' and 'life-denying repressions': 'Reseeing and retelling are inseparable' (ibid. 167). So 'crystallization' lays bare the 'interweaving of processes in the research: discovery, seeing, telling, storying, re-presentation' (Guba and Lincoln 2005: 208). Richardson is asserting the transformative power of writing - its capacity to be creative of continually shifting researcher-writer identities. Interpreted in this way, it suggests one way of 'bringing ethics and epistemology together [ ] via practices of engagement and self-reflexivity' (Lather 1993: 686) and of challenging prescribed identities in a 'continual praxis of identity' (Spry 2003: 171). The growth of crystals affirms the power of difference; they do not remain the same only bigger; their growth is their becoming different.

Affect in Deleuze is a form of pre-personal or impersonal perception that is intensive because it concerns the becoming of qualities. Intensities produced by writing will, as Colebrook implies, disrupt or confuse the faculties and allow both reader and writer to grasp: 'the powers of becoming from which our ordered and composed world emerges' (2002: 39). So returning to the question evoked for me by the potentially prescriptive description of autoethnography
provided by Ellis (1999: 673) (how vulnerable is vulnerable and who decides?) I insist that only the writer can decide, in their singular becoming, how much they say and how they say it. This is what I take from writing as nomadic inquiry (Gale and Wyatt 2009); that becoming is necessarily unpredictable, depending as it does on the chance of events – on the memories, texts, situations and others encountered during the process of writing. So my own self-writing may be realist at times, but also become experimentally hysterical, depressive, psychotic even: ‘Reason is always a region carved out of the irrational – it is not sheltered from the irrational at all’ (Deleuze 2004: 157). By hysterical, I mean an ‘excess of presence’ where the writing releases presences beneath and beyond representation through its action on the nervous system and the production of a ‘nervous optimism’ (ibid. 1981 / 2003: 36 - 37). By psychotic, I mean writing that reveals a ‘body without organs’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 173) - a ‘connection of desires, conjunction of flows, continuum of intensities’ (ibid. 179) that recognises desire in all its positivity; a desiring machine that has been ‘plugged into other collective machines’ because the body without organs is necessarily ‘a Collectivity’, and one where ‘what remains of me, unalterable and changing in form, crossing thresholds’ is about ‘experimentation’ (ibid.). By depressive, I mean writing which speaks of interpretation (reduction to pre-given frames) and judgment replacing experimentation and therefore learning - of the blocking of flows, connections and intensities within neoliberal grids (ibid.).

Richardson talks of stories that change over the course of their telling, and the selves that change with them (Flemons and Green, 2002: 91); there are many stories here in this writing of mine: stories that start in the middle, that surface for breath and that distract my thinking. I had wanted my writing to exude affirmation - ‘a desire that produces’ (Deleuze 2004: 223) by not writing
'against' (ibid. 141). I tried to reorientate myself in a new geography of writing style, avoiding the ascents of a highly theoretical impersonal discourse, striving to be worthy of the powers of difference that flow through me (Deleuze 1969 / 1990: 170); and leaving behind 'the linear mode of intellectual thinking, the teleologically ordained style of argumentation that most of us have been trained to respect and emulate' (Braidotti 1994: 29). I recognise however that: 'The BwO is a component of passage' (ibid. 175) and: 'Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping even, realms that are yet to come' (ibid. 5).
Foucault, Freud and flagellation ...

Long before I finished the thesis, I became conscious of a rhythm establishing itself within and across plateaus. I had not appreciated just how powerful the sense of risk might be when transgressing my own sedimented assumptions about academic writing. Upon re-reading, it seemed that I had run for the cover of my habitual style of writing in the plateau below, contrary to my professed intentions and supervisory support for experimentation. This rhythm or movement was duly noted in supervisory feedback - that 'I' had suddenly disappeared from the text and needed to consider why this had happened. I was aware when writing this plateau that Latour (2004: 230) has rejected the 'critical barbarity' of social scientific critique. But I have to admit that I can derive considerable pleasure from exercising this writing skill when I feel that it is warranted. I respond here to a paper on the later Foucault that appeared to exemplify the sort of invalidating reductionism that psychoanalytic theory can engender.

February 2010

The artist never confronts a blank canvas, or the writer a blank page. The latter must be 'emptied' or 'cleaned' of all 'givens' in a process of deciding what will hinder and what will help - which 'clichés' ('psychic' and otherwise) should be abandoned and which retained (Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 61). Confronting these clichés can be a difficult experience of 'confused sensations' (ibid. 62, 71) - irrational and involuntary responses. But this is all part of that process of deciding, not 'who I am', but 'what I want to become' (Braidotti 2002: 2) as an academic subject. And it is this knowledge that I am not a blank page - an empty surface awaiting normative neoliberal inscription, which makes me resist institutional imperatives that assume that I will inevitably and unquestioningly recognise myself in such premises. As a mature student with professional research experience, I re-entered higher education in search of far more than accreditation. Memories of my undergraduate days in the late 1970s led me to perceive academia as the site where novel or controversial ideas could be enthusiastically debated – where ideas mattered, where identities were forged,
and where a plurality of perspectives was assumed. I am disheartened by the contemporary emphasis on training not education, on accreditation not authenticity, and politico-economic imperatives not personal learning agendas. Is the ‘research training’ that governmental intrusion into the academy has prescribed (Lather 2004: 15-34; 2006: 35) appropriate for mature students who enter with experience in the execution of postpositivistic research or whose profession will never require them to demonstrate proficiency in this area?

The confused sensations I experienced in the initial phase of my doctoral studies (2008 – 2009) involved negotiating identity conflicts. I wanted to recover an undergraduate self that thrived on engagement in topical theoretical debates and grasped their social relevance, yet also felt an enormous pressure to be the professional woman who could rapidly read a situation and just get on with whatever was required of me – a syndrome Davies and Gannon (2006: 158, 160) attribute to gendered socialisation and relations of power. As former theoretical loyalties and issues were evoked through my reading, I found this desire to ‘be the right kind of woman’ (ibid.) increasingly unsustainable. Although like Foucault, I reject the repression hypothesis – the notion that an essential or ‘true’ self awaits its liberation from oppressive social systems and their repressive ideologies (1985: 113; 1990b: 102), my current determination to explore theories and research practices that challenge the hegemonic postpositivistic orientation within higher education (Gale 2007: 472) does feel like a recovery of a former academic self. I am excited by my reading of Deleuze and the sense of discovery it affords. Lather advises that we ‘practice in our empirical endeavours what we preach in our theoretical formulations’ and reflect on how our value commitments ‘insert themselves into our empirical work’ (1991: 80). Such coherence assumes however that those values or
political principles are non-contradictory and readily articulated, whereas I had spent many years outside of higher education. It was only when beginning a traditional postpositivistic analysis of qualitative interview transcripts that I recognised a contradiction between my research strategy and my teaching practice which is intuitively collaborative, affirmatory, and empathetic. I could characterise this recognition as a form of ethopoietic self-constitution (Foucault 1997: 209; Pelias 1999) – a process, as Braidotti (ibid.) suggests, of deciding what I wanted to become, and involving intensive reading as I sought support for this desire to develop an alternative research practice ethos that resonated with my teaching style. I abandoned postpositivism but became an ‘empiricist’ in Foucault’s sense of the term – of trying not to ‘advance things without first checking whether they are applicable’, of attending to the ‘finer detail’; and I identified with him when I read how, in his youth, knowledge had been ‘a means of surviving by understanding’ - the ‘protection of an existence’, and how he came to regard the ‘transformation of oneself by one’s own knowledge [as] something rather close to the aesthetic experience’ (1990b: 106, 39, 14, 7).

A cliché of the hegemonic linear postpositivistic research model increasingly imposed upon academics and students in neoliberal higher education regimes (Lather ibid.; Davies 2005: 7; St. Pierre 2004: 285) is that the research question is generated through exhaustive review of the existing literature. Deviation from this product-orientated self-evidently logical sequence is discouraged through concomitant training in generic professional competencies like project management (Green 1995: 13). Logico-scientific disciplines do, of course, demand production of scientific narratives (Bruner 1986, 1996) that demonstrate adherence to shared and replicable procedures. Beyond such disciplines however, this model functions as a normative force –
as evidence of a pervasive 'secular theology of enhanced competitiveness and
ineluctable market forces' (Haraway 1997: 90) and a 'neoliberal orthodoxy'
(Touraine 2001: 1). Resistance feels 'risky' in a climate of uncertainty about
individual, institutional, and national economic survival (Davies 2005: 11).
References to 'heresy' (Atkinson 2004: 111) and 'heretic agency' (Spry 2006:
344) indicate the perceived power of this dominant research model to suppress
alternatives ways of thinking. As a doctoral student, in the 1990s and more
recently, I have resisted producing the type of literature review dictated by this
model. For me, confining reading to a time-framed stage of a linear research
process is not at all suggestive of 'a passion for a life of the intellect' or
'impassioned scholarship' (Davies ibid. 7, 8). Instead, it evokes the 'vampiric
consumption of de-territorialized differences' that characterises advanced
neoliberal capitalism (Braidotti 2005: 2-3). This clichéd consumerist treatment of
texts persists despite recognition that the contemporary proliferation of available
material pertaining to any one selected topic means that 'no single-authored
synoptical overview is possible' (ibid. 11).

Reducing reading to a gap-finding exercise contradicts my
longstanding expectation of doctoral study that it will afford 'thinking spaces'
(Davies February 2010) – opportunities to pursue themes, digest ideas, make
connections, and learn more about the theoretical, philosophical and pedagogic
traditions that interest me. If asked now why I find the texts of Deleuze so
engaging, I might glibly respond that they address troublesome binaries like
'nature-culture' and 'essentialism-constructivism' (Braidotti 2005: 12) and situate
my work within a recognisable academic tradition; but it has taken many months
of close reading to find a space that I feel confident writing from. Foucault's
description of a state known as stultitia in Greco-Roman culture, in the context
of the *hupomnemata*, suggests how the imperative to survey a sizable literature in a very limited time may work against thinking and personally transformative scholarship: spreading ourselves across numerous texts has a 'scattering' effect such that the mind forgets itself and fails to find a point from which to write 'in the possession of an acquired truth' (1997: 212). *Stultitia* is a state of distraction implying superficiality and inconsistency (Ure 2007: 51). The *hupomnemata* is one of three sets of pre-Christian practices identified in Foucault's study of the 'arts' of the self that comprise an 'aesthetics of existence' (ibid. 261). These practices differed from subsequent Christian confessional purificatory self-narratives premised on a belief that self-government, necessitated by an ascetic righteous mode of existence, could be fostered through writing about one's thoughts and actions, since the very act of writing allegedly enabled the writer to anticipate reactions in others and thereby instilled fear of disapproval and shame (ibid. 209 - 211).

Contra Christian purification and self-policing rituals, Foucault argues that Greco-Roman writing concerned the exercise of thought and reasoning: the *hupomnemata* were recorded collections of quotes, book extracts, and overheard reflections that functioned as 'guides for conduct' and facilitated a 'silencing of the passions' and self-reliance in the event of adverse circumstances (1988: 22). The objective was not to simply memorise and cite this disparate material; the power of reasoning was purportedly enhanced through an ethical project of self-constitution that demanded its digestion and unification – making its truth one's own and forming an identity through which a 'whole spiritual genealogy' could be read (ibid. 1997: 214). A related but distinctive practice of *correspondence* served the dual purpose of providing valued others with advice whilst concurrently preparing the self for similar life
events. This embrace of reciprocity and friendship was the 'souls labor upon itself' and Foucault argues that such reciprocity far exceeded 'counsel and aid'; correspondence was equally a reciprocity of the gaze that constitutes the self in its presentation for the scrutiny of another - the 'objectification' of the soul is simultaneously a 'subjectivation of true discourse' as such writing is construed as a 'personal' asset (ibid. 214, 216, 221). The third Greco-Roman form of writing and self-training is described, following Plutarch, as ethopoietic; it possesses an ethopoietic function by transforming truth into an ethos or principle of rational action (ibid. 213). But it is in correspondence where the historical development of writing about the self's relation to the self is first evidenced; Foucault cites letters from Seneca demonstrating growing concern with subjective and bodily states, impressions not actions, and 'interferences of soul and body' (1988: 29). These letters show a movement between subjective impression - as bodily sensation, and the exercise of thought brought about through 'remedies of the soul' which include 'meditative walks' and support from others: 'it is a question of recalling the effects of the body on the soul, the healing of the former resulting from the care given to the latter' (ibid.).

Ever since reading that Richardson ascribes a 'healing' power to self-narrative (Flemons and Green, 2002: 166), I have been intrigued by the use of such terminology. It feels risky. It contradicts the image-management I associate with neoliberalism and defies the fear of stigmatisation accompanying the shift Foucault charts, i.e. the historical migration of maladies from the body-soul to the head as symptoms of individualised mental illness. My reaction to statements about 'healing' is always ambivalent. I applaud the courage of those making them but worry that proponents of the postpositivistic research model will use and abuse them by perceiving any admission of human vulnerability as
indicative of a potential for causing harm and therefore grounds for manipulating research agendas. Why else would Davies and Gannon (2006: 6) insist that their collective biographical method is not therapy, and why did I once feel compelled to advise adult interviewees that therapy was not being offered?

In my early teens, any suggestion that aesthetic self-stylisation is ethical would have been anathema to me; testimony perhaps to the enduring social legacy of early Christian polemics within which Greco-Roman ethical practices were deemed pagan cults of 'self-love' and the 'sin' of self-deification (Ure 2007: 23, 31). Hostility today assumes an ostensibly different form: reactions to personalised 'confessional' narrative include charges of solipsism - as the unhealthy withdrawal into a private sphere, narcissism - as an infantile behaviour indicative of retarded emotional development, or self-indulgence – as an inappropriately excessive individualism (e.g. Patai 1994: 52). I dislike the word 'confessional' intensely and attribute this involuntary, and arguably irrational, response to its religious connotations and their function as a mechanism of social control. The volunteering of relatively innocuous autobiographical detail can trigger self-recrimination despite my intellectual interest in the heuristic value of personal narrative. Sometimes though, I will perversely head off in the other direction and defiantly put it out there to see what comes back. In a reworking of the Christian taboo on self-love and valorisation of selflessness, I tell myself that I am old and strong enough to do so, and that such self-exposure may make it easier for others to tell their story and weather accusations of self-indulgence.

Wittgenstein viewed confession as a 'kind of surgery, an operation to remove cowardice' according to Monk (1990: 372) and Peters (1999b) maintains that Wittgenstein's philosophy is interpretable as a positive response
to the cultural nihilism of fin-de-siècle Vienna which rendered suicide obligatory for many of his peers. Wittgenstein described philosophy as 'more like working on oneself' (1980: 16e). Peters constructs a third space where '(auto)biography and philosophy [] commingle' (ibid.); Wittgenstein, Nietzsche and Heidegger are located within a philosophical tradition concerned with self-constitution that culminates in later Foucault's technologies of the self. Some important differences should be noted however: Foucault, I believe, abstained from the type of quasi-religious confessional practice undertaken by Wittgenstein in the mid-1930s which included oral exposition of his sins to selected live audiences and directly apologising to a female pupil whom he had struck but publicly denied striking. Moreover, it is precisely the absence of confession as a ritual of purification and absolution in Greco-Roman practices of the self that Foucault emphasises. And while Wittgenstein remains committed to challenging the self-transparent Cartesian subject, Foucault's later work is read by Dews as marking the 'return' of a subject (1989: 37), or perhaps more accurately, a return to Nietzsche, in order to recover a positive model of the exercise of subjectivity having conceded that subjectivity is more than an effect of power - however embodied and embedded (Ansell-Pearson 1995: 13-30; Patton 1994).

I sense a greater affinity between Foucault's writing on the constitution of subjectivity in the 1970s and reductive interpretations of Wittgenstein's language philosophy that invite the subject to be viewed as merely an 'effect' of 'language games' (Wittgenstein 1967 / 1972: 219, 238). Although Wittgenstein states that: 'The truth can be spoken only by someone who is already at home in it' (1980: 26e), the criteria by which the truth of self-narrative is to be established are exclusively those of the language games deemed to comprise his post-Cartesian autobiographical project: 'confessing, bragging, accusing,
blaming, apologizing, expressing, and so on’ (Szabados 1992: 6 cited in Peters 1999). Szabados (ibid. 7) is therefore able to claim that Wittgenstein demonstrates the futility of attempts at coherent self-accounting since, on the latter’s account, such narratives can only be forms of ‘myopia or self-deception’ where any objective of coherence ‘fuels omissions, rationalizations, invention: suppressions of salient, raw, stubborn memories which confound the imperial attitude of pretended wholeness’. Contra Szabados, Davies (2005: 13) argues that students should be encouraged to produce coherent or ‘stable narratives of identity’ in order to ‘understand the way that neoliberal discourses and practices will work against that stability’ – to foster conscience and a critical literacy. Davies (ibid.) links the ineffable to desire and irrationality, and Wittgenstein is equally concerned with what cannot be expressed – he writes of being ‘seduced’ by logic and ‘mislead’ by grammar. Peters (ibid.) however attributes Wittgenstein’s sense of the ineffable to his Judeo-Christian Calvinist religious outlook which dictated asceticism and a striving for purity; desire here would be a torment demanding forgiveness from a ‘higher’ authority and not a source of creativity or transformative becoming-other.

From a pedagogical and personal perspective, I prefer the less prescriptive approach to student ‘self-writing’ implied by Davies (ibid.) and others (e.g. Gale and Wyatt 2009). Peters glosses over differences between early and late Foucault in his determination to privilege confessional narrative as a pedagogical practice: ‘we might profitably investigate the notion of “writing the self” as a pedagogical practice that encourages a confessional mode compelling us to tell the truth about ourselves and, thus, creating the conditions for ethico-poetical self-constitution’. Foucault does not however mention confession in the context of ethopoiesis, nor is there any sense of students
being 'compelled' in the relationships of apprenticeship within which the Hellenistic and Stoic practices of the self were evolved. Reading and writing were spiritual exercises linked to meditation (Hadot 1995: 81). Foucault identifies two series: a linear one going from meditation to writing to trial in a real situation – ‘a labor of thought, a labor through writing, a labor in reality’, and a circular one where meditation precedes writing which can later be reread to instantiate meditation (1988: 37). Peters suggests that for Wittgenstein, truthfulness lies in the uniqueness of ‘voice’ and personal style (ibid.), but I think it is equally important to recognise that writers – including students, are similarly unique in their attitudes towards confessional narrative, which are infinitely variable. Hence for Pelias (Bochner and Ellis 2002: 35) there is ‘no catharsis, no purging of emotions [ ] no act of purification’ in autoethnographic writing. Richardson writes of ‘healing activity’ but acknowledges that some stories must remain untold if the teller is not ready for their telling (ibid. 166-167).

It may be inaccurate to suggest that Wittgenstein’s political awareness did not develop beyond guilty self-flagellation at his privileged upbringing, but this is my impression: that philosophy and confession were taken as ‘therapy’ for an individual tormented soul. So although Wittgenstein (1972) intends that his texts will ‘act little by little on our spirit, like a cure, like a medical treatment’, the inclination to look beyond the individual to the socio-political context in Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009; 1980 / 2004) is far more inspiring, precisely because it allows the possibility of an ethics that facilitates collective agency, and a pedagogy based on relationship and collaboration rather than competitive individualism. When Deleuze writes of ‘health as literature’, and the writer as the 'physician of himself and of the world' (1997: 228), he is not resurrecting a Judeo-Christian tradition of repentance and absolution, of charity and salvation,
but referring to writing that 'escapes the dominant system' and that speaks to a 'people that is missing'. In the same paper, the fragile health of Spinoza is mentioned as 'bearing witness until the end to a new vision whose passage it remains open to'; there is no conformity to language games here: 'Every writer is obliged to create his or her language' and writing is 'passage' – a possibility of life (ibid. 228, 229).

A new vision is conveyed in Deleuze (1981 / 2005), and Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004). Traditional narrative structure is abandoned as chapters can be read in any order since, as Conley states: 'their conclusions are enveloped everywhere in the “machinic” manner of the text' (Deleuze 1988 / 1993 / 2006: xxi). Machines are simply connections, parts that function together in the absence of invisible unifying or organising principles (1980 / 2004: 4-5) and to read is to connect with a text in a unique way that has as much to do with the affects generated in the reading process (Deleuze 1970 / 1988: 129) as the ideas contained within it - which are already, and always, subject to multiple readings. In Deleuze (1969 / 1990), the body is shown to be organized into an organic unity through a hierarchical structuring that produces its subordination to the rational ego; this process of subordination is a condition of possibility of that ego, but obscures the forces acting upon the body and the multitude of assemblages into which a body enters with other bodies (Johnson 1999: 33). My reading of Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004) is reminiscent of the meditative process associated with the hupomnemata, as Foucault describes it, in that I have returned to this text on numerous occasions in order to (re)consider specific ideas and make them my own truth. Yet, contra Foucault, each reading generates entirely different affects and lines of flight in my thinking.
and I am changed by it. But I would not describe that change as enhancement of my power of reasoning or capacity for rational thought.

Ure (2007: 19-52) criticises Foucault for a misleading emphasis on thought and rationality in his interpretation of Greco-Roman practices of the self, and is clearly repulsed by suggestions of an aesthetics of existence. Like Peters, Ure identifies a philosophical tradition, dating back to Socrates and including Nietzsche, within which to locate Foucault, and conceives this tradition as a ‘therapeutic’ one – a *therapeia* of the soul, not an aesthetic one. Ure endorses claims that Foucault exaggerated the extent to which beauty was the *telos* or objective of Greco-Roman self-training techniques, and that a nineteenth century cult of beauty was inappropriately transposed onto a classical tradition where the meaning of aesthetics was much narrower (ibid. 22; O’Leary 2002: 14-15). Hadot (1995: 207) also criticises Foucault’s reading of Greco-Roman ethics as an ‘ethics of the pleasure one takes in oneself’. Ure proposes an alternative psychoanalytic interpretation, derived from Freud, of the Nietzschean middle works upon which Foucault drew; practices of the self here are reduced to ‘a treatment’ addressing the ‘psychological traumas of loss and transience’ and therefore the ‘loss of narcissistic plenitude and its pathological manifestations’ (ibid. 22 - 23). Against Hadot’s advice that the psychological state of an author should not be inferred from their philosophic writing (Davidson 1995: 18 in Hadot 1995), Ure clearly implies that Foucault is guilty of narcissistic self-absorption and that the proposed care of the self only serves to heighten this tendency: ‘Foucault’s recasting of the work of the self in terms of Baudelairean Dandyism or the freedom of undefined, unrestricted self-invention, elides something fundamental to this ethics’; consequently: ‘Foucault’s
Baudelairean aesthetic self-fashioning is merely a symptom of narcissism' (ibid. 24, 25; Foucault 1986: 362).

Ure is less judgmental about Foucault's observation regarding the distortion of modern ethical discourse by a zero-sum Christian concept of love, presumably as it is supported by a psychoanalytic source – namely Fromm, who identified a resonance between Freudianism and Christian theology in a shared emphasis on self-renunciation. Fromm (1939: 173 - 197) rejected the mechanical relation between self and object love in Freud, whereby an increase in one produces a proportionate diminution in the other. Foucault maintains that secularisation has neither eradicated the perception of morality as obedience to external law, nor the Christian tradition of rendering self-renunciation as a condition of salvation – self-love continues to be synonymous with selfishness or the sin of self-deification (1988: 22). Hence the contemporary relevance of Greco-Roman practices of self in Foucault's project of making care of the self 'the basis of a morality' and developing a personal ethics as the 'stylization of conduct' and exercise of 'individual liberty' (1986: 32, 253; 1985: 115). In The Use of Pleasure (1985) it is the relationship of the self to external norms as a process of adjustment, not the self-constitution through relationality implied in Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth (1997), which concerns Foucault and where a distinction is drawn between the Hellenistic and Roman Stoic traditions: 'beauty' and 'brilliance' derive from the manner of adjustment in classical Greek culture, whilst the Stoics emphasise rationality as a means of achieving self-mastery and introduce the notion of 'enjoyment of oneself without desire or disturbance' (1986: 68; 1985: 63, 70). Ure avoids any further exploration of the role of psychoanalytic theory and practice in reproducing and perpetuating the Christian view of morality as respect for external, and patriarchal, law and seeks
instead to demonstrate that Foucault has conflated the classical and Stoic traditions and recast them as ‘too purely aesthetic’ thereby neglecting the therapeutic dimension of Nietzsche’s ‘art of living’ (ibid. 34, 47).

A quotation from Nietzsche provided by Ure (ibid. 35 - 36) – one also used by Foucault in both Care of the Self (1986: 44) and Technologies of the Self (1988: 20), is evocative of Davies (2005) and the concept of the ‘untimely’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 112-113). Nietzsche writes passionately about the ‘lust for power of idealists’ who ‘hammer into children that what matters is ... the salvation of the soul, the service of the state, the advancement of science, or the accumulation of reputation and possessions, all as a means of doing service to mankind as a whole’ (Nietzsche 1880 / 1986: 6). I substitute higher education students for ‘children’ and late capitalism (Braidotti 2005) for ‘mankind’ and wonder what has changed. Maybe Foucault thought so too in insisting that an aesthetics of existence was necessitated by the contemporary demise of morality as external law (1989: 311).

However objectionable Ure’s central premise and psychoanalytic interpretative frame, I have found his provision of historical examples of medical metaphors and analogies helpful. Now that I am aware of the extent of their usage by Stoics like Seneca, and Nietzsche’s adoption of them as his own, I will be less antipathetic or ambivalent in future when encountering reference to healing and therapy in autoethnographic texts. I am able to situate them, make connections, I am generating questions of my own, I am reading with love (Deleuze 1990 / 1995: 7-9) and I want to read more. This is not stultitia. This is learning. For me, reading is a form of correspondence, collaboration, relationality, that says ‘do with me’ and not ‘Do as I do’ – which is education for Deleuze: ‘Our only teachers are those who tell us to “do with me”, and are able
to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce' (1968 / 2004: 26). So when I read texts depicting the doctoral supervision relationship in neoliberal managerialist or contractual terms (e.g. Yeatman 1995: 9-11; Wisker et al. 2003: 91-105; Mullins and Kiley 1998: 1-13), it is precisely this sense of heterogeneity that is missing; they read like flat-pack self-assembly instructions and recipes for institutional ‘melancholia’ (Nietzsche 1982: 382). ‘Out of loveless words directed at us, conclusions grow up like fungus: one morning they are there, we know not how, and they gaze at us, morose and grey’ (ibid.). The Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics shared the belief that ‘erroneous beliefs and value judgments’ can induce disorders of the soul – a spiritual sickness, and Nietzsche adopts this position when describing his own philosophising as a ‘self-treatment’ (Ure 2007: 38).

In a sleight of writing hand, Ure (ibid.) suggests that Nietzsche ‘obsessively returns’ to the notion of philosophy as ‘a therapeutic art that heals the sufferings and diseases of the soul’; an ‘aesthetics’ of therapy, linked by connotation to medicine, is acceptable to Ure whereas Foucault’s ‘aesthetics’ of existence is not. And although practices of the self were initially introduced by Ure as curative of the ‘psychological traumas of loss and transience’, additional disorders are later identified in a passage from Nietzsche that have a distinctively psychoanalytic flavour – traumatic memory and mania, culminating in Nietzsche being credited with the positing of an ‘alternative medico-philosophic therapy’ (ibid. 40). The Stoic practice of praemeditatio is raised in this context; this form of ‘self-testing’ refers to loss-related emotions such as anger, desire for vengeance and envy that demand continuing askesis as self-mastery through the ‘assimilation of truth’ not self-renunciation (Foucault 1988: 35). Ure approvingly describes Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence as a
key post-metaphysical diagnostic and curative spiritual exercise and form of 'self-testing'; it is what Magnus (1978: 156, 194) describes as an antidote to Platonism, Christianity, and romantic pessimism, in that these arrest 'becoming' and temporality. Ure's approbation of Magnus's argument is confusing since it is Foucault's concern with such 'becoming' that is so heavily criticised. The purpose of Ure's sleight of hand is manifested when, at the end of his paper, he refers to 'Stoic therapy' (ibid. 50). We are longer in the realm of metaphor and analogy.

Foucault writes against a 'Cartesian moment' in philosophy after which it is understood as a predominantly cognitive enterprise not one linked to spirituality, truth, and subjectivity (2005: 14-16) or 'transformation of the subject's being' (Hadot 1995: 265). Nietzsche also objects to a shift in philosophy from study of wisdom towards philology (the study of mere words) – a change he attributes to much earlier sophistic teaching (Ure ibid. 45). Foucault asks: 'what would be the value of the passion for knowledge if it resulted in a certain amount of knowledgeableness and not [ ] in the knower's straying afield of himself?'(1986: 8). Ure attaches enormous significance to this mention of 'straying' from oneself interpreting it as 'continuous estrangement of the self from itself', 'limitless, perpetual self-transformation', and 'release from all pre-given limits' occurring independently of all external norms (ibid. 47- 48; Jay 1989: 73; Dews 1989; 40). Foucault is not only accused of conflating the historical contingency of subjectivity with 'self-fashioning as analogous to the indifferent, indeterminate material of artistic poiesis'; Ure refers to Foucault's 'theoretical and personal resistance to psychoanalytic theories' and to Patton's argument that Foucault must presuppose a 'feeling of powerlessness' in order to promote a continual self-transformation to enhance one's feeling of power
Foucault’s care of the self is then read as evidence of precisely that pathology that the therapeutic orientation of Roman Stoicism, and the middle works of Nietzsche, sought to cure: ‘the transgressive desire to flee from oneself or tear oneself from oneself’ that results from a primal ‘narcissistic wounding’; Foucault purportedly presents such transgression as a ‘virtue’ because he was unable to embrace - at either a theoretical or personal level, the ethical, psychological and normative implications of the Stoical project; consequently, according to Ure, he seemingly grasps the practical-therapeutic conception of philosophy but simultaneously severs it from the central ‘normative ideal of self-sufficiency’ and ‘analysis and critique of the emotional agitations or pathologies on which this ideal is premised’ (ibid. 51).

I have cited Ure’s paper at such length for several reasons. Firstly, I wanted to show how psychoanalytic theories encourage reductive critiques that degenerate into an ad hominem (against the person) mode of argument. Whereas Foucault discusses stultitia in the context of the hupomnemata, and the importance of rereading and processing their contents, Ure presents stultitia as exemplifying the inhibited psycho-emotional development from which Foucault must be suffering in order propose an ‘aesthetics of existence’ that valorises self-transformation (ibid. 51). We are effectively invited to dismiss Foucault’s concept of ethics without an adequate exposition of its content. I am suggesting here that it is not just self-writing that implies ethical principles – particularly since students increasingly rely on secondary sources. Citing Patton to bolster the image of Foucault which Ure wishes to convey is misleading. What Patton (1994: 60-71) offers is a defence of Foucault against arguments that he fails to provide normative criteria against which varying regimes of truth,
and forms of individual agency, can be compared. Secondly, I hoped to highlight the downside to the consumerist approach to reading dictated by a linear research model. Had I pursued my original doctoral research proposal (2007), reviewing the existing literature instrumentally – to rapidly identify the ‘gap’ with which to justify a postpositivistic study, I could not have pursued these sources in any depth or meditated on questions arising during that brief survey. I endorse Braidotti’s depiction of global capitalism as ‘schizophrenic’ in its multiplication of difference for the sake of profit and national competitive advantage. The latter imperative provides the rationale for governmental control of the higher education system. For (Braidotti 2005 / 2006):

‘Advanced capitalism looks like a system that promotes feminism without women, racism without races, natural laws without nature, reproduction without sex, sexuality without genders, multiculturalism without ending racism, economic growth without development, and cash flow without money’

If my experience of doctoral study is not to become one of education without learning, then I need to pursue issues that arise through my reading.

I find, for example, that Patton (ibid.) does not endorse Ure’s suggestion that a ‘feeling of powerlessness’ underlies Foucault’s desire to convert stultitia – conceived as an infantile disorder, into an ethical mode of existence. On the contrary, Patton addresses criticisms of Foucault that he considers misplaced and that relate to Foucault’s alleged failure to provide normative criteria and his conception of subjectivity. Ure’s traditional psychoanalytic orientation dictates an exclusive focus on individual adaptation to an existing social formation through attention to seemingly universal timeless contingencies of life (separation, loss, mortality); hence the selective emphasis on ‘self-doctoring’ within Nietzsche’s philosophy and neglect of key Nietzschean concepts like will
to power. The latter, as a historically contingent feature of human life, involves
d Reflexivity and therefore the possibility of political agency or resistance to an
existing social and moral order. Foucault cannot offer universal moral norms or
criteria of evaluation without undermining the basis of his analysis of power,
agency, and morality – all are recognized as historically contingent and
therefore variable. As Patton states: 'values are internal to types of individual
and social being, not independent of them', hence it is exactly the non-
universalizable character of Foucault's ethics that permits the possibility of an
enhanced sense of personal agency and resistance, where oppressive social
forms seemingly preclude both (ibid.).

The 'practice of freedom' (Foucault 1987: 113) is not the infantile desire
for omnipotence or narcissistic plenitude Ure implies, but the possibility of
personal and social transformation based on a human capacity for reflection,
critical reflexivity, and modification of power relations as intrinsic to human
existence. Patton argues that once Foucault's conception of power as an
interplay of forces and inducement of affective states in other bodies is
understood, it makes little sense to ask how resistance is possible. Foucault
follows Nietzsche, firstly, in regarding human freedom and autonomy as a
given: thinking is part of the capacity to act stemming from 'the kinds of internal
division within the self which Nietzsche saw as resulting from the human will to
power turned back against its subject' (ibid.). And secondly, in recognising that
the socially situated character of individual existence means that self-
interpretation is influenced by the 'moral' judgments of others; there is a
'feedback loop' such that affective states induced by those judgments may
enhance or diminish our 'will to power', and the perceived success or failure of
our attempt to act will in turn also effect that capacity for agency: 'the peculiarity
of human action is that it is not only conscious but self-conscious: we are happy or sad according to whether our actions produce a feeling that our power is enhanced or a feeling that it is diminished' (ibid.). This demonstrates that Foucault presupposes a 'fuller conception of human subjectivity' than that suggested by either his critics or his focus on power relations, and that this conception is required to explain both the feeling of power and the lack of a sense of agency that is so often recorded as indicative of oppression (ibid.). It is also needed to account for the experience of the limits of freedom as the basis for social change, and it is in this context that Patton states: 'In order to account for the experience of these systems of power as forms of domination, as limits to individual's capacities for action, Foucault must presuppose the existence of particular forms of self-interpretation and the existence of something like the feeling of powerlessness' (my italics) (ibid. 71).

Ure's (psycho)analysis of Foucault's proposed care of the self exemplifies 'interpretosis' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 127) – 'a Western disease that traces all becomings back to some origin' (Colebrook 2002: 134). Ure implies that had Foucault overcome his resistance to psychoanalysis, the Oedipal or childhood trauma underlying his recommendation of self-transformation as an aestheticised ethics would have been uncovered. 'Interpretosis' is a defining feature of representational thinking whereby all experienced affects are read as signifiers of some original scene; it is typified by the Freudian concept of overdetermination that reads all affects as symptomatic or symbolic of some original parental fantasy, and ultimately, of a desire to 'heal' the narcissistic wound of maternal absence (ibid.). Instead of referring images back to an event conceived as an external cause, and searching for the concealed 'real' meaning, Deleuze and Guattari (2006: 81-83)
propose an internal intensity of affect. Dreamed or fantasised images do not represent or symbolise anything other than potential actions: 'a desire to expand or become-other through what is more than oneself' (Colebrook 2002: 135). A version of 'interpretosis' is evidenced in the educational literature (Balatti and Whitehouse 2001: 43; Holligan 2005: 276; Cryer 2000: 87) where apprenticeship is recast as a developmental process akin to psychological individuation. Hence we speak of 'mature' and 'independent' scholarship regardless of the age of the students, and trauma is presented as a condition of the production of individualised and 'independent' scholarship (e.g. Lee and Williams 1999: 23).

Deleuze (1986 / 2006: 73) notes the 'stupidity' found in many commentaries on Nietzsche and Foucault relating to notions of subjectivity:

‘Emergence, change and mutation affect composing forces, not composed forms. Why is this idea, apparently so simple, difficult to understand to the point where the "death of man" has caused so much misinterpretation? [...] The question concerns the forces that make up man: with what other forces do they combine, and what is the compound that emerges’ (ibid.)

I laugh in self-recognition, as I sit glued to a PC monitor with aching wrists, when reading the ensuing illustration offered by Deleuze: a combining of the forces of man and of information technology will create something other than man – 'indivisible "man-machine" systems?' (ibid. 74); there is no universal eternal subject here, and the concept of ‘Man’ is a historically situated one which operates as a contrived set of boundaries, or a limit on experience, that neglects becomings with the non-human. The affinity Deleuze (1970 / 1988: 22, 26) identifies between Nietzsche, Spinoza, Foucault's 'death of man' and presentation of power as a relation of forces is clearer when Spinoza’s definition
of a body is understood. The latter involves two propositions: firstly, that a body comprises an infinite number of particles: 'it is the relations of motion and rest, of speeds and slowness between particles, that define a body, the individuality of a body'; secondly, 'a body affects other bodies, or is affected by other bodies; it is this capacity for affecting and being affected that also defines a body in its individuality'; these propositions are described as kinetic and dynamic respectively (ibid. 123).

For Deleuze, the apparent simplicity of these propositions is deceptive. In a passage that captures my own experience of encountering Deleuze's philosophy, he writes: 'if one truly installs oneself in the midst of these propositions, if one lives them [ ] one finds that one is a Spinozist before having understood why' (ibid.). It should be noted that bodies are defined by these relations not by form or function – the development of form is dependent upon them: 'The important thing is to understand life, each living individuality, not as form, or a development of form, but as a complex relation between differential velocities [ ] A composition of speeds and slownesses on a plane of immanence' (ibid. 122-123). The 'plane' functions as a conceptual-affective continuum and Deleuze illustrates this using music and sound particles: 'It is not just a matter of music but of how we live: it is by speed and slowness that one slips in among things, that one connects with something else' (ibid. 123).

Deleuze takes up the second Spinozist proposition and underlines its implication that bodies (or minds) are not substances or subjects but modes defined as relations: 'concretely, a mode is a complex relation of speed and slowness, in the body but also in thought, and it is a capacity for affecting or being affected, pertaining to the body or to thought' (ibid. 124). Deleuze's 'indivisible “man-machine” systems' now make more sense since every being is
defined by the ‘arrangements of motions and affects into which it enters, whether these arrangements are artificial or natural’ (ibid.); this follows from the propositions relating to bodies and to Spinoza’s first principle that all bodies – minds, individuals, machines, whatever, are part of Nature: ‘one substance for all attributes’ (ibid. 122).

Perhaps this is why Deleuze (1969 / 1990: 149) describes his philosophy as an ethics of *amor fati* or love of what *is* – an affirmation of existing life not a quest for ‘external’ foundational assumptions and transcendent givens like God, Being or Truth (Colebrook 2002: 71). And why Deleuze proposes a ‘transcendental’ empiricism that is claimed to be ethical as it concerns the concrete conditions of possibility of the real and does not take an ahistorical universal Cartesian cogito as a given (Deleuze 1953 / 1991). Deleuze seeks to demonstrate the ‘productive, positive, and liberating’ nature of thought and go beyond critique (Colebrook ibid.). On Patton’s reading of Foucault, ethopoietic self-constitution can be interpreted as a similar affirmation of life, thought, and relationality of bodies. And the negation of life in Ure’s (psycho)analysis of Foucault is clear. Foucault, like Deleuze, sought to liberate his thinking from a ‘subjection to transcendence’ and an ‘ethics of knowledge’ that dictates fact-finding in an ‘exterior’ world as the basis for action (ibid. 71; Foucault 1972: 203). The ‘subject’ is simply another form of transcendence or, following Hume, the habit of saying ‘I’ (Deleuze 2006: 364; 1969 / 1990: 17). Foucault is challenging the idea that thinking is an innate interior faculty: ‘Thinking does not depend on a beautiful interiority’ (Deleuze 1986 / 2006: 72), just as Wittgenstein challenged the notion of a ‘private’ interior language.
Painting waves ...

‘One never commences: one never has a tabula rasa; one slips in, enters in the middle: one takes up or lays down rhythms’ (Deleuze 1970/1988: 123). In the preceding plateau, I alluded to concerns about linguistic constructivism but defended Foucault against unethical forms of critique (ad hominem argumentation and psychoanalytic reductionism). I was moved to find affinities between Deleuze and Foucault not highlight their differences, e.g. Foucault’s (1990: 32) rejection of productive desire as an originary source and less radical conception of power (Morss 2000: 198). I draw on the doctoral pedagogy literature below, particularly two papers that adopt Foucauldian concepts and purportedly relate theory to supervisory practice. Neither accord with my Deleuzean vision of the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage as a site of practical experimentation, and both evoke Stengers’ (2008) demand for a mesopolitical orientation. I continue to support macro-level critiques of neoliberal managerialism, even as I struggle to articulate the specificity of my current supervisory assemblage and account for its novelty and productivity. I explain the apparently paradoxical proposition - singularity through relationality by outlining selected Deleuzian concepts. I draw on Smith (2007) who maintains that the medical analogies pervading Nietzsche’s writing convey the complexity of assessing what is singular, and what ordinary, in any given multiplicity (2007: 12 - 13); hence Nietzsche’s likening of the philosopher to a physician reading symptoms to ascertain the interrelation of forces prevailing within whichever multiplicity is being considered. Despite the metaphorical resonance, this is not the language of diagnosis evidenced in institutional supervision policy guides or student-directed manuals, where an essence of good or effective supervision is invariably posited and remedial or prophylactic actions specified. The first paper (Grant 2005) suggests one manifestation of the ‘language of therapeutic empowerment’ in educational settings that Bleakley (2000) rejects, and confirms my concerns about psychoanalytic reductionism. The second (Holligan 2005) links traditional discourses of scholarly autonomy to the preservation of epistemological pluralism in higher education.

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When Francis Bacon met Deleuze following the publication of The Logic of Sensation (Deleuze 1981), the artist said that he dreamed of painting a wave but dared not believe in the success of such a venture (Translators Introduction, 2003 edition). Deleuze found this reticence very ‘Cézannian’ (ibid.) and quotes from D. H. Lawrence (1972: 578 - 9) who noted that Cézanne fought with clichéd representations of the apple for some forty years and that Cézanne’s
apleyness could not be imitated: 'Every man must create it new and different out of himself: new and different'. A similar principle informs the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage where supervisors do not ask what 'Proper supervision' (Grant 2005: 337 – 338) is or seek to replicate clichéd representations or models, but instead engage in practical experimentation that is student-specific.

Grant (ibid.) adopts a Foucauldian perspective in presenting doctoral pedagogy as a 'rich discursive context' of competing discourses, and this context purportedly promises a 'slipperiness' that permits the limits of what may be 'sensibly' thought, spoken, and enacted, to slide and shift (2005: 337-338). Such discourses are held to function as 'fantasies, fairytales, fictions and fallacies' and display an 'unruliness' as they 'play out in lived experience' (ibid. 338 - 339). Of six competing discourses identified, the four deemed most influential are the traditional-academic, techno-scientific, neoliberal and psychological, and Grant explores how 'Proper supervision' is constituted in each. The traditional-academic is designated an elitist pedagogy of indifference (Johnson, Lee and Greene 2000: 135) that requires a subjectivity infused with 'masculine norms' of academic life (Grant ibid. 341; Frow 1988; Green and Lee 1995). The image painted here is one of nineteenth century Oxbridge tweed-clad dons who rarely condescend to communicate with students and eagerly perform the rituals of social-academic Darwinism allocated to them; and it is argued that this discourse persists in a relationship of tension with more recent discourses (ibid. 341). The techno-scientific is deemed a similarly anachronistic by-product of late nineteenth century positivism and subsequent postpositivism, and supervision is presented as a rational logically ordered process where the probability of successful outcomes is maximised through skill training, close
surveillance and control (ibid. 342; O'Rourke 1997: 32; Acker et al. 1994: 484).

A neoliberal discourse, connected with the recent commercialisation of higher education, has purportedly reconfigured education as a commodity, students as consumers, and supervision as a managed contractual relationship ensuring mutual accountability and therefore 'consumer satisfaction' (ibid. 343; Yeatman 1995: 9 -11). A rampant instrumentalism is allegedly shared by both techno-scientific and neoliberal discourses, but the former is claimed to be dominant given its role in national policy and institutional agendas (Grant, ibid. 343). For Grant, both discourses create pressure on students ‘to limit their ambitions (the scope of their work)’ (ibid.).

The remaining two discourses that Grant identifies, and classifies as marginal, are the radical and the psychoanalytic (ibid. 340). The former comprises feminist and critical perspectives that emphasise power differentials and social positioning (ibid. 344). The latter is characterised as 'Psycho-Supervision'; it is held to be ‘analogous’ to therapy and therefore conditional upon ‘intensive training’ if it is to be ‘effective’ (ibid. 346). A 'psychological' discourse, and 'Psy-Supervision' practice, is clearly favoured by Grant. Supervision relationships here are constituted as primarily interpersonal and personal support is to be provided by a 'caring, expert professional' (Salmon 1992: 20) who is also charged with guiding the student 'along a developmental trajectory to maturity as an independent researcher' (Grant ibid. 341). The student is required to 'confess his / her struggles and failings' (ibid.) in this teleological normative process. Despite the 'unruliness' and 'slipperiness' of the discursive context posited by Grant, 'Psy-Supervision' is predicted to become the most powerful discourse and supervision practice (ibid. 350) since, contra an elitist 'Trad-Supervision', it is expertise in supervision and not a student's
doctoral area of interest that is needed. Grant consequently endorses 'Psy-Supervision' on the grounds that widening participation is facilitated. The 'happy endings' that Grant once believed 'Psy-Supervision' afforded are now less likely however given what are described as institutional limitations; conditions cannot apparently become too slippery within a contemporary context of heightened accountability for outcomes (ibid. 350 -351). Indeed, Grant goes on to paint a scenario that is characterised as the 'fraughtness of contemporary supervision': 'an individual supervisor, lacking extensive knowledge of the topic, supervises a student of unknown ability, within a context of heightened accountability for outcomes' (ibid. 348).

'Psycho-Supervision' and 'Psy-Supervision' are distinguished throughout Grant's paper as distinct discourses with the former being recognised as inappropriate in the absence of training and in settings other than those of relevant therapeutic disciplines, and the latter as universally applicable. Nevertheless, Grant inadvertently describes 'Psy-Supervision' as requiring intensive therapeutic training at one point and not 'Psycho-Supervision' as context would demand (ibid. 346). This slippage or interchangeability is alarming given that the ascendency of 'Psy-Supervision' is predicted and purportedly requires only skills in supervision, a caring disposition, and awareness of the ethical implications of the coexistence of multiple discourses - the danger that supervisor and student may 'talk past each other' (ibid. 351). The potential for abuse of supervisory power, and inappropriate expectations in students, is manifest in the event of slippage between 'Psycho-Supervision' and 'Psy-Supervision'. And I find Grant's paper problematic on several other counts; it fails to consider how an emphasis on pastoral care can resolve the very scenario that Grant portrays as fraught or, more accurately, the predicted
ascendancy of 'Psy-Supervision' is premised on the assumption that an absence of expertise in a student's area of interest is necessarily a bad thing. Grant appears to presume a one-to-one supervisory relationship modelled on the psychoanalytic / therapeutic model and is apparently oblivious to the possibility of supervisory teams. Neither are extra-supervisory factors considered; Trigwell and Dunbar-Goddet (2005), for example, suggest that the departmental environment can condition student perceptions of their supervision - presumably access to academics that do possess knowledge relevant to the student's interests may be a factor here. My own experience of the pastoral dimension of supervision is that I have not consistently required it, but at times it has been invaluable. And I struggle to conceive this support as the discursive construction of a specific subjectivity or evidence of a learnt vocabulary that must compete for traction; this implies a Deleuzean bend in my thinking – a liberal humanist value asserting itself when I decide that empathy and compassion are not skills that are learnt because a job description specifies them. There are gender issues here that Grant elects to ignore. And slipperiness is suggestive of a sense of fluidity that I find lacking in the image of discrete discourses vying for the attention of a subjectivity that is reduced to a site where they 'play out'. The presentation of parties to the supervision relationship as the coexistence of anachronistic and contemporary subjectivities (Grant ibid. 338; Usher and Edwards 1995: 20) perhaps answers Bleakley's (2000) question as to why the concept of empowerment is so seductive to some within educational settings. I lose any sense of the meso inventiveness that Stengers (2008) argues is evidenced at the meso level that concerns practice. When I meet my supervisory team, we are four bodies, four people – not simply representatives of competing discourses and vehicles of passive inscription.
And we are no longer the same people that met several months previously. Our lives have moved on in a myriad of unspoken ways. It is a 'potent cocktail' but not, as Grant (2005: 346) suggests, because I am grappling with conflicting subconscious desires to be taken care of and to be autonomous. To return to Grant's portrayal of supervisory pastoral care as a response to the expertise deficit that is the corollary of higher education expansion, I would challenge this assumption and reframe it: such divergences of interest within my own supervisory assemblage engender its rhizomatic character. I am beginning to explore connections between Stengers' philosophy of science, and the poetic feminist poststructuralist writing of Cixous, without the sense of rigid compartmentalisation between disciplines that I once felt. I feel empowered.

In Holligan (2005: 267-278), Grant's 'rich discursive context' is instead a conflict zone where the survival of traditional discourses of scholastic autonomy (Halsey 1992) is threatened by a commercialised audit culture (Ball 1990, 1994; Power 1997). Holligan is particularly critical of the 'technicist, formulaic model' which promotes the belief that supervision involves the application of a 'generic "tool kit" to facilitate progression'. And a parallel is drawn between postpositivist research narratives which tidy up the field and post hoc 'technicist diagnosis and remediation' exercises which fail to acknowledge diverse constructions of the doctorate on the part of students, or to recognise that facilitation of intellectual originality is often highly context and student specific (ibid. 270). I much prefer the phrase intellectual creativity to 'originality' since the concept of heterogenesis, in the context of a rhizomatic supervisory assemblage, defies this suggestion of individual origin and ownership of ideas. And, as with Grant, Holligan's macro-critique operates at a level of generality that invites precisely the charge of tidying up the field as in not admitting exceptions to the
generalisation to be scrutinised. Holligan maintains that the same 'generic tool kit' precludes discussion of the 'contested character of the process of scientific discovery as a socially and politically embedded practice' (ibid. 274). Yet this subject has driven discussion within my own supervisory assemblage since its inception given the diversity of the epistemological interests represented. Holligan argues that the capacity for critical and creative thought is more easily fostered when students are already inclined to 'irreverence' – refusing deferential conformity to hegemonic discourses, ideas, and practices (ibid.). I would suggest however that divergent epistemological loyalties within a supervisory assemblage render such irreverence inevitable; there is no uniting around a common foe or an entrenched position, rather, a process of exploratory engagement. I concur wholeheartedly with Holligan's view that 'epistemological impoverishment of university culture' must be avoided – that students should have a right to choose. But when he argues that attempts to instil a critical capacity may be read as inappropriately over-directive by students who are insufficiently irreverent, the possibility that they are in fact over-directive should be entertained. The promotion of a culture of donnish dominion (ibid. 277; Halsey 1992) rests uneasily with my feminist sensibilities when criticality is conflated with the selection of 'a' position, and its gladiatorial defence, and an exploratory approach to learning is read as a sign of intellectual weakness. It is not surprising perhaps that Holligan interprets 'voice' (Richardson 1997: 122 cited in Done, Knowler, Murphy, Rea and Gale 2011) as the readiness to critically appraise available perspectives and methodologies (ibid. 274). Or that the tension induced in Holligan by conflicting discursive imperatives are described as 'cognitive dissonance' (ibid.). I am reminded of Foucault's comment that care of the self means evolving an ethics that affords
'protection of an individual existence' (1990b: 16) when Holligan (ibid.) states: 'My own sense of identity made me resist enslavement by corrosive “new” discourses of governmentality'. I suspect that Holligan's sense of identity and experience of dissonance are not confined to his head. A rhizomatic supervisory assemblage creates opportunities for students to engage in a continual praxis of identity through a supportive and non-directive pedagogic strategy that fosters experimentation. I will explain shortly how the 'logic of sensation' (Deleuze 1981 / 2005) redresses the presupposed separation of thinking and affect. Holligan criticises the 'how to' literature directed at postgraduate students (e.g. Phillips and Pugh 2002; Cryer 2000) but adopts the 'weaning' metaphor found in Cryer (ibid. 87) which I find infantilising and potentially controlling. The processes through which the doctoral student is produced in a rhizomatic assemblage are non-linear and non-teleological, and imply complexity, contingency, uniqueness, changeability and unpredictability. References to cognitive dissonance, like Grant's interpretation of pastoral support as a psychological exercise, suggest that we are now so used to 'psychologising' in narratives about ourselves and others (Rose 1996) that we overlook the future and our capacity to change it in often unpredictable ways. A key motivation in abandoning the analysis of my participant-derived transcripts in 2009 was the realisation that I too was engaging in the very psychologising that I despise, and which invariably implies some unattainable normative ideal. And I found Deleuze's comments on Nietzsche's eternal return useful when discussing my feelings about this matter with supervisors. Contra Grant, I did not construe the mutual exploration of this epistemological / methodological break as the 'confessing' of my 'struggles' and 'failings'. And I sometimes wonder whether the casting of such dialogue as 'confessionalism' – with its connotations of guilt
and voluntary subjection to power, or as the ‘introspective personalism’ of liberal humanism (Bleakley ibid.), or as evidence of a disempowering teleological normative developmental process (Cryer ibid.) makes it harder to speak of emotional or affective reactions. Deleuze emphasises the active affirmative ethical import of the eternal return: would we be happy to live the same life over again? (2004: 125). I would have felt distinctly unhappy re-living my academic life had I spent it picking over the psychological bones of women whose company I had valued. I had already abandoned a doctoral postpositivist study in the 1990s but reminded myself that the past can never be repeated – it is always in production just as the present is, so to look to the past is to grasp the force of past questions, problems and directions, and to permit them to transform the present into a future; hence Deleuze describing his philosophy as untimely (Colebrook 2002: 64). It is not the site of hidden truths about ourselves.

Defining changeability, novelty, or the new is not easy and I am indebted to Smith (2007: 1-21) for a succinct account of Deleuze's metaphysics of difference which I will summarise with reference to the concept of model implicitly contained in the two papers reviewed here. It was Bergson who transformed philosophy by posing the question of how the production of something new is possible, and by shifting attention from the eternal and universal to the new and singular (Deleuze 1986: 3). Deleuze is similarly concerned with the conditions under which something new is produced (Deleuze and Parnet 1977 / 2002: vii). The new can only be thought through a principle of difference: if identity (A is A) was the primary principle, i.e. if identities were pre-given, there would be no production of the new or no new differences (Smith ibid. 1). Smith restates familiar arguments (that everything is
new if we are referring to something that did not exist before, and conversely, that the new often appears in predictable patterns); he then contrasts the new from the related but distinguishable problems of: change and transformation, causality and determinism, and the possibility of emergence or emergent qualities.

Transformation is often conceived as combinatorial (existing elements being rearranged or combined) or hylomorphic (matter being treated as inert or passively receptive of forms which vary); both reduce novelty to the rearrangement of matter. Linear causality raises the problem of effects pre-existing their causes such that only quantitative not qualitative change can occur, whereas determination implies that an effect can have multiple causes and that a cause can have multiple or very different effects; determination can therefore take several forms - causal, probabilistic, structural, teleological and dialectical (ibid. 2-3). Smith maintains that each can be derived from Deleuze’s principle of difference: ‘Difference is the state in which one can speak of determination as such’ (ibid.; Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 36). Emergence derives from a ‘physicalist’ ontology and refers to the production of new qualities at ever higher levels of complexity in systems; but physicalism cannot take supra-physical, or emergent, properties (e.g. new individuals or institutions) that their physical components lack into account (ibid. 3). Emergence therefore differs from the concept of the new in Deleuze, Bergson and Whitehead, where: ‘novelty becomes a fundamental concept at the most basic ontological level’ (Being = Difference = the New) (ibid.).

Since Deleuze is concerned with the conditions of the new, I should also address the conditions of thought and briefly outline the alternative conditions previously specified. In assessing logical possibility for example, the impossible
or unthinkable is determined using the principles of identity (A is A), non-contradiction (A is not non-A or not what it is not) and the excluded middle (between A and not-A there is no middle term - something cannot be what it is and what it is not); this is all about essences or essentialism, and a formal logic that restricts us to the realm of the possible or logically thinkable (ibid. 4).

Contra to this logic, Kant introduced a transcendental logic and categories that delimit a realm of possible experience. Causality is deemed a category by Kant since objects of possible experience are conceived as caused by something else; empirical concepts are said to be immanent to experience, and consequently testable, whereas transcendent concepts (God, Soul, World) go beyond possible experience and are unknowable but thinkable (Kant follows Plato in referring to such concepts as Ideas) (ibid.). So Kant posits a posteriori and a priori knowledge: the latter are facts of reason and morality, and the conditions of possibility of such facts are attributed to the transcendental – they are presupposed rather than explained. Smith contrasts this Kantian concern with the conditions of possible experience to Deleuze's search for genetic and differential conditions of real experience and real thought (ibid. 5).

The term genesis derives from Salomon Maimon and his critique of Kant. Maimon argued that a genetic method was required if the production of knowledge, morality, and reason itself was to be accounted for (ibid.). And it was Maimon who first recognised difference as constituting the genetic and productive principle of real thought. Maimon's influence on Deleuze is evident in his text on Nietzsche (Deleuze 1962 / 1983) where genealogy is described as Nietzsche's genetic method, with which Kantian morality and truth was critiqued. Will-to-power is deemed to be Nietzsche's principle of difference (Smith and Protevi 2008). The concepts of virtuality and multiplicity are
introduced in a later text on Bergson (Deleuze 1966 / 1983); this is Deleuze’s solution to Maimon’s insistence that Kantian conditions of possibility of representational knowledge must be replaced with the condition of genesis of the real. The virtual is that genetic condition (Smith and Protevi 2008); it replaces ‘extrinsic conditioning’ with ‘intrinsic genesis’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 154) and this is why the future becomes the fundamental dimension of time not the past. Instead of thinking of the real as the possible with existence added to it, genesis involves the actualisation of the virtual where the latter is held to be fully real and not merely awaiting realisation. The virtual must be actualised, rather than realised, because of its differential nature; Deleuze rejects the Kantian ‘tracing’ operation whereby the transcendental is viewed in the same way as the empirical: ‘the task of a philosophy that does not wish to fall into the traps of consciousness and the cogito is to purge the transcendental field of all resemblance’ (Deleuze 1969 /1990: 123).

The above quotation conveys a fundamental Deleuzean principle – that the ground cannot be the same as that which it grounds. Kantian empirical experience is purportedly personal and identitarian as implied in the Transcendental Unity of Apperception - the possibility of adding ‘I think’ to our judgments. Deleuze wants to hang on to experience but, as Smith and Protevi (ibid.) state: ‘since the condition cannot resemble the conditioned, and since the empirical is personal and individuated, the transcendental must be impersonal and pre-individual’. So the virtual lacks identity but is the condition of real experience. This means that identities of subject and object result from processes that actualise (resolve or integrate) a differential field: the virtual is the condition of genesis of real experience and not the condition of possibility of rational experience (ibid.). Smith (ibid. 6) explains that when the virtual is
actualised, it differs from itself, so every process of actualisation is necessarily a production of the new – the production of a new difference. The absence of Kantian categories in Deleuze’s philosophy means that conditions must be determined along with what they condition; they must change as the conditioned changes and therefore be ‘plastic and mobile’ (ibid.) or ‘no less capable of dissolving and destroying individuals than of constituting them temporarily’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 47).

The concepts of ground, foundation and ungrounded are key to Deleuze’s arguments concerning sufficient reason; the Cartesian cogito is a foundational assumption but Deleuze argues, following Leibniz and Spinoza, that constructing such a foundation is meaningless if the ground on which it rests is fragile: ‘we must have something unconditioned’ that is able to determine both the condition and the conditioned and ensure real genesis’ (ibid.; Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 68; 1969 / 1990: 22). Deleuze identifies a ‘bend’ in sufficient reason or the ground, suggesting that: ‘it leans towards what it grounds, towards the forms of representation; on the other hand, it turns and plunges into groundlessness beyond the ground which resists all forms and cannot be represented’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 274 - 275). In Deleuze’s theory of repetition, the present plays the role of foundation, the pure past is the ground, and the future is the ungrounded or unconditioned – the condition of the new (Smith ibid. 7).

To present the supervision relationship as a compilation of discourses is to attribute a mediating role to language – to imply the existence of fixed forms that can be variously ‘labelled’, as in Grant’s ‘Psy-Supervision’, ‘Trad-Supervision’, and so on (ibid.). This representational model of language suggests that, behind or beyond appearances, the ‘truth’ may be uncovered (or
Deleuze, like Nietzsche, rejects this view and asserts the truth of relativity. The world here comprises 'pre-personal singularities' (Deleuze 1969 / 1990: 102); these are not general forms that language organises but chaotic free-roaming fluxes (Colebrook 2002: 18). Deleuze follows Nietzsche in arguing that philosophical concepts are active and creative not representational. Thinking and the production of concepts is how the flux of reality is made manageable. In contrast, opinion involves reductive generalization where everything is reduced to already known forms and concepts are reactive (as labels of an already ordered world) (Colebrook 2002: 16-17). This is not to imply that opinion is a representational distortion of a true world 'out there' since we necessarily perceive the world in a partial or interested way in order to function within it. The subject here is not a transcendent pre-given rational consciousness, but rather, is constituted through affective forces, habit, and language (ibid.).

It would be misleading to imply that Deleuze’s philosophy marks a complete break with Kantianism since, like Whitehead (1925: 90, 190), Deleuze reworks Kant’s transcendental aesthetic in order to posit a ‘transcendental empiricism’ (1968 / 2004: 180). Artistic creation is one of the non-philosophical sources that Deleuze draws on along with molecular biology and calculus. From the latter Deleuze derives concepts like the virtual, multiplicities, singularities, the problematic and the differential relation through which the conditions of the real are defined (Smith ibid. 8). Texts implying an ‘essence’ of good supervision and providing prescriptive or normative models suggest a very different mathematically-inspired philosophical position; the Platonic Idea (as a defined form or essence) is based on Euclidean geometry where forms are static, unchanging, and self-identical (ibid.). The differential equation invented by
Leibniz produces an alternative 'differential equation paradigm' (Stewart 1989: 32 - 33 cited in Smith ibid. 9) with which to think nature in science and the nature of the real in philosophy, i.e. the conditions of the real and the new. An account of the differential relation is found in Leibniz (1966: 545) or Smith (ibid. 10 - 11). It will suffice here to note that the differential relation continues to exist even when its terms disappear and this fact provides Deleuze with an example of the concept – difference-in-itself.

'Deleuze takes the notion of the differential relation to a properly transcendental level. The differential relation is not only external to its terms (Bertrand Russell's empiricist dictum), but it also determines its terms. Difference here becomes constitutive of identity [ ] it becomes productive and genetic, thus fulfilling Maimon's demand: a genetic philosophy finding its ground in a principle of difference' (ibid. 11).

Deleuze's use of singularity differs from that of logic (where the singular is related to the universal); the singular points of a square, for example, are the corners and an infinite number of ordinary points compose each of its sides. Deleuze describes a multiplicity as a combination or assemblage of such points – hence determination of any individual is precisely this combining of the singular and ordinary points, or the remarkable and the regular: the singularities are those points where something happens in the multiplicity (an event), or in relation to another multiplicity, causing a change in its nature and the production of novelty (ibid. 12). One of several examples supplied by Smith (ibid.) includes 'boiling over in anger' as the singular point of a psychic multiplicity that is in perpetual flux.

If we relate this Deleuzean abandonment of ideas of essence, substance, and therefore identity to what might happen over the course of any one supervision meeting, or supervision relationship, it should be clear why I
prefer to avoid preconceived static notions of what either supervision, good supervision, or bad supervision is, and to take each meeting as 'it' comes, recognising that the relationship is created anew on every occasion. Questions like 'what is?' belong to Socratic and Platonic traditions that aim to determine essences, whereas Deleuze will ask: How? Where? When? How Many? And, of course, I am trying to write a thesis, not seeking to paint the supervisory wave. What does taking it as it comes actually mean? Deleuze might explain that my existence is objectively problematic and, for that reason, the exact directions that I take cannot be specified in advance; I am, at all times, surrounded by virtualities - not logical possibilities but physical realities of which only one will be actualised, at a particular moment, as the production of a novelty or the differentiation of the virtual. The ensuing moment will be both similarly problematic and modified by the preceding one; hence every event is new and, as Deleuze insists following Maimon, the conditions and conditioned are determined at the same time (ibid. 17). This returns us to calculus since although we know now that most differential equations are non-linear, and involve infinite divergent series, determinism or deterministic thinking was encouraged by the historical tendency to attend to linear equations with convergent series that were more easily solved without computers (Strogatz 2003: 181 cited in Smith ibid. 15 - 16). The concepts of the problematic and the virtual evoke Kant in that, for Deleuze, they are conditions of the real that can be thought but not known in any direct empirical sense. Kant distinguished between true and false problems, suggesting that Ideas such as God, Soul, World, are objectively problematic structures since they are taken as objects rather than as problems: we ask questions about objects whose existence we take for granted, and in doing so, the object of the Idea becomes separated
from its solutions or status as a problem – it is a problem incapable of solution (ibid. 14 - 15; Kant 1999: A327/B384). The scope of Deleuze’s concept of the problematic is now clear: the movement from problem to solution is that of the virtual-actual complementarity and it is not confined to thought: the growth of a crystal, a tree, a relationship is a solution to a problem with uncertain outcomes. If I refer to perception in the context of novelty, contingency and unpredictability within supervision meetings and the supervision relationship, it is the fuller conception of perception in Deleuze that I have in mind. Deleuze follows Leibniz in viewing perception as the integration, or actualisation, of a multiplicity of ‘obscure’ minute unconscious perceptions as a condition of real experience. A conscious perception occurs when minute or virtual perceptions - which we are unaware of, enter into a differential relation that determines a singularity which is actualised: ‘Far from having perception presuppose an object capable of affecting us, and conditions under which we would be affectable, it is the reciprocal determination of differentials (dy/dx) that entails both the complete determination of the object as perception, and the determinability of space-time as a condition’ (Deleuze 1988 / 2006: 101; Smith ibid. 13). Space and time are not pre-given or a priori conditions of perception but instead constituted along with perceptions (ibid.).

If supervision meetings are ‘potent cocktails’ (Grant, 2005:346), it is not because those present are nursing potentially disruptive unconscious expectations fuelled by childhood fantasies about Mommy and Daddy (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 50), or powerful desires signifying an originary lack and castration. The latter Lacanian position is not a palatable alternative to the Freudian Oedipal drama; it also risks a reductive and controlling supervisory practice, and the derision of supervisors. I shudder when reading Hecq (2009:
who adopts a Lacanian perspective and writes of 'the possibilities that transference offers supervisors and candidates' and 'an ethical handling of the transference'. Simply replacing Freud with Lacan misses the point about the ethics of such pedagogic strategies. Contra Grant, the 'cocktail' that I propose involves an affirmatory (non-dialectical) unconscious in thought, multiplicities at play, the interrelation of forces referred to earlier, and a potential disharmony between the senses. I am seeking a way of thinking supervisory meetings as unpredictable events / encounters rather than as sites where neoliberal managerialist scripts are rehearsed and performed, boxes are ticked, and the gods of procedural accountability appeased; or of suggesting that neoliberal managerialist and technicist-rationalist imperatives are only part of a supervisory picture that comprises conscious perception, but also unspoken and unconscious thoughts (of a Deleuzean not Freudian nature), unpredictable affects, powerful sensations and forces. When talking with supervisors about starting this thesis, I feared that the task might prove to be bigger than my capabilities and my trepidation felt more like a tidal wave, as I imagined a thesis that might break and dribble across institutional sand, disappointing all expectation in the process. But I spoke confidently about my writing plans. According to the micropolitics of Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004), chaotic flows of desire were inevitably present but it is from such flows that the categories of supervisor and student-candidate - with their attendant interests, are produced in a coding of that desire; both are assemblages of socially coded affects (Colebrook 2002: 92 - 93). Desire is power – the power to become and produce images, and these images can work to enslave us when we invest in, and strive to conform to, the very stereotypical images that desire has produced. On this account, personal qualities begin impersonally and politically,
but contra theories of ideological production of subjectivity, there is no essential repressed self outside of power and the images that desire produces (ibid.). The multiplication of unpredictable affects and intensities can however alter possibilities for experience, and our power to act. I am thinking of intensity in two ways here: as difference which reaches a certain threshold and alters the dynamics of a situation to produce a qualitative change, and to refer to the 'body without organs' as intensities-in-motion, as noise produced in the depths of the body, a physical and pre-linguistic force, or more dramatically – 'the terrifying nonsense of the primary order' (Smith and Protevi 2008). These authors describe Deleuze's text The Logic of Sense (1969) as an aberration – a response to the 'linguistic turn' before he came to 'embrace fully his materialist and naturalistic leanings' with Felix Guattari in Anti-Oedipus (1972 / 2009).

According to Deleuze (1969 / 1990: 181): 'What renders language possible is that which separates sounds from bodies and organizes them into propositions, freeing them for the expressive function', i.e. events of sense. Nonsense functions as a condition of sense, and although sense is virtual and incorporeal, it has the power to transform what bodies can do in its actualisations. If we apply this principle to neoliberal educational discourse, we would argue that it works reactively in presenting itself as descriptive of reality or a doubling of that consequently unquestioned reality. Hence, if sense is what allows neoliberal language to seem natural and meaningful (and discourses of academic freedom or autonomy distinctly unmeaningful and anachronistic), this suggests that the problem lending them sense has changed. For Davies (2005), the contemporary problem is that of planning to control uncertainty; and a related problem – implied by Holligan (ibid.) is facilitating accreditation for ever larger more diverse student populations. If the neoliberal managerialist depiction of
supervision practice makes little sense to me (and the supervision meetings it engendered in the 1990s often left me feeling alienated), perhaps it is because I am old enough to have lived through the very different post-war problem of ensuring meritocratic access to an elitist educational system where exploratory thought was expected not dismissed as an indulgence that the knowledge economy cannot afford. Colebrook provides an example from identity politics: 'It would be impossible to translate the word 'gay' into Ancient Greek or old English, not because they lacked an equivalent word, but because they did not approach the world through the problem or sense of “sexuality” (the problem of “my” inner sexual self above and beyond my bodily acts). Sense [...] is the way we approach those bodies’ (2002: 111).

The Stoic distinction that Deleuze drew on between corporeal and incorporeal events is useful in understanding how this reactive neoliberal transformation of bodies works. Supervision here is an incorporeal event or sense with no reality other than that expressed in a proposition. The activity of supervision (meetings and interpersonal communications) is a state of affairs - an 'intermingling' of bodies and Supervision is a culturally conditioned effect of such intermingling. Hence, sense is 'exactly the boundary between propositions and things' Deleuze (1969 / 1990: 22) and that which subsists or insists – it does not exist outside the proposition which expresses but must not be confused with the proposition. On this count, language creates worlds of (common) sense, but also allows events and movements that defy neoliberal and techno-rationalist academic codes.

In a much later collaboration, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 161) explain that 'counter-effectuation of the event' is the abstraction of an event, or changed pattern, from bodies and states of affairs that lays bare the transformative
potentials inherent in things. The routes not taken coexist with those taken as *compossibles* or *inclusive disjunctions*; *differenciation* is the tracking of the actualisation of the virtual and explanation of why a particular route was taken in a divergent series or *exclusive disjunction* (Smith and Protevi 2008). Concepts here 'speak the event' or map the multiplicities and connections that 'deteritorialize' and 'reterritorialize' – that disrupt habitual ways of thinking and doing and develop new ways (Deleuze and Guattari ibid. 21). Right now though, I want to talk dirty about bodies. This is Grant's (1999: 6) description of writing that disrupts dominant discourses. And, of course, I love it when – despite his 'clinical aesthetic' that draws on psychoanalytic theory, Deleuze (1981 / 2005: 31) notes Bacon's irreverence in this area at interview: 'Bacon seems to rebel against psychoanalytic suggestions, and when Sylvester, on another occasion, says to him that “the Pope is the Father”, Bacon politely responds, “I am not quite sure I understand what you’re saying”' (Sylvester 1987: 71 cited in Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 129).

If I imagine an 'art' of supervision, it would be created 'new and different' (Deleuze ibid. 63) as student-specific, and be filled with affects that speak of encounters as events. When lecturing, Deleuze once explained what Whitehead (1920, 1941) meant by 'event' by unpacking what might happen if he announced: 'There's a concert tonight!' (1988 / 2006: 91; see also www.webdeleuze.com). I sense how joyful and stimulating these lectures must have been. It is the same excitement, or nervous energy, that the discussion of a novel idea or complex problem within the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage provokes – because I am free to explore them further. Excitement here is a collective affect rather than an individually-owned property. Affects are not emotions but charges on the surface of the skin (Massumi, 1995: 83 - 109) that
may, quite literally, be electrifying as they move across and between us. Art is a purely nominal term for Deleuze and Guattari as the heterogeneity of artistic activity implies a diversity of problems and solutions. The artist is held to think with percepts and affects, while the philosopher thinks in concepts (ibid. 163 - 199). The artist's role is to produce 'blocks of becoming' or aggregates of sensation – to 'record the fact' (Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 26). Such recording is not a reversion to a representational model where the artist strives to reproduce a world 'out there' or to (re)present an object through figuration; rather, it is the rendering visible of sensation, of forces that act upon the body, of intensities, through the 'figure' (ibid. 30) that acts directly on the nervous system and disrupts clichéd thinking, feeling, and representation. Again, Deleuze invites us to ask of the artwork 'how does it function?' not 'what is it?' or 'what does it mean?', and to consider the components of the multiplicity of Bacon’s art. This is the realm of the non-rational and non-cerebral (ibid.) where the intensive 'body without organs' beneath the extensive body is laid bare. Deleuze is concerned with the genetic principles of the sensibility, or sense experience, that his empiricism privileges, but challenges the hylomorphic model of perception whereby the matter of raw sensory data is re-cognised in conformity to existing conceptual forms (Smith and Protevi 2008). So I do not ask what 'Supervision' is, but how it functions, for me, in all my singularity.

There is never only one, or even two logics (if we include both formal logic and the transcendental logic of Kant), at play when bodies intermingle in supervision meetings. There are three. The third is a powerful logic of sensation (Deleuze ibid.). I should point out here that, although I sometimes refer to embodiment to distance myself from the familiar hierarchically organised Cartesian mind-body binary, Deleuze is not dealing with the lived body of
phenomenology or with the phenomenological moment in Kant’s transcendental aesthetic. The former is a 'paltry thing in comparison with a more profound and almost unlivable Power' (Deleuze ibid. 32). It is the vital power of rhythm which constitutes sensation and saves us from the abyss – from 'chaos' (ibid. 72 - 73).

When I wrote of feeling overwhelmed by the prospect of writing a thesis, given the enormity of the task, I was invoking the Kantian sublime. Kant’s 'phenomenological moment' occurs when he presupposes the situated or embedded quality of the human body, and assumes its role as a measure in conceptualising perception and aesthetic comprehension. The transcendental unity of apperception requires the unified cogito as a template – I think, and through thinking myself, I think the object in general (object x); I can then synthesise sensory experience using this general form to make judgments about what I am seeing. Where the scale of the object defies any such synthesis that allows me to say: This is a ..., it is because the limits of my imagination have been exceeded (think of standing on the shoreline as a tidal wave of epic proportions approaches). I confront Chaos; I am unable to make the object conform to a familiar extensive spatio-temporal form by measuring it against my body as a reliable unit of measurement. This is the 'bend' in sufficient reason that Deleuze identifies in Kant (1968 / 2004: 210) – the foundation of the synthesis (aesthetic comprehension) rests on a ground that is somewhat fragile because there is always a risk that my imagination will encounter chaos. For Kant, this scenario is easily resolved since our faculty of Reason or Ideas kicks in. As we begin to feel overwhelmed, the imagination is tamed in a demonstration of our moral superiority over Nature. For Deleuze, there is no recourse to Reason. The experience of chaos is the possibility of disrupting clichéd representation. The unit of measurement is in constant
variation, and the artist develops a 'diagrammatic or abstract machine' (of asignifying lines and colours) that constructs 'a real that is yet to come' (ibid. 50). The logic of sensation involves a relation between chaos and rhythm, and such 'diagrams' act creatively or genetically to constitute a 'possibility of fact' (Deleuze ibid. 77, 79). Each artist resolves the problem of how to paint sensation – the invisible forces which act upon nature and the body, in their own way. A rhizomatic supervisory assemblage also creates and resolves its own problems in its own way.

The concept of the mesopolitical does not deny the existence of stratifying forces but demands that we work with, and through, them creatively – reinventing them, in practice settings. It is an imaginative negotiation of smooth and striated space (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004) where the former offers the prospect of deregulated becomings, spontaneity, freedom and novelty and the latter implies organisation and control but also the continuity and security afforded by routine or habitual behaviours and academic codes. I am drawn to the politicised philosophy of Anti-Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009). The Marxist principle informing Anti-Oedipus, where the point is change, resonates with my feminist and politico-pedagogic interests. It is a deeply seated impulse. My memory of academia in the late 1970s and early 1980s is of no strict separation between my emancipatory politics and theoretical interests; together they comprised a mode of life or an 'optimism that believes only in life' (Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 31). I felt connected. And I thrived in academic environments that supported this sense of connectedness, futurity and creative potentiality. I am aware that McMahon (1996: 7) rejects the concept of pedagogic empowerment where power is 'something in the student's future' and, I would add, something that is achieved by doing something to students.
So if I feel empowered within my current supervisory assemblage, it is because, as McMahon (ibid.) advocates, the learning evidenced in my writing here is already an expression of my own power, energy and joy. And this learning implies the actualisation of unknown potentialities that are produced within a collective field of desire that is forever in flux. I want to avoid interpretations of desiring-production as an 'erotics of teaching' (Morss 2000: 197). From my exploratory reading so far, I would argue that it is precisely the sexualisation or eroticisation of desire through psychoanalytic theory and practice that is being challenged in Anti-Oedipus and elsewhere. And I follow Deleuze, and Guattari, in the desire to avoid promoting yet more clichéd and normative representations of supervision, doctoral experience and the thesis. Hence, Guattari (1995 cited in Morss ibid. 196) poses the question as to how paths to singularisation are fostered but resists proposing any specific solutions to this problem; and Deleuze (1995: 139) writes of students being permitted to take what they 'needed or wanted, what they could use'. It seems distinctly un-Deleuzean to talk of texts within a corpus as aberrations, as if consistency - the failure to review and renew thinking, is the hallmark of academic achievement. I have no desire to nail Deleuze to an immovable theoretical cross. I am inspired by his irreverence – by his refusal to limit his own learning in this way.

Bacon responded to the suggestion that his artwork evoked the psychoanalytic hypothesis of ambivalence (simultaneous affection and hostility): 'That is too logical. I don't think that's the way things work. I think it goes to a deeper thing: how do I feel that I can make this image more immediately real to myself? That's all' (Deleuze 1981 / 2005: 28). Freedom to experiment makes my learning more real to me.
Dark precursors ...

I find it difficult to move beyond issues raised in the previous plateau but allow myself to be deeply affected by what I read and go where my writing takes me. Holligan’s (2005: 276) claim that increased governmental control has resulted in ‘residual’ academic discourses of intellectual freedom or autonomy being perceived as anachronistically ‘self-indulgent’, with a consequent ‘knowledge revolution’ occurring ‘quietly’ throughout higher education (2005: 277), leads me to research Deleuze’s take on revolution and learning. Holligan’s fear that invoking revolution may be ‘over dramatic’ (ibid.) reinforces my view that popularised Freudianism can function as a vocabulary of political self-invalidation, and evokes writing about the neoliberal production of ‘docile’ subjects or fearful docility (Davies 2005: 9; Davies et al. 2006: 307; Gale 2007: 473) and related gender issues. Deleuzean lines of flight, as creative escapes from received frames, are not necessarily poetic but they do demonstrate the non-linearity of thinking in the process of problematisation – a phenomenon ignored in the generic model of academic writing proposed by Wellington (ibid.). Thinking the meso-level without resort to introspective personalism and the implication of interiority is proving problematic; I hang on to a collectivised history but also now begin to live the contradiction between evocative autoethnography and a radically decentred Deleuzean subjectivity, and between the impersonality of my academic writing and a desire to demonstrate the singularity of my experience. I am unsure how to experiment however much I value being afforded the space in which to try. I am still looking backwards, even as I write about impersonal becomings and futurity. Foucault once wrote: ‘Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to “think otherwise” (the future)’ (1985: 15 cited in Deleuze 1986 / 2006: 98).

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Some thirty years ago, accusations of self-indulgent stridency were deployed against feminist academics. In the mid-1990s, the Research Director of the university where I completed my first undergraduate degree, responded to an enquiry about returning to undertake postgraduate research into child abuse by informing me that the department had once included a ‘feminist’ and that it did not ‘work out’ as she was ‘a very aggressive woman’. I still regret my response - that I would be challenging feminist orthodoxy; it is reminiscent of Leonard’s (2001) advice to female doctoral students to ‘play the game’. I require a sense
of freedom from overt political control to be intellectually productive. I did not submit a proposal to the institution in question.

Holligan fears that the newer discourses of technicist-rationalism and consumerism associated with government performance targets and skills training agendas may ‘entirely’ displace a traditional emphasis on scholarly self-reliance and intellectual independence (ibid.). Induction programmes specific to mature students are nevertheless recommended, given his own experience as a returnee and concomitant sense of loss of status and self-determination that becoming an ‘apprentice academic’ produced (ibid. 272). Balatti and Whitehouse describe a similar trajectory: from self-perception as competent professionals at ‘forty plus’ to re-invention as low status students, novices and ‘apprentices’; their adopted survival strategy was one of ‘becoming feral’ and resisting a ‘hidden curriculum’ that any marketing professional could instantly recognize: ‘the idea is to sell ideas’ (2001: 43-53). As in Holligan, the ‘apprenticeship model’ of doctoral study is attributed to Phillips and Pugh (2002). Balatti and Whitehouse also criticise the dubious analogy between marriage and supervision employed by these authors: failure to resolve irreconcilable differences is likened to divorce (ibid. 49). Such facile analogies distract attention from specifically educational issues and may foster unrealistic expectations in students regarding the level of contact and support supervision provides.

Balatti and Whitehouse’s concept of the ‘composite supervisor’ (ibid. 50) captures a familiar process. My own insecurities as a returnee pivoted around being out of touch with debates that had preoccupied me many years before. I read obsessively to re-orientate myself, charting the various turns within the social sciences, and related developments in educational theory and
philosophy. I did not expect any individual supervisor to assist this process. But I worried about potential misunderstandings where supervisors were not familiar with the critical traditions and 'conceptual personae' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 61 - 62) that had enlivened my existence as a sociology undergraduate decades before – about talking past each other (Grant 2005) or communicating across 'parallel universes' (Holligan ibid. 277). Like Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.), I sought out those whom could expand my repertoire of available theoretical perspectives or had similar interests. Some months later (in 2009), one of my three supervisors was replaced with someone who shared my interest in Deleuze. I believed then that, far from avoiding the support of any one academic lest they should 'fall from grace' (ibid. 48), having a supervisor on a similar theoretical wavelength was a condition of my own creativity and fulfilment. Intellectual isolation, not physical and emotional isolation (Frow 1988: 319), felt like the bigger issue. Over time however, I have come to believe that it is the divergences in the epistemological and methodological loyalties within my supervisory team – as I perceive them, which is multiplying the rhizomatic connections that I am now making.

Neither 'playing the game' (Leonard ibid.) nor spreading risk through non-alignment to any one academic as a matter of policy (Balatti and Whitehouse ibid.) strike me as sustainable strategies unless, of course, education is re-invented as the 'commercial professional training' that Deleuze and Guattari consider 'an absolute disaster for thought' (1994: 12). I recall a conference where the chairperson congratulated the presenter on the publication of a paper that accurately portrayed the pressures on academics in audit cultures and their indirect effect on postgraduate students. The presenter coughed in embarrassment: 'I almost lost my job over that one' was his muffled
response. It is easy to see why, under such circumstances, Holligan (ibid.) fears the demise of scholarly independence. Was the writing of this paper evidence of 'self-indulgence' (ibid.)? Or was the censure it invited from the author's home institution indicative of a 'new fascism' (Deleuze 2006: 138) and 'abject reterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 109)? Balatti and Whitehouse write of developing 'a strong distrust of the system' (ibid. 48) and of resisting the 'cauldron' image of postgraduate study: 'we did not wish to be melted down, stirred, new elements added, others skimmed off, and then poured into an unfamiliar mold [ ] We wanted a journey, not a crucible' (ibid.).

I too need a journey. And a thesis that demonstrates the learning process - my singular encounter with Deleuze. I am entering a very different cauldron by doing so: 'If the writer is a sorcerer, it is because writing is a becoming' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 265). Following Deleuze, it is not a question of being a scholar; but of becoming-scholar and engaging in scholaring (ibid. 264) and resisting production as a fixed and State-sanctioned academic identity. And if this means being condemned to 'haunt the fringes', then so be it; sorcerers have always held the anomalous position (ibid. 271). Do those who level charges of self-indulgence fear what they cannot control - fear contagion that might spread like an infectious disease or a 'nameless horror' (ibid. 270)? Deleuze and Guattari describe 'pack fascism' as one form of human behaviour induced by forces that privilege 'State intelligibilities' as a mode of sociability over pack effects; 'internal black holes' are thereby created (ibid. 271). In the absence of such forces however, dynamic positions are at play and anomalous or peripheral positions occupied by some can suddenly become attractive to others; hence the phenomenon of bordering implies a perpetually shifting border. It is all about which 'half-space' we elect to enter (ibid.). This
image is drawn from the discipline of ethology (animal behaviour). I relate to it.
The cocktail of epistemological divergence is becoming ever more potent.
In 2007, long before meeting my current supervisors, I rejected the term apprenticeship in a higher education context, and I queried depictions of supervision as 'friendship' (Bartlett and Mercer 2001: 59) or a contractual relationship. What about power differentials and the recasting of political control as pedagogic guidance or training? I still cannot think of myself as a doctoral apprentice, though I can now recognise myself in 'becoming-apprentice' – these are not the same thing (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 113). If, following Nietzsche, I diagnose my own becomings in every passing present, then I must think what might have triggered this particular becoming (ibid.). It is a 'love of scholarship' (Becher and Trowler 2001: 51) – of learning something that I did not know before (Richardson 1997: 87) that has eclipsed concerns about power differentials. And my feelings about becoming-apprentice were changed by Deleuze's take on apprenticeship.

I intuitively doubted that Phillips and Pugh (ibid.) and Bartlett and Mercer (ibid.) had invented the concepts of apprenticeship and professional academic friendship respectively and wanted to know more about their histories. A classic example of a 'conceptual personae' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2, 61) is Descartes' cogito or concept of self (I think therefore I am) where the relation between doubting, thinking and being lacks any logical determination but becomes one of 'inseparability' through the arranging of each in: 'zones of neighbourhood or indiscernability that produce passages from one to the other' (ibid. 24). Historically, the sage as possessor of wisdom was displaced by the Greek philosopher as someone who was a friend of wisdom but did not formally possess it; the sage had thought in 'Figures' while the philosopher thinks in
'Concepts' (ibid.). Deleuze and Guattari explore what 'friend' signifies in the context of Greek city formation, and argue that it is an important question since the shift at stake is one from empirical circumstance or 'extrinsic persona' towards: 'a presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality [such that] the Greeks violently force the friend into a relationship that is no longer a relationship with another but one with an Entity, an Objectality, an Essence – Plato's friend, but even more the friend of wisdom, of truth, or the concept' (ibid. 3). A conceptual persona is a condition of the exercise of thought and the philosopher becomes the judge or arbiter of concepts – of rival claims to validity (ibid. 2-3). The Greek city, as a society of equals, demanded a means of distinguishing contested claims in the rivalry of free men – a 'generalized athleticism' involving friendship, but also a conflict between claimants and competitive distrust of rivals (ibid. 4). Deleuze and Guattari criticise the tendency to regard existing concepts 'as a gift [or] a wonderful dowry from some sort of wonderland': the point is to make or create concepts not 'polish' pre-existing ones (ibid. 5). They reject both universal concepts and contemporary reductions of thinking to marketing exercises whereby 'the concept has become the set of product displays' and critique is replaced with 'sales promotion' (ibid. 10). There is no 'new Athens' where the validity of rival claimants can be authoritatively distinguished, as in the Platonic tradition, but rather concepts, following Nietzsche, that are created in: 'an intuition specific to them: a field, a plane, a ground that must not be confused with them but that shelters their seeds and the personae who cultivate them' (ibid. 7).

The concept of supervision as an academic friendship is problematic where it functions normatively or as a transcendental reality - a pre-given
representation of some supposed underlying empirical reality, and ignores the specificity or 'uniqueness' of specific supervision relationships (Acker, Hill, Black 1994: 484). So too is the etymological backdrop of rivalry and 'conflict' (ibid.) that suggests precisely the competitive individualism decried by Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.). I appreciate the issues raised by these authors, but I also find their portrayal of academic culture excessively bleak as relationships other than the purely instrumental, and those of rivalry, are seemingly precluded. Neither am I convinced that 'becoming-feral' – a phrase strongly evocative of 'becoming-animal' in Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 265 - 266, 269, 302), is appropriate to the process they describe. The strategies outlined as devious but necessary responses to what is perceived as an infantilising disempowering academic culture for mature postgraduate research students include: the misuse of photocopier access codes and avoiding alliance with any one individual. Neither strategy strikes me as subversive resistance, but rather, as striving to become even better at playing the game than established players. This is not, of course, an ethical reading in Deleuzean terms; I am being judgmental and moralistic. How can such a position be justified when this requires a 'separate, stable and disengaged' perspective from which to judge? I have engaged in an active selection – affirming this, rejecting that, but presented it reactively – as predetermined through a common value system (Colebrook 2002: 130). I am assuming that 'Everyone recognizes that ... ' , even though I know that: 'there is always an unrepresented singularity who does not recognize precisely because it is not everyone or the universal' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 63).

To perceive or interpret ethically is to grasp the ethos evidenced in Balatti and Whitehouse as emerging from the situation in which they find
themselves. They write of a sense of no longer knowing who they were, or what they were becoming (ibid. 44, 46), which is more reminiscent of 'becoming-imperceptible' (Deleuze and Guattari ibid. 308 - 309). According to Colebrook, it is exactly this sense of not knowing who or what we are that permits us to remain open to the 'differences, intensities and singularities that traverse us' and not conform to fixed and molar images of what we should become (ibid. 130, 131). 'Becoming-imperceptible' involves a dissolution of the border between perceiver and perceived and therefore freedom from judging and pre-judging. It is an affirmation of our power to become (our joy), and of our power to refuse what is limiting (our sadness) (ibid. 131). I detect no joy in the account of doctoral study in Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.); it implies a relational composition that is toxic in its diminution of their power to act. Nevertheless, I read their text as a 'minor literature' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 116) in its highlighting of the experiences of some mature students within doctoral programmes designed for younger students:

'There is an entire politics of becomings-animal, as well as a politics of sorcery, which is elaborated in assemblages that are neither those of the family nor of religion nor of the State. Instead, they express minoritarian groups, or groups that are oppressed, prohibited, in revolt, or always on the fringe of recognized institutions' (ibid. 272).

The objective here is not to represent that experience but to be productive of affects and intensities that encourage new ways of perceiving the academic world. In this event, as readers, we would not overcode (ibid. 72 – 73; Colebrook 2002: 133, 137) the text by interpreting it as an example of an enduring underlying reality - the human quest for meaning; we would feel what becoming-feral is like in the environment that Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.)
describe, be transformed by that feeling and relate to similar situations differently (Colebrook 2002: 137).

Before turning to apprenticeship in Deleuze, I want to comment on the reference to Christian narrative in Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid. 48). At proposal stage, I referred to the heretical content of my literature review – particularly of those texts on doctoral pedagogy aimed at prospective students and those I found defensive (e.g. Lovitt 2005: 137-154). I especially disliked the latter’s central, and tautological, argument that students who withdraw from doctoral programmes are those who should not have been admitted in the first place or those who are incapable of finishing. Richardson (1997: 211 - 212) provides a more politicised account of postgraduate withdrawal from a professorial perspective, as do Balatti and Whitehouse from the vantage point of the doctoral student (ibid. 49). Reading of experiences of enforced postpositivist methods and political censure - however far afield, led me to assume ever more polemical – if not gladiatorial, positions. Nevertheless, I voluntarily elected for a postpositivist qualitative research project rather than risk sanction or the withholding of the papal seal that I had read about. Yet I was supported in abandoning this study as I am being supported in my nomadic writing here. I had re-entered academia as a Christian, then become a Greek, before discovering that only becoming-Deleuzean would provide the journey that I really sought. I concur with Deleuze and Guattari when they ask: ‘And what would thinking be if it did not constantly confront chaos?’ (1994: 208), but it was a heartfelt commitment to one theoretico - philosophical perspective that I needed back then in order to progress – to pull my own disparate interests together. Holligan is correct to suggest that selection of a theoretical perspective is a neglected issue in the doctoral literature (2005: 273).
I am ambivalent about invoking Christian narrative to convey a point. I am unsure how apt implied analogies between church and educational regime actually are, however useful others find religious metaphors. Frow (1988: 307), for example, portrays supervision as discipleship prompting a paper from a former student (Giblett 1992: 136) on the narcissistic need for disciples in supervisors. And Balatti and Whitehouse write of how a valued member of staff can 'fall from grace' (ibid. 48). The barren landscape of self-interest and instrumentality conveyed by these authors leaves me craving something sacred. When I write of being a Christian however, I am referring to self-martyrdom in a structure I once perceived as concentrating the authority to pronounce what constitutes knowledge at, or towards, the apex of that structure. And when I write of being a Greek, I am referring to my readiness to defend my chosen method (autoethnography) against an earlier rival (my postpositivistic qualitative study). Of course, nothing is this simple (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 113) and undoubtedly, I must address the relationship between past, present, and future in relation to being and becoming. It will suffice here to state that becoming suggests the dissolution of empirical identity as a consistency whose being is determined in its relation to a definite field of representations. And that earlier, I was providing a representation of higher education where the content was determined by a prior representation - Christian narrative (Baulch 2008: 12). For Deleuze however, such 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 mobilizes and moves nothing' (1968 / 2004: 67).
Becoming is movement away from fixed and molar identities; it is always molecular and implies ‘a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view’ (ibid.). Deleuze talks of an ‘infinity of representations’ that is ensured by the ‘convergence of all points of view on the same object or the same world’, or by making ‘all moments the properties of the same Self’ (ibid.). It is the RE in representation that, as Deleuze argues, signifies a conceptual form of the identical: $A = A$ or $\text{Self} = \text{Self}$, and which subordinates differences (ibid. 68). To become is to leave the domain of representation and enter that of immediate experience where: ‘every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences’ (ibid.).

What then does RE signify in repetition, if repetition is opposed to representation? Deleuze explains this in relation to the Nietzschean eternal return which is present in every metamorphosis and opposed to the coherence implied in representation:

‘Repetition is the formless being of all differences, the formless power of the ground which carries every object to that extreme “form” in which its representation comes undone’ (ibid. 69).

The world is to be understood as simultaneously complete and finished – in contrast to the implied infinity of representation, and yet unlimited and chaotic. What is then affirmed in the eternal return is the power of difference:

‘the circle of eternal return, difference and repetition (which undoes that the identical and the contradictory) is a tortuous circle in which Sameness is said only of that which differs’ (ibid.).
The coherence of the subject that represents itself, and the object which it represents, is thereby excluded. I recall a conversation with my Director of Studies shortly after commencing doctoral study where I either suggested or conceded – I cannot remember the precise order of events, that a doctoral student’s experience of supervision will be conditioned by prior experiences (educational and otherwise). This echoes Acker et al. (ibid.) where the uniqueness of each supervision relationship necessarily follows from the divergent past experiences of parties to the relationship. At that time, my understanding of myself – my self-narrative(s), included crass psychologisms encouraged by Freudianism; evolving any such narrative would inevitably entail varying degrees of self-interrogation as to whether I was perpetuating a pattern, or unwittingly reproducing the dynamics of former relationships – particularly familial ones that had compromised my capacity to trust.

The problem here though is that whenever I reflect on, and represent my experiences (and I am thinking of specifically educational ones), they feel unique; any suggestion of an identifiable pattern, which I have somehow unconsciously brought about in a reproduction of the Same (where I = I across all situations), denies the very different circumstances in which I have engaged in becoming-student, and the very different others with whom I have entered into pedagogic relationship. We become with the world; we do not remake it in our own image. This is, of course, also the problem with an autoethnographic method that assumes a universally ‘vulnerable Self’ (Ellis 1999: 673) as a unity of the faculties and principle of representation. It is the problem which Deleuze attributes to the Cartesian and Kantian cogito – that ‘I’ as an object of thought depends upon an a priori thinking subject which functions ‘as a beginning’ (1968 / 2004: 169).
'I conceive, I judge, I imagine, I remember and I perceive – as though these were the four branches of the Cogito. On precisely these branches, difference is crucified. They form quadripartite fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different: difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude' (ibid. 174).

Falls from grace, excommunication, papal seals, now Deleuze and crucifixion; too much religion I feel, as I write here and hear a very dear Refrain (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 343 - 344) playing in my head – a source of calm outside the black hole. I had intended to write about apprenticeship and becoming using Deleuze's example of learning to swim (Deleuze ibid. 26, 205) and not religion or its psychoanalytic sibling. It seems however that I am hard-wired to recall an appropriate Joni Mitchell lyric when body and soul demand it; on this occasion - 'wash and balance me' (1975). And I know it was reference to abusive dynamics that triggered this soothing intrusion. When teaching about trauma, I like to mention Pierre Janet before introducing Van der Kolk (van der Kolk and van der Hart, 1989: 1530 – 1540; van der Kolk, 1994: 253 - 265), and always as a prelude to criticising Freud. I have never raised Deleuze in this context. I should. To hell with disciplinary boundaries. Deleuze rejects notions of originary trauma through maternal separation and Freud's argument that we have no model for death (since all becoming implies it). But now, I want to think about seas and learning to swim. Seas are didactic – a Romantic idea perhaps, but within them, I am invariably reminded of my own insignificance in the scale of things; hence the purifying value of immersion however gentle or angry their waters may be. How can Christian narrative explain this power of sensation, of sensuality and of sensibility – the 'being of the sensible' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 69)? I am introducing Deleuze's discussion of learning to swim in the context of
apprenticeship because hegemonic representations of learning seem inadequate.

'Learning takes place not in the relation between a representation and an action (reproduction of the Same) but in the relation between a sign and a response (encounter with the Other)' (ibid. 25)

We do not learn to swim by imitating our instructor nor do our movements resemble those of a wave. Instead, our body combines some of its own distinctive points with those of a wave and 'espouses' the principle of a repetition which is:

'no longer that of the Same, but involves the Other – involves difference, from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted' (ibid. 26).

Learning here is the constitution of a space of encounter with signs, and according to Deleuze, signs testify to the spiritual and natural powers acting beneath representation – beneath the words, gestures, characters and objects that are represented (ibid.). As Colebrook (2002: 136) puts it:

'I will only learn to swim if I see what the instructor does not as a self-contained action but as a creative response [ ] I have to feel what good swimming does, not what it is'

It is about feeling the force of the problem.

Deleuze states that learning is about entering into the 'universal of the relations which constitute the Idea, and into their corresponding singularities', and then refers to the 'idea' of the sea in Leibniz (1968 / 2004: 204). Clearly,
Ideas and ideas are not synonymous. An Idea is not a property of individual consciousness, nor is it bound to the representation of an object or concept (Baulch 2008: 3). 'The Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in function of that which is not "representable" in things' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 71). According to Deleuze, only the Idea or problem - or the problematic Idea, is universal (ibid. 202 - 203). This is why Colebrook (ibid.) refers to feeling the force of the problem of how to swim and of creative responses: 'Once we “forget” the problem, we have before us no more than an abstract general solution'. The consequences of such forgetting leads consciousness to attempt to reconstitute the problem:

'but by way of the neutralized double of particular propositions (interrogations, doubts, likelihoods, hypotheses) and the empty form of general propositions (equations, theorems, theories ...) So begins the double confusion which assimilates problems to the series of hypotheticals and subordinates them to the series of categories'

(Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 202)

What this means is that the nature of the universal is lost (the force of the problem) but so too is the nature of the singular: 'for the problem or the Idea is a concrete singularity no less than a true universal' (ibid.). This returns us to Leibniz and singular and distinctive points since:

'Corresponding to the relations which constitute the universality of the problem is the distribution of singular and ordinary points which determine the conditions of the problem' (ibid. 202)
It was Leibniz who recognised what separates problems and propositions: 'all kinds of events, “the how and the circumstances”, from which propositions draw their sense' (ibid.). Ideas are multiplicities or complexes of relations and corresponding singularities. Deleuze offers the idea of the sea in Leibniz by way of illustration. It forms a system of differential relations between particulars and singularities corresponding to the degrees of variation among these relations – 'the totality of the system being incarnated in the real movement of the waves' (ibid. 204 - 205). So to learn to swim is to 'conjugate the distinctive points of our bodies with the singular points of the objective Idea in order to form a problematic field' (ibid. 205). In this conjugation, Deleuze suggests that a 'threshold of consciousness' is reached, whereby micro-perceptions of the prevailing real relations cause our real acts to be adjusted; it is a subliminal process that attests to a 'profound complicity between nature and mind': learning occurs in and through the unconscious (ibid.).

For Deleuze, there are two aspects to apprenticeship. I want to tease out their implications, and those of related ideas about learning, for my own experience of doctoral study and becoming-apprentice; I have already introduced the first aspect which is about the process of learning and relevance of signs in problem formation: it is signs which 'cause problems' (1968 / 2004: 204). Deleuze then states:

'the paradoxical functioning of the faculties – including, in the first, sensibility with respect to signs – thus refers to the Ideas which run throughout all the faculties and awaken each of them in turn' (ibid.).

Here, I assume that the force of problem can be felt but not necessarily articulated. It is then the articulation, or conscious formulation of a scholarly
problem, that as Deleuze suggests, is its solution: 'A problem does not exist, apart from its solutions. Far from disappearing in this overlay, however, it insists and persists in these solutions' (ibid. 203). As a mature student who entered my faculty with conflicting epistemological loyalties (having studied animal behaviour most recently), the pressure created by the linear postpositivistic research model to select an appropriate methodology at proposal stage was stressful. I was dogged by a sense of dis-ease at my chosen methodology, but not at all well-positioned to articulate this feeling as a carefully defined set of problems. When I abandoned this method, opting instead for autoethnography, I envisaged the latter allowing me to formulate problems related to subjectivity and epistemology. Bruner's (1986) two types of knowing the world (logico-scientific and narrative) did not relieve me of an acute sense of division at the core of my academic being. I felt undermined by my inability to adequately articulate and resolve this contradiction.

I want to say now that learning and apprenticeship, by definition, take time. Thinking takes time, and for Deleuze 'thought is time' (ibid. 206). That learning is also so often an unconscious process implies that neoliberal managerialist, or technicist-rationalist, depictions of the doctorate - as an unproblematically conscious and linear process of learning, is inadequate. Rapid identification of an appropriate methodology and theoretical perspective suggests a privileging of final product (the thesis) over process (learning), and may not be applicable for all students. Instead, I have embraced complexity and non-linearity (Waller 2002), and rejected postpositivism in favour of a theoretico-philosophical odyssey. I am following Gale and Wyatt (2009: 3 - 5, 7 - 8) in prioritising the process of learning; their work poignantly demonstrates that a traditional discourse of scholarly self-reliance and autonomy does not
necessarily preclude collaborative modes of learning (Gale, Speedy, and Wyatt 2010: 21). Learning can and should facilitate experimentation – the production of rhizomatic connections (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 277), the circulation of intensities (ibid. 169) - a veritable ‘tantric egg’ (ibid. 170, 181-182), and defiance of the 'judgment of God' that insists we learn alone (ibid. 176) and of those who police the plane of organisation and seek to 'plug' lines of flight (ibid. 297) as they steal the body of learning (ibid. 305).

In another example of the relationship between problem formation and solution in apprenticeship, Deleuze describes an experiment in psychology where a monkey must learn to find food contained in boxes of a specific colour (1968 / 2004: 204). The point here is that: ‘Learning is the appropriate name for the subjective acts carried out when one is confronted with the objecticity of a problem (Idea), whereas knowledge designates only the generality of concepts or the calm possession of a rule enabling solutions’ (ibid.). If I allow myself a brief moment of becoming-monkey, I can feel the elations that accompany the initial phase of the experiment or apprenticeship as I start discovering tasty morsels in the yellow boxes. If I respond like the monkey in the cited experiment, my choice of boxes will reveal fewer errors over time, even though I cannot articulate the problem, and do not possess the knowledge that is its solution. This is the ‘paradoxical’ period which shows how ‘truth and falsity are distributed according to what one understands of a problem’; and when I eventually get it ‘right’ every time, it will seem as if the ‘final truth’ has emerged – ‘as though it were the limit of a problem completely determined and entirely understood’ (ibid.). Imagine now, as that ‘philosopher-monkey’ (ibid.), who has grasped the truth, that I am invited to continue the experiment but this time with a different coloured box. Becoming-monkey again, how will I react to seizing the
‘right’ coloured box and finding it is empty? My first reaction would probably be to pick it up again to check that my eyes were not deceiving me; or I might refuse to continue to participate and withdraw to ponder my sanity; or decide that learning to juggle the boxes is much more fulfilling now that I am satiated; or duly comply and continue to pick up boxes despite my disappointment and confusion. As Deleuze states, there is no method to learning: ‘We never know in advance how someone will learn: by means of what loves someone becomes good at Latin, what encounters make them a philosopher or in what dictionaries they learn to think’ (ibid. 205). Why then should current definitions as to what constitutes a legitimate doctorate be so limited? Why is engagement with theory relegated to the pre-stage of bone fide research? Who presumes to know ‘by which signs within sensibility, by which treasures of the memory, under torsions determined by the singularities of which Idea will thought be aroused?’ (ibid.).

One posited ‘method’ of learning, for Deleuze following Nietzsche, is ‘the means of that knowledge which regulates the collaboration of all the faculties’ and which is effected through ‘violent training’; culture is ironically described as an ‘involuntary adventure’ that trains the mind in order to produce a ‘nation of thinkers’ (ibid.). Deleuze also considers the Platonic theory of apprenticeship where learning is the transcendental movement of the soul, and argues that an insistence on resemblance and identity recasts the apprenticeship in the ‘image of thought itself’, and therefore functions as a ‘repentance, crushed by the emerging dogmatic image yet bringing forth a groundlessness that it remains incapable of exploring’ (ibid. 206). This dogmatic image of thought forms the eighth ‘postulate of knowledge’ and embodies the seven other postulates outlined by Deleuze (ibid. 207). It is ‘the postulate of the end, or result, the postulate of knowledge (the subordination of learning to knowledge, and of
culture to method' (ibid.). Deleuze suggests these postulates 'function all the more effectively in silence' (ibid.) thus evoking Gale's observation (2007: 479) – of the tendency to convert findings from empirical research into subsequently unquestioned 'givens' that purportedly reflect the way the world is. It also invokes the contemporary construction of the doctorate as the execution of a postpositivist study which now functions as an unspoken 'given' – as to what the doctorate is, the map that precedes the territory (ibid.). Deleuze's third postulate is that of the model. This is where the distinction between the Platonic Idea and the Idea in Deleuze can be highlighted. Plato posits a dualist ontology where there are two worlds - the real and the apparent; the sensible world is allegedly derivative, i.e. it is modelled on (and therefore a copy of) the realm of Ideas, in a hierarchical organisation of the intelligible and the sensible (Ross in Parr 2005: 208 - 209). 'Copies, that comprise the sensible world, mark a graded descent away from the realm of Ideas to the merely "apparent" world of the senses' (ibid.). Art is regarded as a copy of a copy and consequently fares badly in this hierarchical ranking exercise, while theatre is deemed positively dangerous to the proper order of the State because it suspends belief, thereby dissimulating its status as copy and training citizens to mistake the true and false copy (ibid. 209). There is no possibility of fostering critical interrogation or reflexivity here (Gale ibid.).

Deleuze reverses Platonism in asserting the priority of the simulacra (false copies), by arguing against their repression (1969 / 1990: 293 - 294), and in suggesting that the very distinction between copy and simulacra undermines the 'notations of copy and model' (ibid. 294). But Deleuze also insists that the 'motivation of Platonism' should not be 'left in the shadows' - the 'will to select and choose' (ibid. 291): 'to select lineages: to distinguish pretenders; to
distinguish the pure from the impure, the authentic from the inauthentic' – hence the Platonic metaphor of testing for gold and the principle of division it implies (ibid. 292). Here, Plato is not proposing a dialectic of contradiction but a 'rivalry of claimants and suitors' that demands claims are screened (ibid.). Plato resorts to myth to extract models that function as a 'foundation-test' and 'method of selection' between true and false pretenders:

'The distinction wavers between two sorts of images. Copies are secondary possessors. They are well-founded pretenders, guaranteed by resemblance; simulacra are like false pretenders, built upon dissimilarity, implying an essential perversion or a deviation [so] on the one hand there are copies-icons, on the other there are simulacra-phantasms' (ibid. 294)

'Elective participation' is the response to the problem of a method of selection whereby 'different men participate unequally in the mythic model' in a hierarchy as follows: 'the true statesman or well-founded aspirer, then relatives, auxiliaries, and slaves, down to simulacra and counterfeits' (ibid. 293). Deleuze reminds us that resemblance, in this duality of Platonic Idea and image, is an external relation. It is resemblance between Idea and thing, rather than between things, as it is the Idea which is constitutive of the internal essence. A true pretender therefore 'conforms to the object only insofar as he is modelled (internally and spiritually) on the Idea'; and conversely, simulacra are guilty of an 'internal imbalance' since they have not passed through the Idea – it is an image without resemblance (ibid. 295). This latter effect of resemblance is achieved by 'ruse or subversion', and in an impression of depth and distance that is the becoming-unlimited of the simulacra – a becoming-other that is problematic to observers; hence the Platonic imperative that limits must be imposed on this becoming that seeks to evade 'the equal, the limit, the Same,
or the Similar' demanding 'the selection among pretenders, the exclusion of the eccentric and the divergent, in the name of a superior finality, an essential reality' (ibid. 296, 297). No becoming-monkey here then either. The human is privileged over nature in Platonism - a privileging that Deleuze rejects. I have clearly nailed my sail to the mast of a lineage that is not yet recognised as copying a widely established model of scholarly tradition. And I have found a rationale for doing so in the writing of Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari. I can hardly be accused however of not engaging in an internal spiritual modelling of my doctoral odyssey on the Idea of scholarship as Holligan (ibid.) defines it. I do not copy a technicist-rationalist and Platonic Idea of doctoral study as the mechanical reproduction of a true (postpositivistic) copy. The application of a standardised method or model contradicts the traditional quasi-religious demand for monastic isolation and asceticism as a condition of originality in scholarship. For me, there are no rational or logical rules that can ensure painless and timely completion if observed. The Platonic model of apprenticeship is self-evidently conservative - working against experimentation in knowledge production and encouraging reproduction of familiar frames. The priority of the simulacrum in Deleuze, as an affirmation of difference, does precisely the reverse. So my strategy for resolving the epistemological dilemmas referred to earlier and 'surviving' as a mature doctoral student is the privileging of becoming over being. I have tried to (re)constitute a very different notion of apprenticeship using Deleuze, and Gale and Wyatt (2009), that foregrounds becoming and relationality against prevailing Platonic notions that require me to conform to a pre-defined Idea as to what a real doctorate is, and how a good doctoral student should behave. I also reject the somewhat Platonic strategy of Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.) of striving to be an authentic copy of
the academics within a particular academic 'community' since I find the concept of 'community' problematic. Lovitt (2005) recommends early postgraduate student induction into the academic community to reduce the possibility of attrition, suggesting that this concept functions as a 'given' (Gale, ibid.) and implying a homogeneity or pre-defined territory (ibid.) within academic faculties that is not necessarily desirable.

All situations have micro-political potential (Spry 2003: 171; Gale and Wyatt 2009) - opportunities to create novel collective solidarities, and to dissipate the 'enabling lie' circulated by those with political power and 'love for nation-states, tribes, clans, political parties, churches, and perhaps everything done up to now in the name of community' (Surin in Parr 2005: 163). The latter is community conceived as comprising solitary rational autonomous individuals whereas collective solidarities involve a learning process as molar identities, structures and stratifications or codings are disrupted and challenged; hence my allusion to exposure of widespread abuse of power within the Catholic Church earlier. Beyond showing the enduring influence of Christian narrative where 'in moral matters we are still weighed down with old beliefs which we no longer even believe' (Deleuze 1986 / 2006: 74), I also wanted to underline the micro-political dimension of this exposure. I understand the conspiracy of silence that surrounds such abuse. And the extraordinary lengths that abusers go to in order to protect themselves and their molar reputations. So I find it remarkable and inspiring that those who have been affected by such behaviours, isolated and silenced, should now form a collectivity that cuts across molar identities and confronts one of the most powerful institutions in the world. There is a lesson here about potentiality and the virtual images of opposition that may be actualised when criteria of affiliation shift in unexpected ways. Contra my earlier
declared intention to distance my writing from Christian narrative, the profound historical influence of such narrative, and its ever pervasive character, makes electing to 'forget' religion impossible. Besides, the collectivity currently protesting against the excesses of the Catholic Church is testimony to what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as 'becoming-revolutionary' (1994: 112). It has disrupted my own 'clichéd' thinking or 'weary thought' (ibid. 214) that such abuse will inevitably, always, ultimately, be concealed. I have been reminded that it is a question of rediscovering the singular process of learning beneath generalities (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 28).

I am aware that my brief outline of the Platonic theory of Ideas and apprenticeship fails to discuss the role of memory in learning. Nor have I mentioned becoming as forgetting (ibid. 9) – a highly seductive notion to me. This may have to wait. I want to explore memory and the unconscious, but without stepping into a Freudian territory that I find infinitely bleaker than any writing about neoliberal managerialism. So I shall return to Holligan and the notion of a quiet 'revolution' (ibid.) within higher education. When I began writing, it was my past experience of 'old discourses' (ibid.) relating to education that I intended to explore. This would, of course, have necessitated looking at Deleuze’s treatment of memory. But instead, reading Holligan’s paper - which is a case study of supervision involving a single mature female doctoral student, prompted me to reach for Balatti and Whitehouse (ibid.). I remembered their writing as being irreverent, and not at all suggestive of the extreme deference that Holligan found so challenging when supervising the student of his case study (ibid. 274). I had forgotten about the becoming-feral of the former authors because I was not sufficiently familiar with Deleuze and Guattari two years ago to make any comparison with becoming-animal. It was their experience as
female mature students that had interested me back then; and whether the concept of apprenticeship was appropriate to such students. According to Davies (2005: 11), the neoliberal managerialist higher education regime was attractive to female academics in the late 1970s because it promised gender parity in employment and promotion prospects. Realisation of this promise could perhaps be described as the fulfilment of a liberal feminist agenda where women could be 'expert' and speak with authority too (Balatti and Whitehouse 2001: 51). Others have written about the 'feminization' of teacher training (Griffiths 2006) and academia. The latter refers to traditionally female professions and vocational subjects becoming university-based, thereby altering the historical gender (im)balance at professorial level and above (Bridges 2006). More recently, I have wondered whether such feminist aspirations have contributed to the 'new fascism' in education – a term originally used by Deleuze in the context of film censorship (2006: 138) and which I use to invoke the distinction between manifest and latent consequences in Merton's sociological functionalism (Holmwood 2005). From another perspective, it indicates the apparatuses of capture whereby the State has appropriated the 'war machine' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 268) of feminism. It is more appropriate to speak of 'double capture'; the latter suggests an anti-hylomorphic conception of control, and a rejection of unilinear or unilateral causation (Toscano in Parr 2005: 140). Instead, Deleuze and Guattari posit the historical assemblage as a transformative articulation of becomings (ibid. 288 - 289). Feminism was never a homogenous movement as the various labels (liberal feminist, radical feminist, socialist feminist, Marxist feminist) confirm. Collectivities that cut across such divisions spontaneously formed around specific issues – particularly where changes in legislation were sought. The
process of becoming - other was, however, experienced as ongoing. It lacked any clearly defined end point or telos. It was all about transforming reactive forces into active forces of becoming. It was about not knowing in advance what we might become. As a Marxist feminist in the 1970s and early 1980s, I rejected the separatist essentialism of so-called radical feminist politics. I believed that real sustainable change had to involve collectivities including men who also wanted to become-woman (ibid. 321) or become-imperceptible (ibid. 308) in the 'active micropolitics' that becoming-minoritarian requires (ibid. 322): 'Every block of becoming is a block of co-existence' (ibid.). Radical feminism, with its ostensible conflation of sex and gender, was problematic to me. I wanted to be part of a pack that continually transformed itself (ibid. 274), that experimented, that crossed thresholds. I did not want one historically oppressive milieu to simply be replaced by something that could feel equally oppressive or restrictive. I struggled however to reconcile Marxism and feminism at an intellectual level, although I respected those - like Juliet Mitchell (1974), who stroved to produce abstract solutions to this problem. But why would I want to preserve a timeless mode of reproduction – the Holy Family of religion and psychoanalysis, the 'so that is what this meant' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 51, 67), by mapping it on to a historically variable mode of production?

My fears that separatist feminism would produce new, but equally fixed, identities or rigid orthodoxies were re-affirmed in the mid-1990s. After two years of part-time doctoral study, I was invited to re-submit an upgrade or transfer panel document on the grounds that it was 'above doctoral level but might make the department look right-wing'. I had written about child abuse but included boys amongst the abused, mentioned punitive mothering (Miller 1991, 1993), and acknowledged that abuse is not an exclusively male activity. The panel was
chaired by a male Head of School and comprised several female members of staff. I argued that a feminist perspective should not simply ignore these phenomena by casting women as universal victims, and boys who were abused as merely perpetrators-in-waiting. I feel this position has been subsequently vindicated by recent high profile cases in the UK of child abuse resulting in fatality. And in a recent article on child abuse in the Catholic Church entitled What Would Mary Do? (Miller 2010: 20) - premised on the argument that 'big boys do bad things when left to their own devices', it was acknowledged that sadistic abuse by female workers in Catholic residential units has also been reported (Miller 2010). I had critically reviewed the concept of a cycle of abuse as the inevitable return of the Same and hoped that my research would identify those factors that lead to very different outcomes for the children concerned (as statistics confirm that reproduction of the Same occurs in the minority of cases). It seemed to me then – and my view remains unchanged, that any research seeking to contribute to efforts to reduce future levels of perpetration should not be obstructed on radical feminist grounds, or in the service of a senior individual's career (the Head of School had been charged with creating a 'progressive' image for his department).

From my perspective at that time, gender parity in academia had hardly resulted in a 'revolutionary' change in knowledge production, or much evidence of the desire to flatten hierarchically organised power structures that had informed feminist political activity two decades earlier. At the institution in question, I experienced female academics policing knowledge in a very 'masculinist' way (Lee and Green 2000: 44). Given that my own teenage years included many violations of trust, primarily by a sadistic and violent stepfather and secondarily by those not inclined to interfere with his activities, this episode
in my academic history was profoundly shocking. I withdrew and moved on. Golde (2000: 199 - 227) is correct to suggest that doctoral students who withdraw do not always offer the real reasons to their supervisors or their institution; I pleaded health grounds. I had also found the conduct of supervision meetings to be quite bizarre – surreal even. They began with discussion between my supervisors as to which would take notes for the meeting report. One would then take copious notes as we spoke such that the content could be read, vetted, and signed by me at the end of the meeting. It was an utterly soulless academic experience. Despite all the deference to neoliberal procedure on the part of my supervisors, neither had volunteered any indication of the departmental political objections to my work over a two year period as a self-funding pre-transfer student. I feel entitled to be judgmental and perceive unethically under the circumstances. I am not however offering a generalisation about women in academia – not trying to extract a truth from this particular experience. I was a component of that supervisory assemblage and I did not overtly object to the way that meetings were conducted. We were all caught up in increasing levels of bureaucratic surveillance, and I always concluded that they were obliged to dutifully abide by instructions from above. And I too wanted the glass ceiling to be shattered. I cared too much about my own professional image.

It would be a mistake to interpret the above account as suggesting that Holligan (ibid.) explicitly implicates gender in the ‘knowledge revolution’ that he fears. His use of the term revolution serves however to highlight the difference between revolutions as both change in, and repetition of, oppressive power structures, and the becoming - revolutionary of Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 112). If sense is an event and what we call something, as an entity or being,
initiates a line of becoming (Colebrook 2002: 60), then calling changes in higher education revolutionary indicates that something of dramatic proportions has indeed taken place and that its magnitude demands our attention; particularly when it has purportedly happened without our awareness - change without a concept or without the conscious awareness of those who have participated in bringing it about. Yet Davies (2005: 11) is very clear about how and why the 'revolution' that Holligan (ibid.) describes has occurred: governmentally-instilled fears about individual economic survival have ensured acquiescence in a neoliberal form of competitive individualism. The problematic idea for the future is that of how to resist governmental control of education, and demand independence from governmental agendas, without either gender securing a monopoly on what constitutes knowledge and learning. And without the learning process being reduced to the consumption of existing knowledge, or knowledge production being confined to a finite range of methodologies and theoretical perspectives: ensuring a radical pluralism within higher education.

I was sensitised to issues of intellectual integrity and scholarly independence through this doctoral experience of the 1990s – of being obstructed for the wrong reasons. I had taken both for granted previously. An undergraduate Gender Studies module had positively encouraged open constructive discussion of differing feminist theories without obligation to defend a pre-given political identity. I thrived on that freedom. It is clearer now perhaps why, for me, becoming - revolutionary and becoming - apprentice are linked; there is so much in my background that militates against unquestioning trust of power differentials, and both require a trust in the future. There is a vulnerability associated with forgetting oneself and one's history. It may also be clearer why a philosophy that prioritises becoming over being and identity is so seductive to
me – there is much to forget. Like the artist or novelist described as ‘a seer, a becomer’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 171), I think that a child who has experienced abuse has also: ‘seen something in life that is too great, too unbearable […] the mutual embrace of life with what threatens it’ (ibid. 171). Trauma of this type can involve a ‘shattering of lived perceptions’ (ibid.); hence my mention of Janet earlier. A philosophy that speaks of ‘freeing life wherever it is imprisoned’ (ibid.) was always likely to interest me, just as I embraced the Marxian principle that the only point of life is to change it when I was younger. In a televised interview, a young Austrian woman who was kidnapped as a child, imprisoned for several years, and subjected to humiliating sadistic rituals (Channel 5, UK, 17th February, 2010), described being occasionally allowed out into a large garden. These tiny events were powerfully significant to her – a breeze, the movement of a blade of grass, the vibrant colour of a petal, ‘a breath of fresh air, a relationship with the outside world’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 322). I know this feeling very well – the forgetting through becoming-breeze, the becoming - alive with nature that is not a remembering but something else entirely, a blissful dissolution of the self that represents, and the promise of an endless becoming in mutual ‘contemplation’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 96). The sadism and physical abuse to which I was subjected pales into insignificance when compared to hers. Some of the fall out is very familiar however: the sense of being an Outsider (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 275), different, a borderline between parallel universes. So multiplicity, as Deleuze and Guattari describe it, speaks to me: becoming and multiplicity are the same thing (ibid.) and we become with the ‘hour’ of the world and the world becomes with us (ibid. 274; Gale, 2007: 480). It is only the ‘now of our becomings’ that matters (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 112). When writing of
Virginia Woolf, Deleuze and Guattari also liken artists to philosophers in that they may share an 'affective Athleticism'; it is an athleticism of becoming where impersonal forces are revealed and which may therefore involve a certain fragility of health: 'not because of their illnesses or neuroses but because they have seen something in life that is too much for anyone, too much for themselves, and that has put on them the quiet mark of death' (ibid. 172). It is then explained that this 'something' can also sustain and support; a resonance between Nietzsche and Michaux is implied: 'one day we will know that there wasn't any art but only medicine' (Michaux 1935: 193; ibid. 172 - 173). 'Sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other (while continuing to be what they are)' (ibid. 177); I cannot eradicate my history but I am forever creating distance from it - living to become and becoming to feel alive, defying arborescence as submission of the line to the point and passing 'between points' to come up through the middle (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 323).

No logical order is implied in the movement between becoming-woman and becoming-animal, becoming-molecular, and becoming-imperceptible (ibid. 275). Becoming-woman is necessary however if we are to escape the concept of Man. The latter has functioned historically as the privileged point of stable being - or identity against which everything is judged; it has set us against a world of appearances and devalued those appearances accordingly (Colebrook 2002: 139). Deleuze and Guattari state:

'Man constitutes himself as a gigantic memory, through the position of the central point, its frequency (insofar as it is necessarily reproduced by each dominant point), and its resonance (insofar as all of the points tie in with it). Any line that goes from one point to another in the aggregate of the molar system, and is thus defined by points answering to these
mnemonic conditions of frequency and resonance, is a part of the arborescent system' (ibid.323)

So even women must become - woman (ibid.) to escape a logic of being in favour of one of becoming and difference – a becoming minoritarian (ibid. 321 - 322). Perhaps my indignation at being silenced for raising punitive or sadistic mothering is now self-evident: how could the perpetuation of an image of motherhood as sacrosanct (woman = nurturer) be considered radically different from a radical feminist position? The feminism I favoured rejected political and religious images of the maternal role which portrayed women as fonts of boundless compassion, or implied that unthinking nurturance is the fulfilment of their biological destiny. I wonder now, as I write, if any of those present at the transfer panel I wrote of above have ever bothered to read the account of childhood abuse written by David Pelzer (1999). Somehow I doubt it.

I created a dilemma for myself when I concurred with my current Director of Studies that prior experiences will condition the course of events in subsequent educational settings. The less sanguine experiences in my familial history were those that had most influenced my attitude towards learning and educational settings. I did not want to appear to be endorsing the popularised Freudianism that I detest whereby psychic maturity is conflated with conformity to selected norms. I also recognise that many psychoanalytic concepts - psychical repetition for example, were popularised through the very self-help literature and consciousness raising groups that were integral to feminist attempts to curb abusive behaviours (domestic and sexual violence, and child abuse); hence my habitual self-checking for damaging patterns. There was a moment shortly after I had decided to abandon my postpositivist study in 2009 when I wondered if I was creating the conditions for history to repeat itself. Was
I guilty of an unconsciously motivated academic self-sabotage insofar as my work might invite opposition, obstruction even, causing me to eventually withdraw as I had done before? My perception of supervision had been changed by that unfortunate experience of the mid-1990s which led me to anticipate problems and respond accordingly; ‘psychoanalytic drift’ would set in, ‘bringing back all the clichés’ – a former hidden principle or plane of organisation, a teleological plane of transcendence (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 286, 292). I am writing about my experience in the 1990s in order to emphasise that it was my relationship with an ‘outside’ that triggered this sense that history might repeat itself, not some internal psychical compulsion to repeat that history. I might insist here that the Idea involved was not a psychoanalytic phantasm of my own individual consciousness, but instead a real problem - a ‘system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements [ ] incarnated on real relations and actual terms’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 231). I could also point to the distinction Deleuze draws between psychical and historical repetition: the former is a concept produced by reflection, or a matter of analogy, whereas the latter is ‘above all a condition of historical action itself’ because we create on condition that we identify with figures from the past (ibid. 114). Deleuze is, of course, writing about revolution and the theatre that is history, not about academic relationships.

Deleuze explains that in psychoanalysis it is repression that purportedly causes psychical repetition: ‘When the consciousness of knowledge or the working through of memory is missing [ ] it is played, that is to say repeated, enacted instead of being known’ (ibid. 16). An inverse relation is posited between ‘repetition and consciousness, repetition and remembering, repetition and recognition’ such that the less one is conscious of remembering one’s past,
the more one repeats it; so, in theory, remembering and the working through of memory prevents repetition (ibid.). On this account, I should never have worried about repetition as a psychic compulsion as it is forgetting that I consistently find to be difficult. Merely remembering, or not forgetting, is not however enough for psychoanalysis - it is the ‘working through’ that counts. This begs the question as to just what ‘working through’ actually entails. Unsurprisingly, the answer for Freud is therapy. And a therapeutic relationship that is not concerned with memories in the abstract, but memories where affects associated with parental figures can be transferred to the therapist. The latter is allegedly able to represent them, and render them conscious in a subject who then recognises their truth and finds themselves empowered to break the cycle of bare repetition (ibid. 21). Such transference therefore requires a living connection with the past and installing ourselves there in conditions Deleuze likens to a scientific experiment: ‘the patient is supposed to repeat the whole of his disturbance in privileged, artificial conditions’ (ibid.). Deleuze later points out however that transference as repetition in fact serves more to verify or ‘authenticate the roles and select the masks’ than to ‘identify events, persons and passions’ (ibid.).

It is precisely this authentication or verification process that leads me to consider psychoanalysis to be potentially damaging to those who have already suffered impositions of a sexual or physical or psycho-emotional nature. Abusers invariably seek to impose their own definitions of the situation upon those they abuse and simultaneously strive to undermine the confidence of abusees in their own intuitions, perceptions and judgments. I find the suggestion of a purportedly therapeutic relationship, where unconscious desire for an abusive parent (or its alleged psychic representatives) is a pre-given
assumption the patient must recognise, nauseating; hence my concern about Grant's (2005) inadvertent conflation of 'Psy' and 'Psycho' supervision in the previous plateau. And, of course, it was Freud's shift in thinking about seduction that prompted most anger in the feminist circles in which I mixed in the 1970s. The implications of this shift for anyone whose abuse has been denied by those responsible, or by those who could have acted to prevent it but failed to do so, are deeply offensive. The shift, or inversion, I refer to is Freud's abandonment of a hypothesis of real childhood events and traumatisation, and its substitution with a seduction theory where only fantasy is at play – the child's fantasy that is. I must confess that it was difficult for me to read Deleuze describe this Freudian volte-face as a 'decisive moment' before suggesting that 'simulacra are the letter of repetition itself' (ibid. 19). But then Difference and Repetition was first published in 1968 before the medicalisation of child abuse and feminist activity in this area. It remains a taboo subject for many. I also understand that Deleuze critically engaged with Freud in order to rework key Freudian concepts and make them his own.

Deleuze challenges many popularised versions of Freudian ideas in this process. Hence the concept of a death instinct – which for Deleuze marks a 'turning point' in Freud's work (ibid. 18), is not interpreted as referring to aggression or self-destructive tendencies; instead, it becomes crucial to Deleuze's argument about difference and repetition. So too with the seduction theory; Deleuze is not denying the reality of childhood events, but insisting that they cannot be reproduced as they were experienced at the time of their occurrence. We cannot recreate the exact affects and feelings precisely because the event has passed. Attempting to represent it is all we can do. So what Deleuze is objecting to is Freud's conviction that there is a 'first term that
is repeated' (ibid. 19) - specifically, an Oedipal first term that is lurking 'underneath' the 'disguises' such that our adult loves can only signify an oedipal desire for our mothers (ibid.). 'There is therefore nothing repeated which may be isolated or abstracted from the repetition in which it was formed, but within which it is also hidden' (ibid.) Rather than reducing varied fantasies, 'symptoms' and dreams produced by condensation and displacement to some originary term related to oedipal desire as Freud conceives it (the Same), Deleuze emphasises that these variations are 'the internal genetic elements of repetition itself'; variation is related to the death instinct in that death is formed from one disguise to the other – 'with and within the variations' (ibid.). Hence Deleuze argues that the concept of the death instinct functions as a transcendental principle for repetition and is characterised by positivity. It is silent insofar as it is not given in experience, in contrast to the pleasure principle; but it is Thanatos which submits Eros to repetition (ibid. 20). Something must cease for becoming to be possible. Deleuze insists that cycles are only abstractions (ibid. 24) and is highly critical of the interpretation of psychical repetition as in: 'one repeats because one is mistaken, because one has not worked through the memory, because one lacks consciousness, because one has no instincts' (ibid. 33). Contra the bounded ego of Freud, and indeed our own sense of being as closed entities, Deleuze and Guattari are concerned with the social and political emergence of the ego - how we come to experience ourselves in this way (1980 / 2004: 289 - 292). Against the psychoanalytic notion that desire originates in bodies, is oedipally organised, and therefore repressed as a condition of sociality, it is argued that desire produces bodies but also exceeds them: 'Desire is free flow, creative difference and becoming' (Colebrook 2002: 142). Although we have the capacity to recognise ourselves as subjects, the creative
forces of life will always exceed us. This is why we repress and why Deleuze and Guattari speak of artists and writers who return 'breathless and with bloodshot eyes' after having seen 'Life in the living'; they cite Virginia Woolf in suggesting how a moment of the world can be captured: 'Saturate every atom' (1994: 172). As Colebrook states, this creative force exceeds or transgresses the boundaries of persons and intentions; it may be extremely disruptive of perceived and stable identities (ibid.): becoming reveals forces that are not our own. Sexuality is similarly discounted as a human property that emanates from bodies – particularly from that of the child for the prohibited mother as a prelude to, and origin of, adult sexuality. Desire is pre-individual (between body parts) and pre-human (not reducible to sexual relations between people); and it is only through a contraction of political and social investments that the 'figure of the mother' which we associate with the nuclear family (and radical feminism?) emerges (ibid.). Such invested images demonstrate the social organisation and collective nature of desire. To think anti-oedipally, as Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009) advocate, is to reject the production of woman as 'an impossible, lost and prohibited origin' through the Freudian incest taboo where the child is required to repress its desire for the mother and become like the father (Colebrook 2002: 143). This brings us back to becoming - woman. It is not imputed desires that are unconscious but rather the very real socio-political processes through which Man is produced as a transcendent value; becoming - woman is revolutionary because it is necessarily means the dissolution of 'oedipal man' (ibid. 144, 145). This is achieved by rejection of a sex in favour of a thousand tiny sexes – 'n sexes', as the uncontrolled becomings of organisms more used to the fabrication of opposable positionality within a dualism-machine
(Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 307, 304-305). It can also be achieved through writing (ibid.).

I suggested earlier that becoming - apprentice and becoming - revolutionary were connected for me. I meant that I now feel as if I inhabit a plane of becoming where old dramas can be (re)written. I am letting my writing take me to places that I had not envisaged going. I am no longer quite sure what independent scholarship is if it is not the freedom to become immersed in this process of learning. In the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage, the thesis is an 'enterprise of co-creation' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 173) not a monument to competitive individualism. The 'old discourses' that Holligan describes can be (re)worked to function in an 'untimely' way (Deleuze 2004: 139) - to support a thousand tiny doctoral projects and thereby expand the definition of 'excellence', but without simultaneously promoting the 'sink or swim' policy that Holligan claims characterises elite institutions (ibid. 268, 276). The latter was not my experience many years ago. Informal help was readily available for those who required it, but less eagerly provided to those who would be more suited to the pending neoliberal managerialist environment where they would be told what to think, say, and do and then required to provide evidence that they had thought, said, and done it. It is not my experience now.

I shall briefly describe the role of memory in the Platonic theory of learning as reminiscence which was omitted earlier. My planned writing about memory and the unconscious remains on hold however for the moment. I sense the 'dangers of falling into the black hole of involuntary memory' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 186) and the drift in my writing here is testimony to that danger perhaps. Memory is powerful if left to its own devices. It is why I entitled this piece of writing 'dark precursors' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 319). Deleuze
however is referring to the power and violence of nature - its power to break and make connections. But I digress. What is the role of memory in knowledge and learning according to Plato? It derives from the Pythagorean idea of the immortality of the soul and the belief that once installed in the human body, the pure and complete knowledge in which the soul once dwelt is contaminated by sensory experience; knowledge is innate and achieved through introspection, but sensory experience can serve as a reminder of what is already known (Hergenhahn 2009: 47 - 48). Knowledge is recollection of what the soul knew prior to entering the body. So Plato’s theory of reminiscence is both nativist (knowledge as innate) and rationalist (knowledge is achieved through the workings of the mind); its idealism stems from the privileging of abstract forms and ideas as the ultimate reality (ibid. 48). Plato conceived the soul as comprising three conflicting components: the immortal rational, the mortal emotional and mortal appetitive. Since fulfilment of the latter is a major motivational force, the function of the rational component is to control appetites and emotions by deferring gratification, however much energy is required to do so, although it was recognised that different components would predominate in different people (ibid.). This privileging of the rational forms the basis of Platonic morality and politics in that a utopia was proposed where the philosopher would be king or kings would be required to think philosophically; and those unable to forget or control the evils of the flesh and attractions of sensory experience would be condemned to a life of ignorance and forced to stand aside in order to make way for the possibility of life as Plato defined it (ibid. 50). Thank God for Deleuze, and Deleuze-Guattari.

I now want to conclude this piece of writing on two lighter notes. The first is another Joni Mitchell (1974) refrain which I discovered in the same year and
which always lifted my spirits: ‘My analyst told me that I was right out of my head. But I said dear doctor I think that it’s you instead. Because I have got a thing that’s unique and new. To prove it I’ll have the last laugh on you. ‘Cause instead of one head, I got two. And you know two heads are better than one’.

The second is a quote from Anti-Oedipus (1972 / 2009: 14) because I was similarly amused, thirty seven years later, by the many irreverent anecdotes included by Deleuze and Guattari in this text, however serious the point being conveyed. Here they are writing about the inadequacy of a reductive Freudian Oedipal perspective and an institutionalised judge – Daniel Paul Schreber, whose own memoirs influenced Freud’s writing on paranoia:

‘The psychoanalyst says that we must necessarily discover Schreber’s daddy beneath his superior God, and doubtless also his elder brother beneath his inferior God. At times the schizophrenic loses his patience and demands to be left alone. Other times he goes along with the whole game and even invents a few tricks of his own, introducing his own reference points in the model put before him and undermining it from within (“Yes, that’s my mother, all right, but my mother’s the Virgin Mary, you know”). One can easily imagine Schreber answering Freud: “Yes, I quite agree, naturally the talking birds are young girls, and the Superior God is my daddy and the inferior God my brother.’

I think that I need Patti Smith, not Joni Mitchell, right now. Can I be a ‘riot-gurrl’ (Lort 2000) at fifty plus? And which cauldron am I in now? Is it really a cauldron? If I do not answer in the affirmative, it is because I am no longer writing from within that arborescent supervisory assemblage in a top-down exercise - by which I mean that everything must follow from a key premise and related imperatives. Looking back, I can see a direct relationship between critiques of neoliberal managerialism, behaviours within those supervision meetings, and the suffocation of thought. Here though, writing now, I feel more
like Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 1) who once said that there had been ‘too much desire to do philosophy to wonder what it was’. I have been too busy writing, making connections, being affected by supervisory questioning to pause and ask why, on earth, is it that I am thanking God and not my present supervisory team for creating the conditions that are making such writing possible. If it is a cauldron that I am in, then they are in it too. So sorcery perhaps. But I am growing tired of feeling bound by the neoliberal spell (and the critiques it engenders). I – we, are on a witch’s flight. ‘To think is always to follow the witch’s flight’ (ibid. 41) – to invoke forces without deceiving ourselves that they belong to us as individuals. And Stengers’ (undated) ‘effective togetherness’ (www.recalcitrance.com/deleuzelast.htm) is rendered ineffable within the neoliberal managerialist lexicon, but also in the macro-level critiques that accompany it, with their assumption of a central antagonism that functions as an organising principle of everything (ibid.). I am unsure where my writing is taking me, but it is, I feel, a rhizomatic supervisory assemblage that is taking me there now.
Divine pleasures and sacred thrills

Stengers (undated) – a former student of Deleuze, was frustrated by his reluctance to give direct answers in lectures, but now describes her joy at discovering that an answer ‘had to determine its moment, its occasion and circumstances, its landscapes and personae, its conditions and unknowns’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 2). This penultimate plateau marks a step-change, I feel, in my writing. I confront my historical relationship to feminism by living divergent theories of subjectivity in defiance of concerns about consistency and betrayal of favoured academic positions. I explain why God is a lobster for Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004), and show how my embrace of neorealism has been complicated by feminist appropriations of psychoanalytic theories and my enduring concerns about biological determinism. I consider whether linguistic constructivism and social constructionism do, in fact, overcome the macro - micro divide such that the affective basis of thought is grasped and meso inventions can emerge uninhibited by the ghost of conformity to prescriptive orthodoxies.

May 2010

The concepts of ‘riot girl’ and ‘outsider women’ (Lort 2000) were initially appealing. I grew up in the 1960s and 1970s when rejection of the judgment machine - the ‘judgment of God’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 45) and the impulse to question the status quo was not unusual. My own sense of outsider status derived from an oppressive familial situation, and I relied on reading to render it intelligible and to manage its fall out. Any text with ‘anti’ or ‘free’ in its title was attractive to me prior to, and following, escape from my toxic home environment at sixteen. I was politicised through my reading of Laing (1960, 1970), Laing and Esterson (1964), Sasz (1961 / 1974), Illich (1971), and Neil (1968). I felt less isolated knowing there were others who found the world and the Holy family particularly, to be a cauldron of boiling tar not a harmonious trinity. Works by the women whom Lort cites - Kathy Acker, Patti Smith, Anna Kavan, also remain on my bookshelves as testaments to a different era - to an energising sense that things could be otherwise; old friends to my efforts at self-transformation and rejection of stultifying gender norms. But they came later.
As a fourteen year old, it was the anti-psychiatry literature that I found especially engaging. My habitual response when others volunteer accounts of their experiences of familial abuse is that I got off lightly. Violence was an easy price to pay for the preservation of another form of physical integrity. I invariably describe the occasion when, at fourteen, I mustered the courage to hit back, and how my stepfather's hasty retreat made me realise that cowardice and inadequacy is behind much abusive behaviour. But of course, things were far more complex than that and my refusal to be coerced and manipulated invited unpredictable episodes of rage and fury, and ritualistic humiliation. I have never understood claims that girls become male-identified, or identify with their aggressor. Nor do I understand the concept of maternal collusion as yet one more way mothers are socially denigrated. I infinitely prefer Deleuze and Guattari's take on 'becoming girl' - a fugitive being indifferent to memory (1980 / 2004: 305 - 306), to the implication that I should have identified with the very form of femininity that I understood feminism to be questioning. Whenever it is suggested that I celebrate the feminine in a conflation of sex and gender, as it was recently by a friend who enjoys Irigaray (1985, 2000), I rail against this version of difference and crave the 'song of life' (Deleuze and Guattari ibid. 304). I was almost fourteen when my step-father's fear of exposure prompted a pre-emptive strategy of contacting my school and the parents of friends to inform them that I was psychotic and strongly recommend that they dismiss anything I might say about my domestic situation. Loyalty to my mother had always precluded discussing such matters, but I turned to the psychoanalytic and anti-psychiatric literature in order to understand what I had been wrongly accused of. I would like to think that today this very parental act would immediately raise an alarm. It failed to do so back in the early 1970s. And it
was, as always, my mother whom I felt particularly betrayed by. Aware of events behind closed familial doors, she worked hard to preserve a veneer of normality to protect my stepfather from public scrutiny and preclude the forcing of difficult choices.

I identified with Natascha Kampusch’s (cf. p.130) account of what it was like to live under the same roof, with no option to do otherwise, with someone whose primary objective is to break one’s spirit and secure passive compliance, her subsequent tendency to self-isolate, and the powerful sense of being, freedom, and connection that the natural world afforded her. So I cannot accept Judith Butler’s (1993: 224) identification, and subsequent dismissal, of a ‘kind of vitalism’ in Foucault in the presentation of power as a ceaseless confrontation or struggle. Those who have lived in situations where such struggles were ongoing understand the power of contemplation which, for Deleuze and Guattari, is self-enjoyment without concepts or knowledge, a pure internal Awareness: ‘it is sensation itself [ ] beneath the noise of actions’ (1994: 212 - 213) – I feel therefore I am. Nor can I wholly endorse the idea of outsider women as Lort (ibid.) presents it. The anti-psychiatry literature facilitated the use of specific psychiatric or psychological conditions as heuristic devices in Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009). This move echoes the sociological tradition that looks to deviant cases to illuminate the normative social world. Deleuze and Guattari adopted schizophrenia and the writing of schizophrenics such as Artaud (ibid. 122, 124 –125; 1980 / 2004: 166) in a similar manner. But they do not idealise or romanticise mental illness (Deleuze 2004: 238, 240). Hence Deleuze acknowledges the danger of proposing a clinical aesthetic (1981 / 2005: 31) and madness, like drug addiction, is discussed in the context of the dangers of excessive de-stratification (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 316).
I therefore feel distinctly uneasy about the presentation of the writer Anna Kavan as exemplifying a Deleuzo-Guattarian inspired subversion of the masculine-feminine binary. I wonder instead why she died with a needle in her hand and how much distress her schizophrenia had caused her. I also doubt whether Patti Smith saw herself as shot through with 'shards of masculinity' – a phenomenon that Lort (ibid.) suggests is inevitable when women resist normative gender relations. Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 304) reject the tendency to view the subject as a container within which a balance of masculine and feminine elements should be achieved; this indirectly perpetuates the binary: 'It is just as deplorable to miniaturize, internalize the binary machine as it is to exacerbate it' (ibid.).

Perhaps the case of schizophrenia that interests me most, and which I first encountered in 1976 when studying English literature before entering university, was that of an academic-poet at the University of Washington. It was not unusual, I recall, for him to be found on all fours traversing the campus lawns at the onset of a schizophrenic episode. And as interested as I was in his poetry at the time, it was the fact that his somewhat deviant behaviour was compassionately accommodated that I found so surprising. This resonated with me since, despite all my courageous defiance of my stepfather, it was not until returning to education after two years of living independently, that I acknowledged the extent to which my self-esteem had been damaged. For a brief period, panic attacks in the presence of others kept me away from lectures. But I was encouraged not to abandon my studies rather than identified as a student who was falling short of some neoliberal managerialist blueprint of the professionally - skilled prospective employee. The education sector had not yet been called upon to function as the handmaiden of a knowledge economy.
My academic work was valued. I felt valued. Although anti-psychiatry is no longer fashionable, I am alarmed by non-specific psychiatric diagnoses like borderline personality disorder. I suspect that many abusees acquire such labels because it is easier for the feint-hearted to pathologise the individual rather than confront unpalatable truths about the society in which they live. Perpetrators are adept at engineering the invalidation and isolation of their chosen prey. Much has changed since feminists insisted that deviant behaviours often, like charity, begin at home, but clearly it is not enough as recent high profile abuse cases (institutional and otherwise) demonstrate. I worry too about schoolchildren in a governmentally-induced culture that prioritises examination league tables over and above the welfare of pupils as my research in the 1990s indicated prevalence that translates into at least one abused child in every classroom.

I still reach for Patti Smith’s Babel (1978) sometimes, but I wondered, after reading Lort (ibid.), whether I could identify ‘outsider women’ in academia, although I would prefer to abandon the sexual attribution as Deleuze and Guattari do in their gallery of literary becomings (ibid.). Many authors came to mind but I re-visited texts by Judith Butler and, to paraphrase another time-worn Refrain, saw something of myself in more than one an aspect of her writing. I had always neglected to read the 1999 Preface in Gender Trouble (1990 / 2006) in my haste to extract and engage with key arguments. It contains a personal statement that shocked me, although I now wonder why it had that effect. Butler mentions an uncle who was incarcerated on account of his anatomically anomalous body, her own struggle with a ‘scarring condemnation’ (ibid. xx), and how a dogged determination to denaturalise gender emerged from a ‘desire to live, to make life possible, to rethink the possible’ (ibid. xix). If I
recognise myself in this statement, it is because prior to the mid-1970s, I was only aware of texts on the incest taboo. The term child abuse was not in circulation. Homosexuality is the heuristic that permits Butler to explore the role of language in subject-formation, feminist appropriations of homophobic psychoanalytic theory, and the essentialism of specific feminist writers and political economic theories of ideology.

It had not occurred to me until reading this preface that my own experience of abusive behaviour may have always functioned as an unspoken personal heuristic and fuelled my interest in trans-disciplinary thinking. Like Butler, I have always detested the biological determinism evidenced in popular thinking about gender. My appreciation of theories of trauma and child abuse informed by evolutionary affective neuroscience is therefore difficult to reconcile with an anti-naturalising stance. Why am I reassured by a paper portraying the statistical predominance of abuse by stepfathers as an evolutionary hangover (infanticide being practiced by the incoming male in some mammalian herd species)? And why do I then recoil when considering how this hypothesis might function as a potential rationale? It is many years ago that I stopped trying to answer the question that preoccupies many abusees – why me? Life is too short. But there is a sense in which I have never stopped seeking answers – as if making abuse intelligible will somehow liberate me from intrusive memories and fall out. Hence: academic texts become personal resources, theories are checked for their implications for abusees or their emancipatory potential, and I continue to welcome disclosures like those of Butler (ibid. xx) and Wyatt (Gale and Wyatt 2009: 227–229). Making sense matters, however much I wish that it did not. What I took from Laing at fourteen years of age was that schizophrenia can be a rational response to a crazy situation – an argument not so unlike the
ethological position that behavioural pathologies may be evidenced in captive animals deprived of opportunities to exercise their natural behavioural repertoire.

I suspect that my detestation of neoliberal managerialism is attributable to its totalising tendencies – the imposition of a reality that is not my own. I was precocious enough when younger to know what a totalising head-game was, but not aware of how emotionally, and at times physically, isolating the consequences of rejecting one would be. When I described my supervision relationship in the 1990s as bizarre or unreal, it was because, having known a very different academic culture I wanted to hang on doggedly to my sense of it in the face of an increasingly totalising paranoia and the resultant feeling that we were often speaking different languages. This reference to paranoia is from Foucault’s preface to Anti-Oedipus (1972 / 2009: xiii). I have resolved to read more prefaces. In this one, Foucault pays a ‘modest tribute’ to a seventeenth century priest who wrote ‘Introduction to the Devout Life’ by suggesting that Anti-Oedipus might be read as an ‘Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life’ (ibid.). Foucault describes the latter as a book of ethics: ‘The Christian moralists sought out the traces of the flesh lodged deep within the soul. Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, pursue the slightest traces of fascism in the body’ (ibid.). The three adversaries that must be confronted are: ‘Bureaucrats of the revolution and civil servants of Truth’ (political ascetics, sad militants, terrorists of theory), ‘poor technicians of desire’ (psychoanalysts and semiologists), and crucially ‘the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour [] that causes us to love power’ (ibid.). In the summary of contents provided, Foucault lists the principles that inform ‘the art of living counter to all forms of fascism’: abandonment of pyramidal hierarchisation and subdivision, freedom
from all unitary and totalising paranoia, constant generation of de-
individualisation, using analysis to multiply domains and forms for political
action, and a final principle that I will quote in full:

'Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit,
castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has for so long held
sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is
positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities,
mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not
sedentary but nomadic' (ibid. xiii-xiv)

Foucault advises that Anti-Oedipus should be read, not as a 'flashy Hegel' – as
an all encompassing philosophy with all the answers, but as an 'ars erotica, ars
theoretica, ars politica' (ibid. xii) where instead of asking why, we ask how to
proceed in disrupting established orders. The blasphemous and humorous style
of Deleuze and Guattari is viewed as an attempt to neutralise the power of
academic discourse and avoid manipulative rhetoric (ibid. xiv).

There is little humour in this thesis of mine but I would like to think that in
alternating between a traditionally rhetorical academic style and a more
autoethnographic genre, I am subverting both - albeit in a modest way. These
ebbs and flows have as much to do with my own reactions to relating details of
my past to a wider audience as anything else. My writing is nomadic in this
sense and I do not believe that an autoethnographic genre necessarily
demands every autobiographical detail to be laid bare. I think of
autoethnography as a fluid tendency that can accommodate very different
conceptions of subject-formation and modes of presentation, and not as a
Church dictating rigid methodological ritual. Richardson writes of a story she
wishes to tell but does not know how (Bochner and Ellis 2002:167). I see my
writing here as proceeding in a similar spirit. I also quickly learnt not to appear
too clever within a nuclear complex where any intelligent remark might trigger a violent reaction from a stepfather who had to have the last authoritative word. All these years later, writing in a heavily academic style as a woman - when I feel inclined to do so, still feels like a self-affirmatory statement. Deleuze and Guattari politicise the organism (1972 / 2009: 8; 1980 / 2004: 175 - 176) and posit an anti-essentialist radically decentred subject. A feminist politics based solely around molar identity is considered dangerous however in that it limits subversive becomings and risks reproducing what it seeks to challenge; it is a molar politics that is deemed 'indispensable' in allowing women to 'win back their own organism, their own history, their own subjectivity' and become a collective subject of enunciation – 'we as women' (1980 / 2004: 304).

Butler also recognises a problem with political signifiers like 'women' and 'freedom' (1997: 160-161); 'freedom' belongs to a 'political discourse of modernity' that was premised on the exclusion of women, but it can be reappropriated to configure a future that embraces excluded groups. It is an unknown future that can 'only produce anxiety in those who seek to patrol its conventional boundaries' because it will be supported by an anti-foundationalist position (ibid. 161). I am still unravelling the continuities and discontinuities between Butler, Deleuze-Guattari and Deleuze. The former links socio-political oppression and the traumatisation and demonisation of individuals. The latter link social oppression and psychic repression under capitalism but reject the positing of a psychic reality and criticise Kant for perpetuating a Platonic logic of desire as lack of a real object. Hence Kant's critical revolution is deemed spurious in that it posits desire as productive, but confines it to the realm of fantasy or the imaginary, such that the real object called into being is a fantasy or an hallucination (1972 / 2009: 25 - 27). Butler draws on what reads like a
distinctly Platonic conception of the false copy found in Derrida (1997: 151; Derrida 1978: 17). Here citationality is conceived as mimesis without end and the 'imposture' - as false copy or simulacra, is a condition of the legitimacy of the performative (ibid. 151), whereas for Deleuze, all we have is simulacra. Butler argues that naturalised knowledge of gender operates as a pre-emptive violent circumscription of reality (1990 / 1999: xxiv) but supports her linguistic constructivist separation of sex and gender with genetic research. Deleuze and Guattari write of the introduction of desire into neurology and thereby imply a biological realism (1972 / 2009: 40). They will argue that sexuality is poorly explained by the binary organisation of the sexes (1980 / 2004: 307), as will Butler; but Butler rejects the suggestion of a 'thousand sexes' (ibid.) by implying that Deleuze and Guattari are referring to the allocation of sex – as a stable biological category, which clearly they are not. Butler criticises Monique Wittig (1979: 119) for endorsing this idea on the grounds that a limitless proliferation of sexes logically entails the negation of sex as such:

>'If the number of sexes corresponds to the number of existing individuals, sex would no longer have any general application as a term: one's sex would be a radically singular property and would no longer be able to operate as a useful or descriptive generalization' (ibid. 161)

I feel that this counter-argument contradicts Butler's own destabilisation of sex as a self-evident and fixed category. Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 167, 286 - 7) are advocating experimentation, or openness to desire and becomings that underlines the fluidity of sexuality and sexual identity. They are not referring to biological categories, rather, writing about disrupting any sense we may have of possessing 'a' sex as an enduring personal property. They are arguing against conformity to any prescribed molar identity: desire is de-subjectifying and defies
the plane of organisation – the socially prescribed gender binary and the sex-gender conflation, the Freudian privileging of genitility and mandatory heterosexuality. Butler maintains that the radical disjuncture between heterosexuality and homosexuality is far less rigid than Wittig suggests, and Deleuze and Guattari would no doubt concur. But they would be unlikely to endorse the notion that: ‘there are psychic structures of homosexuality within heterosexual relations, and structures of heterosexuality within gay and lesbian sexuality’ (ibid. 165). Their rejection of structure (ibid. 57) and critique of Freudian oedipalisation - with its related concept of a pre-oedipal stage that is passed through en route to sexual maturity, would preclude consensus (1972 / 2009: 44 - 45). An anti-hylomorphic stance is claimed by both Deleuze-Guattari (1980 / 2004: 449 - 451) and Butler. The former write of surrendering, or connecting operations, to a materiality and not imposing form on matter, while Butler refuses to see nature as a unified and prediscursive reality and focuses upon materiality as an effect of language (1993: xi, 2). Given my interest in theories of trauma that detail the somatic impact of traumatic events and consequent unsuitability of talking therapies for some traumatised abusees, the conception of the body offered by Butler, and necessitated by her emphasis on (re)signification, is particularly important to me. Later I will introduce a naturalising philosophy of political physiology and political affect derived from Deleuze and Guattari, and developed by Protevi who theorises the body – the anoedipal and vital body (2009: 89 - 122), in a way that Butler cannot given her anti-naturalisation stance. This will include an outline of Deleuze and Guattari’s use of schizophrenia as a heuristic device in their promotion of a materialist psychiatry and countering of a psychoanalysis they assert is:

‘taking part in the work of bourgeois repression at its most far-reaching level [thus] keeping European humanity harnessed to the yoke of daddy -
mummy and making no effort to do away with this problem once and for all' (1972 / 2009: 50)

That problem is the 'age-old tendency to humble and demean us, to make us feel guilty', which psychoanalysis revived by rendering the production of desire a 'dirty little family secret' (ibid. 49). It now occurs to me that Butler has been inadequately introduced and I should rectify that omission given her enduring contribution to gender and identity politics.

Subversion of the categories through which we see and in which we invest usually begins with a problem that has no name (Friedan 1963: 56) – one that cannot be articulated within existing frames but which causes what Butler (1990 / 2006: xxvi) terms 'psychic difficulties'. Friedan asked why so many of the women in post-world war America, who were striving to conform to an image of the nuclear family as the natural sacred unit of capitalist consumption (where happiness was a new Hoover and bliss achievable through efficient domesticity and confinement to the suburban home), should be consuming Valium with similar levels of enthusiasm. In France, Simone de Beauvoir (1949 / 1972) had already insisted that women are made not born, thereby drawing a clear distinction between sex and gender – between the biologically given and the socially produced. But it was Butler who challenged the category of sex by demonstrating that social processes of naturalisation were at play, even where our most taken for granted categories (male-female, masculine-feminine) were concerned. Drawing on genetic research and papers like Life in the XY Coral (Fausto - Sterling 1989: 333 - 348), Butler shows that allocation of sex at birth may in fact be a lottery for some and that biology is certainly not immune from ambiguity when it comes to the determination of sex (ibid. 224).
The persistence of gendered subjectivity, despite its fragile biological ground, is attributed to the iterability of performativity: the wedding ceremony figures prominently in the examples of performative speech acts (Austin 1962: 52), where 'I pronounce you' effects the relation that it names and carries an authoritative force. Iteration of such speech acts lends them a citational power not unlike the function of precedent in legal proceedings (Derrida 1988: 18).

Hence for Butler (1993: 226 – 227):

‘If a performative succeeds (and I will suggest that “success” is always and only provisional), then it is not because an intention successfully governs the action of speech, but only because that action echoes prior actions, and *accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior authoritative set of practices*’

To politicise gendered identity and desire is therefore to challenge the constitutive historicity of discourse (ibid.). Given that the subject is constituted within a pre-existing language, Butler argues that saying 'I' is a citation of the place of 'I' in speech – a place characterised by 'a certain priority and anonymity with respect to the life it animates' (ibid. 226): 'it is the historically revisable possibility of a name that precedes and exceeds me, but without which I cannot speak' (ibid.). In the nexus of power and discourse proposed, subjective intentionality is replaced by a reiterative acting (speech) that is power in its persistence and concomitant instability.

A condition of political revolution is therefore the questioning of 'reality' – what is taken for granted, what qualifies as intelligible and is considered to be real, yet which is simultaneously often violently policed (Butler 1990 / 2006: xxiv). That reality is produced through discursive performativity in a theory that privileges speech over writing given its affective power in subject formation and
reproduction, and role in political control. Butler invokes Althusser's (1971: 170 – 186) biblical example of the divine power to name in explaining the concept of 'interpellation' in the context of ideological state apparatuses (1997: 31-32). And also the paternal law of Lacanian psychoanalysis (1985: 83, 85), where the incest taboo is enforced in the Name of the Father within a signifying economy that renders the feminine a signifier of lack; i.e. sexual differentiation and gender positionality are achieved through the operation of linguistic rules - mechanisms of exclusion or foreclosure (ibid. 38, 135; 1990 / 2006: 38, 58 - 62). The personal is political (or ideological) for Butler because a structural homology can be identified between the mechanisms through which both are organised (1993: 190, 193). Following Rose (1987: 90), Butler argues that the paternal law of Lacan should not be interpreted as a deterministic divine will, but instead as a 'perpetual humbler' that prepares the ground for insurrection against its authority (1990 / 2006: 39). Butler's arguments refuse the status of the subject as a 'monotheistic singularity' (ibid.), and it is the individuated body which is posited as the site where the security and risks of linguistic life are experienced; hence words that 'wound', 'injurious speech', 'linguistic injury' (1997: 2): 'Insurrectionary speech becomes the necessary response to injurious language, a risk taken in response to being put at risk, a repetition of language that forces change' (ibid. 163).

Our 'vulnerability' to language is therefore two-fold: we are vulnerable simply by virtue of being constituted within it – 'insulted from the start' by the power of its constitutive historicity; and we risk loss of psychic and bodily integrity when language derogates and demeans us, or fails to provide us with a vocabulary that permits articulation of our bodily sense (ibid. 2). Signification practices are held to both constrain and enable resignification. It seems
legitimate to question where bodies figure in this process. The title of the 1993
text informs us that bodies do matter – in opposition to linguistic idealism where
naming purportedly brings into being what it names. For Butler, discourse
materialises sets of effects that form the basis or condition of future actions, and
sex is viewed as a performative which evokes norms – chains of iteration
invoked in the performative utterance. Bodies are materialised and sexed
through a differentiated production (is it a boy or a girl?) and regulated by an
enforced masculine or feminine identification that can only be unstable (isn’t it
time to stop being a tomboy?). Regards the latter, Butler is referring to
oedipalisation. We are all familiar with popularised interpretations of
homosexuality as a failure of the oedipal drama whereby girls must abandon
both parents as objects of desire and boys their mothers (ibid. 187 -188).
Lacanian psychoanalysis purportedly explains the impossibility of identity as
coherent or stable by highlighting the constitutive exclusions upon which the
illusion of coherence and stability is based. So iterability implies exclusion, or
what Butler terms the ‘constitutive outside’ – ‘the unliveable, the
nonnarrativizable, the traumatic’ (ibid. 188). The concept of abjection (Kristeva
1982: 4, 13) is mobilised on two levels: ‘social abjection’ is the unspeakable
within language or what is speakable only in pejorative terms, while the body
must live with the pain produced by the failure of exclusion and iteration in order
to secure the borders of its materiality: ‘in the case of bodies, those exclusions
haunt signification as its abject borders or as that which is strictly foreclosed’
(ibid.; 1993: 243).

Resignification becomes possible, Butler argues, precisely because
discourse injures bodies and places some at the limits of intelligibility or of
available ontologies (ibid. 227). Resistance demands the appropriation of
performatives that shame, insult and pathologise those who resist prescribed social forms and therefore lack hegemonic sanction; the recommended political response is 'practices of parody' (1990 / 2006: 200) that challenge the conflation of sex and gender and expose the socially constructed character of both. It is not whether to repeat, but how to repeat, such that the sex / gender conflation as a foundational assumption, and a politically constructed hierarchy, is displaced; a 'radical proliferation of gender' (as material 'effects') is to be achieved through the subversive resignification of bodily categories (ibid. 202). We could say that parody troubles existing categories without positing alternative universalising prescriptive definitions of Woman and Man. Identity politics will always be confronted with the impossibility of coherence since definition is conditional upon exclusion and inherently unstable however politically attractive its 'phantasmatic promise' (ibid.).

Butler exposes and rejects the reification of psychoanalytic prohibitions, insisting instead on the possibility of non-heterosexual variants as the return of the excluded - but not as psychosis or the figure of the psychotic within politics: 'How might such socially saturated domains of exclusion be recast from their status as "constitutive" to beings who might be said to matter' (ibid. 189). I still feel however that Butler simultaneously foregrounds and neglects the body or the affective power of judgments of God. Deleuze and Guattari deride the emphasis placed on the power of language by 'signifier enthusiasts' (1980 / 2004: 74). And I assume that it is Butler who Protevi (2009: 188) has in mind when criticising socio-linguistic constructivists for failing to theorise affect (particularly collective affects and emotions as their subjective correlate); Protevi proclaims himself to be one of the 'naturalizers' (ibid. 187) who is condemned for his interest in affective neuroscience. So on one hand we have
Butler, whose refusal to afford the body any prediscursive reality leads her to suspect any theory that might (directly or indirectly) naturalise gender. On the other we have Protevi, who maintains that Deleuze and Guattari provide a more comprehensive theory of subject formation (and deformation) and account of affective political power given their readiness to draw upon scientific disciplines. I explain below why I am provisionally inclined to align myself with Protevi, but why one of the illustrations that he utilises to support his arguments (the mother-child relationship in primates) suggests that Butler's fears about naturalisation and the representation of gender relations are not ill-founded. By neglect of the body in Butler, I mean that rhetorical descriptions of 'bodily productions' to which we can relate are supplied:

'One need only to consider the way in which the history of having been called an injurious name is embodied, how the words enter the limbs, craft the gesture, bend the spine [and] how racial or gendered slurs live and thrive in and as the flesh [thus] taking on the semblance of the natural, configuring and restricting the doxa that counts as "reality"

(1997: 159)

The way in which the body can 'disorientate' cultural sense or popular opinion in the moment of 'expropriating' the discursive means of its own production is also mentioned (ibid.). Yet I am not sure that how words enter limbs and condition future actions is actually explained. While I would not disagree with Butler that words can function as a form of violence, I find her response to Elaine Scarry (1985) to be inadequate. Contra Butler, torture, severe violence and terror at the prospect of further violence, can indeed be profoundly de-subjectifying and 'efface its witness' as Scarry suggests (ibid. 6); erase is perhaps a better word in this context. Surely it is not just a question of logic – of ignoring this issue due to an alleged logical error on Scarry's part in implying that the body is anterior to
language? I believe that the concepts of the body politic, political physiology and affective cognition proposed by Protevi are pertinent here (2009: 33).

For me, the fundamental point made by Protevi in response to fears concerning biological determinism and naturalisation, is that everything depends on the scientific theory deployed; a corollary is that engaging in debates about human nature and gender is a more appropriate and efficacious strategy than wholesale dismissal of naturalisation (ibid. 188). Sensitivity to such fears is shown in a quotation which I will cite at length. It touches my deeply-rooted sociological nerve and captures my own feelings about the use of biological models in theorising the social prior to reading Deleuze and Guattari:

'I have finally come to the conclusion that all extension of biological models to the social level is to be avoided [] for political reasons [] History has shown that biological holism [] has always had its dark side, a black side, each time it has allowed itself to be applied to a social model. There are always slippages towards fascism, towards authoritarian impositions, eugenics, and so on’

(Varela 2002 cited in Protevi 2009: 41)

The key word here is holism. Deleuze and Guattari criticise a particular version of vitalism and the concept of mechanism; the latter abstracts a structural unity through which the self-perpetuation of that unity (system or organism) is effected, while the former invokes an ‘individual and specific unity of the living, which every machine presupposes insofar as it is subordinate to organic continuance’ (1972 / 2009: 284). The normative and repressive potential of such holism when applied to the social arena is self-evident. Like Deleuze and Guattari, Protevi wants to go above and below the rational cognitive subject, but alongside the nomadic subject, in order to integrate the socio-political field with the field of sub-personal, autonomic and somatic cognition (affective cognition).

Capitalism involves a radical deterritorialisation of material flows. Prior to capitalism, and in tribal societies, territorialised qualitative judgments linked such flows to the earth. Within empires, such flows were deterritorialised but overcoded such that despotic power and the socius were linked. Under capitalism, both type of link gives way to basic rules of quantitative calculation of differences (between the flows of capital and labour and surplus extraction). The socio-economic capital-labour relation is represented, and experienced, as one between private individuals; the site of subject formation consequently becomes the oedipalised familial relation (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 262 - 263). The accelerated deterritorialisation of flows and exhaustive commodification under advanced late capitalism has prompted many critiques of consumerism, the social control necessary in sustaining it, and the atomisation and lack of reciprocity with which it is associated (e.g. Packard 1957; Baudrillard 1970; Galbraith 1958). For Deleuze, the contemporary ‘control society' implies a perpetual self-checking or surveillance and self-improvement (1990 / 1995: 177 - 82). Hence Protevi (2009: 161) argues that we all experience becoming - minoritarian as the judgment machine of advanced capitalism, and particularly neoliberalism conservatism, leads everyone to feel
they are falling short of some norm or another – but usually many (ibid. 99).

Judgment consequently provokes flows or vectors of desire which, by virtue of the developmental process of oedipalised personalisation or subject formation, we claim as our own; we feel that desire and attribute it to a single embodied ego that is ours and ours alone (ibid.).

Deleuze and Guattari introduce desiring-production as a universal primary process (1972 / 2009). They aim to synthesise Marx and Freud whilst avoiding reductionism through the privileging of either one. Traditionally, such privileging means presenting neuroses or psychoses as inevitable superstructural features of an economic structure, or conversely, positing an original oedipal libidinal investment that is subsequently sublimated through the investment of social figures. Dualist ontology is rejected as the universality of desiring-production implies no categorical distinction between nature and society, or between the individual and the social. Instead, it embraces all processes as a creative, autonomous and self-constituting force, and is therefore profoundly anti-anthropomorphic and a radical break with the presupposed subject of liberal humanism (Protevi 2009: 91). Contra Butler, who rejects the assumption of nature as a unified prediscursive reality, the nature posited in the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari is bivalent, as the concepts of stratification (the judgment of God) and lines of flight (creative escape) indicate. Protevi therefore maintains that the natural world should not be understood as chaotic in the sense of escaping any determination, since chaos theory implies lack of predictability rather than an absence of determination (ibid. 7).

I should now clarify what Deleuze and Guattari mean by the judgment of God and why their challenge to this idea is expressed as: 'God is a Lobster' (1980 / 2004: 45). Strata give form to matter by imprisoning intensities or locking
singularities into systems of resonance or redundancy. They are acts of capture and, like black holes, strive to seize whatever comes within their reach:

'The strata are judgments of God; stratification in general is the entire system of the judgment of God (but the earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgment, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized' (ibid.)

The lobster, with its double pincers, indicates a double bind – a double articulation. Using the example of sedimentary rock formation, the first articulation chooses from unstable particle-flows to form metastable molecular units (substances); it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (form) upon them in a process of sedimentation. In the second articulation, stable functional compacted structures (forms) are established; they are simultaneously actualised (substances) through this process. Hence, each articulation possesses form and substance, and a coding and decoding; but where the first displays systematic interactions (being more supple, molecular, and merely ordered), in the second, phenomena constituting an overcoding are produced, i.e. phenomena of centring, unification, totalisation, integration, hierarchisation and finalisation (the more rigid, molar, and organized) (ibid. 46).

The word 'structure', we are informed, is the sum of both binary relations and biunivocal relationships that obey far more complex laws; however: 'it is an illusion to believe that structure is the earth’s last word' (ibid.). Examples from biochemistry, genetics and linguistics are given to demonstrate that double articulation does not derive from the latter and that content and expression should replace substance and form:
To express is always to sing the glory of God. Every stratum is a judgment of God; not only do plants and animals, orchids and wasps, sing or express themselves, but so do rocks and even rivers, every stratified thing on earth. The first articulation concerns content, the second expression’ (ibid. 49)

They exist as reciprocal presuppositions - neither can pre-exist their double articulation; and expression is as variable as content. This is, I suspect, how bodies matter to speech and language for Butler.

Protevi contrasts the theo-bio-politics of Aristotle, Kant, and Deleuze-Guattari. For the latter, the phrase judgment of God refers to the Western philosophical tradition in which God’s perfection is the model for the self-ordering of the ideal politically attuned human organism – what Protevi describes as ‘the projection of a hierarchically ordered body politic onto a divine natural order’ (ibid. 61). Aristotle and Kant posit the organism as a microcosm of nature conceived as a unified and teleologically ordered finality. This is the unified natural whole, patterned on divine perfection or effected by a divine plan, that Butler alludes to when rejecting nature as a unified prediscursive reality (Protevi 2009: 61 - 88). Protevi (2001: 62) maintains that the choice of Kant and Aristotle is random as similar pairings (e.g. Hegel and Plato), reveal the repetition of this structure – God as the model for the organism.

Protevi insists the question of God is inextricably connected to that of nature (2009: 62) and that directionality matters. I sense that Butler (1997) is sometimes acknowledging the excess that the body produces as that which cannot be expressed in language to imply bi-directionality; but that ultimately language is the only true God in the Butlerian universe. In the bio-ontology of Aristotle, animals are paradigmatic instances of substance. It is questionable whether Aristotle derived his ontology from this assumption, or whether the
nature of substance was derived from his ontology. Either way, it is this view of individual substance as the acting out identity in the world that forms the basis of Aristotelian ethics, logic and metaphysics (Kosman 1969: 62; 1987: 303 cited in Protevi 2009: 64). In this posited hierarchy of substance, only a god is capable of the immanent pure activity of insight which is deemed to be life itself, and which affords a pure constant pleasure; a transcendent ordering principle and an immanent order is thus implied. An identity can be found in Aristotle between divine and human theoretical intuition - although the latter may be confined to intermittent flashes (ibid. 65). A polis is also required that facilitates theoretical insight by ensuring theoreticians have a ‘leisured body’ or freedom from stress (ibid. 64 - 65, 72). Whereas the god is a unified and simple substance, man and higher animals are composites of heterogeneous materials. The latter cannot achieve the constancy of a god, so their biological regeneration can only form the closed circle of life valued by Aristotle through individuals becoming members of an enduring continuous series of organisms, and the sharing of a common form. Change is purportedly tamed within the circle of the species to ensure the continuity of forms through an orientation towards the ideal case in which the superior male principle produces the appearance of the same form in the production of a male child resembling the father (ibid. 66). The feminine is reduced to functioning as a necessary supplement that risks monstrosity in what Protevi dubs a ‘teleological semenology of animal generation’ that is ‘literally a patri-archy, since the father, the one responsible for form and finality, is also the efficient cause, the foundational principled source of the change’ where form dominates repetition (ibid. 67).
To avoid the problem of individuation in the hylomorphic position, Aristotle conceives of substance as self-directed activity and the ability to unify energetic dynamisms. The soul (psuchē) is the principle of unification or integration and the body becomes a single instrument devoted to performing the functions that define the organism, or ‘an entity whose essential nature is to be telic, an entity whose being is to be for the sake of that activity of which it is the organ’ (Kosman 1987: 379 cited in Protevi 2009: 68). A unified formation is always a relation of domination and subordination in Aristotle, hence Protevi states:

‘The bio-political register is never more clearly articulated than in the Aristotelian demand that the energetic organization of the emergent organism, the obedience of the body as instrument of the soul, entails somatic enslavement’ (ibid. 68)

This is because, for Aristotle, the telos of the human body as an instrument is logos or reason, and the body - as an emergent whole, is premised on the cultivation and selection of potentials; i.e. on an ethical training of the emotions and appetites through the strategic application of pleasure and pain (initially corporeal and subsequently through discussion). The eventual convergence of nature, habit, and discussion purportedly produces a good man whose moral intuition accords with that of earlier generations of good men (ibid. 69). In this attunement of the embodied soul, moral intuition can be theoretical or practical. Practical intuition is the enmeshing of the social and somatic but, as Protevi explains, ethical choice is better thought of as a duality where reason and desire are aligned such that reason reveals the true while desire pursues the correct. A properly trained person exhibits principled self-direction that goes in the right - socially prescribed, direction (ibid. 70). The unidirectional orientation
to principled self-direction is consequently analogous in Aristotelian theology, biology, and politics: god is the model of principled self-direction and of organismic unity. Those unable to achieve the consolidation of self-directing traits because they suffer from an excess of appetite or weakness of intellect - namely women and slaves respectively, are held to lack decision-making ability; deviation from such self-direction is consequently considered to unnatural (monstrous, feminine, slavish) (ibid. 62). For the same reason, male children are likened to women prior to undergoing appropriate subjectification practices and becoming the organised instrumentalised bodies that must resemble those of their fathers:

'The ethico-political formation of citizen male children is a process of pedagogic corporeal masculinisation, the selection and reinforcement of the right quality of the faculties of the embodied soul with the capacity to withstand the powerful changes to the body that overwhelm the weak person' (ibid. 70)

Those who disapprove of Butler's contribution to sexual identity politics might concur with Aristotle that rhetoric is dangerous. Although rhetoric normally relies on the predictable responses of well-trained citizens, unpredictable flows of passions can also be inflamed. As Protevi suggests: 'it exposes the embodied and imitative nature of the political animal, its condition of political affect – that is, precisely that which disrupts the transcendent vision of the intellect'; rhetoric disrupts the wisdom which Aristotle rates as the fullest expression of the organism as the judgment of God (ibid. 71-72). It is equally disruptive of the polis - a source of disharmony within what Aristotle conceives as an organic natural whole and not merely an aggregate of parts. The crucial role of the legislature within the polis is ensuring that male children of citizens reproduce
the model of their fathers in becoming self-directed emergent wholes displaying excellent reason (ibid. 71). The end state or telos of both citizen and polis is the eudaimonia or flourishing of three types of lives specified by Aristotle: pleasure, honour, and theory. The latter is the most honourable logos-ruled function of the soul whereas politics is simply a necessary supplement that ensures the leisure (or balance between work and leisure) upon which theory and wisdom — the excellence of vision, is conditional (ibid. 72). Protevi reviews divergent opinions as to whether theory contributes to flourishing or is a superior form of flourishing in Aristotle; he concludes that theory is the best life (ibid.). The theoretician is perceived as less likely to be controlled by rhetoric, or subject to change from the outside, as a being able to experience the divine pleasure of theory and rise above base pleasures of the body — the childish or trifling (ibid. 73).

‘Aristotelian political physiology thus requires that the organism, whose masterly enslavement of the body is exemplified in the theoretician’s rule of the appetites, be the judgment of God’ (ibid. 71)

Protevi explores two senses — restricted and extended, in which the organism is the judgment of God in Kant’s transcendental philosophy (ibid. 82–88). The first concerns the relation between teleological judgments and those of natural causality that rely on the concept of mechanism. For Kant, mechanism refers to forces of attraction and repulsion specific to unorganised matter. Biological phenomena resist explication in terms of mechanism, so teleological judgments must be deployed as heuristic presuppositions. Such presuppositions permit the generation of principles that enable phenomena to be ordered in sense-making exercises even though knowledge of things in
themselves is precluded. It is suggested that teleological judgments are warranted if nature is observed 'by analogy with causality in terms of purposes, without presuming to explain it in terms of that causality' – a causality produced in the mind of the observer (Kant 1987, 360: 61; ibid. 83). Kant identifies three foci of teleology – the organism, development of the organism, and the whole of nature. Individual things that are natural purposes are deemed to be both cause and effect of themselves in three senses. Hence a tree will: produce itself to preserve its membership of the same species, assimilate matter in order to acquire the quality of a tree, and display a mutual dependency of parts upon each other. Kant maintains that a thing is a natural purpose if the connection of efficient causes can be judged to be a causation through final causes, i.e. if parts exist for each other (efficient causality) but also for the whole (final causality); this affords a systematic focus whereby the whole plays a constraining role in the development of parts, and for Kant, this means that a natural purpose is both an organised and self-organising being (ibid.). Contrary to the motive force of machines, Kant argues that natural purposes (intrinsic organisation) reveal a formative force which imparts form to matter in an 'analogue of life' (1987, 374: 65); an organised being thus comprises parts which are both ends and means in themselves. Yet when considering nature as a whole, intrinsic organisation is also said to lack any causality that is familiar to us and should therefore be restricted to reflective judgment (ibid. 84). To posit a final causality to the natural world rather than an individual entity would, according to Kant, require the presupposition of a suprasensible end – something beyond nature (ibid. 378). Kant resolves this antinomy of teleological judgment (mechanical versus teleological causality) through the principle that the suprasensible is thinkable but not knowable given the limitations of our
cognitive powers (Protevi 2009: 85). Kant's argument is that we can only think of nature as a purposive whole by positing a supreme cause that acts intentionally (ibid. 399). Because our knowledge of particulars is sensibly derived using the a priori forms of intuition of space and time according to Kant, it becomes necessary to posit a different form of understanding – namely, the intuitive. A necessary harmony is then assumed between biological diversity and universal physical laws, and also a fit between the particular and universal (ibid.). Kant seeks to coordinate the mechanism and teleology through subordination of the former in the development of a 'supreme understanding' (ibid. 414). We can investigate mechanism but will always, by virtue of the nature of our reason, presuppose an ultimate purpose and designer: the biological organism is thus rendered a judgment of God (ibid. 86). When exploring the extended sense of the judgment of God in Kant, Protevi describes how this teleological judgment of nature's purpose folds back onto the Kantian conception of the organism, and how a theo-bio-politics is evolved: only a moral God, as a purposive intelligence, would possess the possibility of man's morality as the final purpose of nature – the production of man as a moral subject (Kant 1987, 435: 83; 443: 86): 'In this way a moral teleology compensates for the deficiency of physical teleology and for the first time supplies a basis for a theology' (ibid. 444: 86). Nature and freedom are finally related in the thought of God as a 'legislating sovereign in a moral kingdom of purposes' (ibid.). God guarantees that nature must at least cooperate with our moral action and the systematicity of nature requires the thought of God as a practical supplement (ibid.).

Protevi argues that to fully understand the Kantian body politic, the distinction Kant draws between the cultures of skill and of discipline must be
grasped (ibid. 87). The former refers to cultivation of the capacity to act
purposively, while the latter is designed to liberate our will from 'the despotism
of desires' (ibid. 432: 83), i.e. from excessive indulgence in those things that
ensure our biological survival and further our life forces. Freedom means
learning to control our biological impulses through self-chosen pain over
pleasure 'as the purposes of reason require', but without injuring our 'animal
characteristics (ibid.). For Kant, science and the fine arts ensure that man's
orientation towards the senses gives way to a 'sovereignty in which reason
alone is to dominate' (ibid. 433: 83). Moral law is established by evoking 'a
feeling which can be called pain' that effects a 'striking down, i.e. humiliating
self-conceit' (Kant 1956: 73 cited in Protevi 2009: 87). In this 'sublime mental
attunement [ ] to the pain of self-reprimand' (Kant 1987 264: 28) and self-
inflicted humility, Protevi identifies a parallel between the political affect of
morality and that of the sublime: 'the violent, painful striking down of our natural
body will rebound to reveal a suprasensible vocation' (ibid.).

'The painful frustration of our inclinations itself makes palpable to our
senses the majesty of the moral law, which produces a positive feeling of
admiration for the principle of our own will and activity'


Self-flagellation allegedly induces a rational self-governance and respect for
moral law that precludes the revolution which would 'place self-love in charge'
(Protevi 2009: 88). What I take from this is: never apologise for being
narcissistic or over-dramatic unless you want to make a veritable Kant of
yourself.
It was in opposition to this deeply ingrained social predilection for punishment and humiliation that I invoked the ‘tantric egg’ in an earlier plateau; Deleuze and Guattari use this phrase when discussing male masochism. My understanding of their argument is that such masochism does not indicate an unconscious desire to submit to a punitive mother figure, or a regressive fixation on partial objects. It is about reaching a state of arousal whereby the entire surface of the skin is eroticised and the subject who says ‘I’ is displaced along with the molar identities that would contain and restrict that desire to legitimate Freudian channels or the ‘three great strata’ of organism, significance, subjectification (1980 / 2004: 176 - 177). When I invoked the tantric egg in relation to learning, it was to convey the unadulterated pleasure I can derive from pursuing ideas across disciplinary boundaries, and from reading to learn about the thinking of others rather than to hastily extract key arguments and construct counter arguments for academic writing purposes: learning is affective and not merely an exercise of purely cognitive faculties. Reading the background material that Protevi (2009) provides on Kant and Aristotle was an experience of joyful composition. Deleuzean and Deleuzo-Guattarian texts assume a familiarity with Western philosophy and my understanding – particularly of their politics of the organism and the subject, has been broadened. And, of course, the issue that Kant – to my knowledge anyway, does not address when advocating pain as a prelude to the crushing of inclinations (nor I presume Aristotle in referring to corporeal means of training) is that bodies do not always do what they are told and may react unpredictably (or predictably from a physiological perspective) in such outwardly aversive situations. I will now return now to the organism as the judgment of God in Deleuze and Guattari and their heuristic use of schizophrenia.
The phrase ‘God is a Lobster’ challenges the notion of God as a transcendent unity upon which the organism or subject is modelled by asserting the immanence of natural processes and their bivalency; tendencies to destratification as well as stratification indicate the priority of flux and becoming in the ontology of Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 45). This phrase also implies any transcendental illusion that is effected through overcoding: ‘The abstract machine begins to unfold, to stand to full height, producing an illusion exceeding all strata, even though the machine itself still belongs to a determinate situation’ (ibid. 70). Deleuze and Guattari are writing here of the ‘imperialist pretensions’ of language due to the translatability that it makes possible; translatability is not that between human languages but:

‘the ability of language, with its own givens and its own stratum, to represent all the other strata and thus achieve a scientific conception of the world. The scientific world (Welt, as opposed to the Unwelt of the animal) is the translation of all of the flows, particles, codes, and territorialities of the other strata into a sufficiently deterritorialized system of signs, in other words, into an overcoding specific to language’ (ibid. 69 – 70)

This capacity to overcode all other strata means that the relation between content and expression is unlike that found in, for example, RNA and DNA since expression is now independent of content and form of expression is independent of substance (ibid. 70). Two points should be noted here: firstly, it is important to recognise the historical scale of Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking and that they are not offering a Heideggerian critique of science and industrialism. On the contrary, Darwin is celebrated for shifting the focus away from the perfection of forms in a quasi-religious evolutionism to one on populations, packs, collectivities and multiplicities – to the diversity and unity
within strata, the shifting relations between organism and milieu, and movements of territorialisation and deterritorialisation. Hence the hand is said to be a deterritorialised paw making tool use possible, while migration from forest to steppe means that a large laryngeal sack is unnecessary allowing the emission of sound to become speech. It is not however a linear teleological evolutionary process that is proposed in either Darwinism or Deleuze and Guattari as the concepts of mutation and genetic drift imply (ibid. 59).

'It is difficult to elucidate the system of the strata without seeming to introduce a kind of cosmic or even spiritual evolution from one to the other, as if they were arranged in stages and ascended degrees of perfection. Nothing of the sort' (ibid. 77)

The hand-tool couplet forms a ‘technical social machine’ and language permits a regime of signs which together comprise a formation of power; this third stratum sees the ‘emergence of Machines that are fully part of that stratum but at the same time rear up and stretch their pincers out in all directions at all the other strata’ (ibid. 70). Such formations can then select and consolidate. Hence the question: ‘who does man think he is?’ and the constitutive illusion of man that derives from the overcoding immanent to language itself (ibid. 71). Deleuze and Guattari go on to say that different formations of power should be thought of as different strata in human populations; they also ask how this third stratum effects the relation between content and expression and respond rhetorically ‘It’s all in the head. Yet never was a distinction more real’: the external milieu for this stratum is the cerebral-nervous milieu – not as a passive support but as the ‘prehuman soup immersing us’ (ibid.). ‘The brain is a population, a set of tribes tending towards two poles’ – things and words (ibid.).
The second point to note is that Deleuze and Guattari are setting the scene for an assault on 'signifier enthusiasts' (ibid. 74). The issue is not whether language affects all of the strata but whether all signs are signifiers endowed with significance: 'for the primacy of the signifier over language guarantees the primacy of language over all of the strata even more effectively than the simple expansion of the sign in all directions' (ibid. 73). Theories that posit the primacy of the signifier are referred to as one posture of the abstract machine, and the illusion specific to this posture is 'that one can grasp and shuffle all the strata between one's pincers' whereby direct contact with all the strata is claimed without having to go through the supposed signs in each one (ibid.). Deleuze and Guattari allude to Saussurian structuralist linguistics and state: 'There is only one thing that can be said about the signifier: it is Redundancy, it is the Redundant. Hence its incredible despotism, and its success' (ibid.). There is clearly an intentional play on words here – a reference to repetition and reiteration, but also to their own rejection of the signifier as the reduction of expression: a form of content is not a signified, any more than a form of expression is a signifier, and to determine their relation requires a variable and specific assemblage (ibid. 73). In structuralist linguistics, language is presented as a system of differences between signifiers such that there can be no intuition of terms or things in themselves since thought itself is conditional upon a prior structure where there are only differences and no positive terms. The question that Deleuze and Guattari are posing is: how is it that we have come to think of thought, or indeed the world, as reducible to a system of linguistic signifiers? 'The most that can be said of significance is that it characterizes one regime [] content and expression are never reducible to signified - signifier' (ibid. 80).
Deleuze and Guattari are rejecting the ‘imperialism of the signifier’ (ibid. 73) in favour of signs found throughout the natural and social world: ‘Signs are not signs of a thing; they are signs of a deterritorialization and reterritorialization; they mark a certain threshold crossed in the course of these movements’ (ibid. 75). Signifiers are merely examples of the way in which life is expressed in all its positivity – of its power to differ, and language should be viewed as equally subject to deterritorialisation through that power of difference (Colebrook 2005: 249). Contrary to the metaphysics of presence criticised by Derrida (1967 / 1976: 49), Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 50, 574) draw on the linguistics of Hjelmslev (1943 / 1969) which assumes the existence of differentiations prior to the effect of language. Hjelmslev broke with the form - content duality and explored language in terms of stratification; the strata were matter, content and expression, form and substance, and matter refers to the plane of consistency or Body without Organs – ‘the unformed, unorganized, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical free singularities’ (ibid. 48 - 49). It is not an opposition or dualist conception of the strata that is proposed:

‘The strata themselves are animated and defined by relative speeds of deterritorialization; moreover absolute deterritorialization is there from the beginning, and the strata are spinoffs, thickenings on a plane of consistency that is everywhere, always primary and always immanent’ (ibid. 78)

Deleuze and Guattari therefore reject the analysis of social formations in terms of base-superstructure, and it is likely that Butler would also be criticised: ‘Nor can the status of social formations be analyzed by throwing some signifier into the base, or vice versa, or a bit of phallus or castration into political economy’
The depiction of materiality as an effect of language (Butler 1997: 5, 158 - 159) does not rest easily with Deleuze and Guattari's concern with process rather than effect, nor with their conception of the real as comprising both the virtual and the actual.

The organism can be conceived as a stratum (habituated, centralised, and hierarchically organised) and the Body without Organs (BoW) - the anorganic body as Protevi prefers to describe it, the converse (2009: 107).

Protevi notes a shift between Anti-Oedipus (1972 / 2009) and A Thousand Plateaus (1980 / 2004) concerning the 'full' BwO; in the former it refers to catatonia - or in the social register the socius, while in the latter it is the 'empty' BwO that is to be avoided as a black hole for subjectivity and the 'full' BwO is valued by Deleuze and Guattari because it permits connection with other destratified bodies (ibid. 107). For Deleuze and Guattari, the organism as a socio-biological entity is already political in that it is organised in accordance with the demands of the social field:

"The organism is [ ] a stratum on the BwO, in other words, a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences. The strata are bonds, pincers [ ] the BwO is that glacial reality where the alluvions, sedimentations, coagulations, folding and recoiling that compose an organism – and also a signification and a subject – occur. For the judgment of God weighs upon and is exercised against the BwO [ ] the judgment of God uproots it from its immanence and makes it an organism, a signification, a subject"

(1980 / 2004: 176)

Protevi draws on several sources, including complexity theory – dynamic nonlinear modelling, to posit a BwO that is receptive to, or participates in, a new

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field of connections or becomings – that leaves a state of equilibrium (the fixity of a habitual state) to enter into an intensive realm where enduring patterns or habits become changeable or metastable (ibid.).

Understanding how schizophrenia functions as a heuristic for Deleuze and Guattari requires clarification of their conception of the organ as a desiring-machine: organs constitute flow-break couplings whereby matter-energy flows are interrupted and a surplus is released into the economy of the body. Organs function as an interface between inside and outside – or, in Protevi’s terms, they provide homeostatic regulation for the body as an autonomous system (ibid. 16). Deleuze and Guattari make no categorical distinction between organ and machine: all machines are systems of flow breaks and the example most frequently cited in the secondary literature is that of suckling (e.g. Colebrook 2002: 141; Protevi 2009: 94). The breast is a part - object but contra Klein (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 47), it does not represent the mother; it does not represent anything in fact, but is simply one component of a breast-mouth machine – a multiplicity that lacks individuation and localisation through any interpretative framework. Schizophrenics can experience their organs as machines. Hence Kavan wrote of the machines in her head:

The cogs are moving, the engines are slowly gathering momentum, a low humming noise is perceptible even now [ ] The wheels revolve faster, the pistons slide smoothly in their cylinders, the noise of machinery fills the whole world‘ (1972: 116, 118)

This phenomenon is very different to the somatisation of trauma where the body becomes the medium of articulation of what is otherwise inexpressible and acutely felt. Speedy provides a good example of the latter (2005: 293). Protevi defines part-objects as: ‘points of intensity, nodes in a network of material flows
in and out of bodies, the connection of the ecosocial and the somatic; hence the body politic is ordered and patterned according to the ecosocial milieu but, Protevi argues, 'while it must be ordered [it] need not be an organism' – i.e. function in the service of the social machine as a transcendent unity (ibid.).

Protevi reiterates the critique of the Kleinian part - object found in Deleuze (1972 / 2006: 44 - 45), and Deleuze and Guattari, where the impersonal nature of infantile connections is stressed: 'It seems [ ] self-contradictory to maintain, on the one hand, that the child lives among partial objects, and that on the other hand he conceives of these partial objects as being his parents, or even different parts of his parents' bodies' (1972 / 2009: 47). A libido that is 'open in all directions to a social field' is to be preferred to forcing the 'interplay of desiring-machines to fit within the restricted code of Oedipus' (ibid.). The pertinent question, they suggest, is what are the forces causing the closing up of Oedipal triangulation?

'Under what conditions does this triangulation divert desire so that it flows across a surface within a narrow channel that is not a natural conformation of this surface? How does it form a type of inscription for experiences and the workings of mechanisms that extend far beyond it in every direction?' (ibid. 47 – 48)

For Deleuze and Guattari, the child is a 'metaphysical being' and 'the unconscious is an orphan' (ibid. 48, 49): it asks who it is, what it is, what its body can do, and these questions have nothing whatsoever to do with parents or 'a repugnant artificial triangle' (ibid. 49). Protevi concurs with the distinction between bodies and persons since the infantile unconscious lacks any sense of global persons, and the infant does not possess the higher cognitive functions required to formulate a body image upon which an ego is based. A distinction
between body image and ‘body schema’ is posited however; the latter is some level of awareness of sensory - motor capacities in the absence of perceptual monitoring, whilst the former is conditional upon input from social systems (ibid. 95). Anyone who has experienced the profound depersonalisation that accompanies physical violence or a protracted threat of violence, where flight is not possible, may comprehend why this idea is compelling for me. The body assumes an importance that Reason would not afford it: I breathe therefore I am.

I fail to see how such bodily sense can be viewed as strictly (and logically) an effect of language. And I wonder how research into affect-regulation in the traumatised through artistic and physical activity (Van der Kolk 2002: 34 – 50) can be reconciled with a prioritising of the signifier. The opposition between the 'motor program of experimentation' and psychoanalytic interpretation of phantasy posed by Deleuze and Guattari is pertinent here. Re-education of the body through the experience of intensities and the construction of a BwO as a surface of re-inscription or, rather, novel inscription (1980 / 2004: 168) is precisely how such activities have assisted me:

‘The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and the significances and subjectifications [ ] Psychoanalysis does the opposite; it translates everything into phantasies, it converts everything into phantasy, it retains the phantasy. It royally botches the real, because it botches the BwO’ (ibid.)

I am referring to basic emotions here and fight-flight responses to triggers – the signs (not signifiers) that an abusee, years later, may react to however irrational they understand their bodily reactions to be. Van der Kolk (1994: 253 – 265) writes of this bodily misreading of signs as either lack of reaction to genuinely
threatening situations or misplaced reaction to those which are genuinely innocuous. When much younger, phrases like 'cerebral override' captured the divorce of head and body that coping with difficult interpersonal situations required – another parallel universe scenario.

Returning to schizophrenia as a heuristic, Deleuze and Guattari isolate different syntheses and their functions based on features of schizophrenic breakdown and recovery with which to think the process of ontogenesis as a differential patterning involving political markers (sex, gender, race, class). The connective synthesis derives from the paranoid phase of schizophrenia, where desiring-machines are acutely sensed and repulsed, and it evokes the social repression of desiring-flows in the production of persons (Protevi 2009: 96).

'Beneath its organs it senses there are larvae and loathsome worms, and a God messing it all up or strangling it by organizing it [so] what is ordinarily referred to as primary repression [ ] is not “countercathexis”, but rather this repulsion of desiring-machines by the body without organs; the paranoid machine is the avatar of desiring machines'

(Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 9)

The second synthesis, whose function is that of recording, is the disjunctive. It relates to the catatonic phase of schizophrenia in which the body that has repulsed invaders shuts down. In physiological terms, the body becomes an ‘undifferentiated mass’ and flows fall in intensity to reach zero which, according to Protevi, is when established patterns of flow-breaks among organs can be re-patterned. Hence the BwO becomes the site for the inscription of social relations or the site on which ‘a social machine regulates the flows of its connections with (and in) somatic bodies’ (ibid. 97). Social repression is effected through the formation of exclusive disjunctions that force organ connections into fixed patterns thus precluding inclusive disjunctions (this not
that, rather than, this and this (ibid.). In schizophrenia, the catatonic phase is followed by one in which a 'miraculating-machine' displaces the 'paranoia-machine', i.e. the 'repulsion-machine' gives way to an 'attraction-machine' where the BwO falls back on desiring-production and appropriates it; this is where the 'full' BwO is presented as the socius, and the body of capital is given by way of illustration:

'This is the body that Marx is referring to when he says that it is not the product of labor, but rather appears as its natural or divine presupposition [ ] In a word, the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface'

(Deleuze and Guattari ibid. 11, 10)

When the organs are regenerated and miraculated on the body of Judge Schreber, he attracts God's rays to himself as the BwO comes to function as:

'an enchanted recording or inscribing surface that arrogates to itself all the productive forces and all the organs of production, and acts as a quasi-cause by communicating the apparent movement (the fetish) to them. So true is it that the schizo practices political economy, and that all sexuality is a matter of economy' (ibid. 12)

The schizophrenic may appear to accept the 'banal Oedipal code' but then 'scrambles all the codes' by completely disrespecting the disjunctions that Oedipalisation is designed to eradicate; hence Artaud's statement that he had been his own son, father, and mother (ibid. 15).

The third synthesis is the conjunctive which is the production of consumption and of the subject. It is also described as the production of recording since there is now a subject to be found on this recording surface.
(ibid. 16 – 17). This is the process of Oedipalised subject formation and its function is pleasure or the production and consumption of energetic surplus value: 'At each connection of the organs, a little bit extra – a surplus value – is produced and consumed in enjoyment'; in physiological terms it is the subjective enjoyment produced by the flow of energy through different singular states of the body (Protevi 2009: 99), a being 'reborn with each new state' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 16). This is the privatisation of subjectivity that capitalism demands- the single ego that deludes itself in saying 'It's me, and so it's mine' (ibid. 17) and the habit of saying 'I' and 'Me' (Deleuze 2006: 365) or 'the habit of registering all these experiences under the same name' (Protevi ibid.). It is how we come to be 'nailed to a dominant reality' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 177). As a third phase of schizophrenia, a new machine – prompted in Freudian terms by the 'return of the repressed' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 17) is necessitated by the need to reconcile the opposition between the repulsion - machine and the attraction - machine; the former is never completely displaced in the miraculating phase and can persist in the form of mocking voices or self-recriminatory interjections (ibid. 11). Deleuze and Guattari dub this new machine the 'celibate machine'; it brings about a new subject through the residual reconciliation of desiring - machines and the BwO, and for Judge Schreber, the recovery phase involves finding himself on occasion dressed as a woman (but only when alone unless it is unavoidable) and deciding that he is entitled to derive a little pleasure from this becoming - woman - which, of course, he has only engaged in because God has demanded a 'constant state of enjoyment' and it is his duty to provide God with it (ibid. 16 -18). Hence, the conjunctive synthesis of consumption and 'consummation' taking the form: 'So that's what it was!' (ibid.18). Or the
prescribed realisation on the couch of Freudian or Kleinian psychoanalysis that it was mommy or daddy all along.

Deleuze and Guattari refer to the pleasure produced by the celibate machine as automatic not autoerotic; in the schizophrenic this eroticism is said to be accompanied by a sense of the unleashing of ‘unlimited forces’ as if ‘intensive quantities’ are experienced in their full state: ‘to a point that is almost unbearable – a celibate misery and glory experienced to the fullest, like a cry suspended between life and death, an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape or form’ (ibid.) that others describe as hallucination or delirium. What is missing from this description, for Deleuze and Guattari, is the role of emotion:

‘the basic phenomenon of hallucination (I see, I hear) and the basic phenomenon of delirium (I think . . .) presuppose an I feel at an even deeper level, which gives hallucinations their object and thought delirium its content – an “I feel that I am becoming a woman”, “that I am becoming a god”, and so on; i.e. hallucinations and delirium are secondary to the really primary emotion, which in the beginning only experiences intensities, becomings, transitions’ (ibid. 18 – 19)

These pure intensities are produced by tension between forces of attraction and repulsion, but do not reach an equilibrium that can be characterised as a neutral state; they are all ‘positive in relationship to the zero intensity that designates the full body without organs’ (ibid. 19). They mark the return of the positive power of difference – its eternal return. So when Judge Schreber ‘imagines’ that he has breasts, Deleuze and Guattari describe them as zones of intensity on his BwO and not delirious or hallucinatory: we are in the realm of: ‘lived experience: the actual, lived emotion of having breasts does not resemble breasts, it does not represent them any more than a predestined zone in the egg resembles the
organ that it is going to be stimulated to produce within itself’ (ibid.). Hence, the BwO is likened to an egg containing only bands of intensity, potentials, thresholds, and gradients. Matter and emotion are deployed interchangeably in this passage where Deleuze and Guattari also acknowledge how harrowing or emotionally overwhelming this schizophrenic experience of pure intensities can be: ‘one’s entire soul flows into this emotion and makes the mind aware of the terribly disturbing sound of matter’ (ibid.).

Given my interest in Protevi’s concepts of political physiology and affective cognition, I emphasise that Deleuze and Guattari insist that the tension between forces of attraction and repulsion does not constitute ‘an expression of the final equilibrium of a system, but consist rather, of an unlimited number of stationary, metastable states through which a subject passes’ (ibid.); hence – ‘structuration’ (1980 / 2004: 57) and Protevi’s ‘patterning’ (ibid. 104 - 105). It is the nomadic subject that paradoxically both persists and becomes through participation in assemblages that occur on varying temporal and compositional scales (short, mid, long term, and personal, group, civic); and Protevi adopts the term ‘core self’ to refer to this nomadic subject (ibid. 99). It should also be recognised however that destratification is a condition of assemblage formation, and therefore this ‘core self’ is not the instinctual asocial self of liberal humanism but a subject that emerges transversally within assemblages that facilitate rhizomatic connections and that rely on the heterogeneity, not homogeneity, of their parts. Butler is particularly dismissive of the notion that the subject is constantly created anew (1997: 224). Yet this is how I experience myself, and again, surely it is such becoming that allows resignification as a political strategy with material effects for Butler. The dismantling of oedipally-induced egocentrism enables participation in encounters that surpass an
individual's ability to identify and separate their contribution to those encounters (Protevi 2009: 103) – a phenomenon highlighted by Gale and Wyatt in their nomadic writing project as a 'between-the-twos' (2009: 50). It is possible to alter habitual patterns through exposure to, and participation in, new assemblages however difficult and protracted a process this may prove to be (ibid. 36). Quite often this happens in unforeseen ways rather than by design.

Protevi regards neuro-endocrinological homeostatic regulation as a form of expression involving the overcoding of the regulation of flows provided by organs, and the organism as a unifying emergent effect of multiple systems of homeostatic regulation – the organism is a thickening of flows of biomass and genetic material and therefore a stratum which benefits from the labor of the organs and which works to constrain the BwO upon which it is constructed (ibid. 104). It is thus both self-organising and organised through the very syntheses identified by Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009: 12, 15). The organs, for example, are patterned by exclusive disjunctions conceived as series of virtual singularities that are actualised, thereby preventing the actualisation of other patterns; hence stereotypical behaviours that arise within periods of developmental plasticity, and I would add, in response to pathological situations (ibid. 105). For Protevi, thinking in terms of a pre-given biological reality of the organism denies the 'concrete reality' of that plasticity (ibid. 105). It is ‘that which sets life against itself in order to limit itself’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 554). Yet when Protevi argues that the thresholds at which homeostatic regulation set in can be measured by species-wide norms (ibid. 105, 189), my habitual sociological sensibility kicks in and its nerve becomes very raw indeed. I appreciate Protevi emphasising the enormous variability within populations which can be far greater than that found between species or populations or
between the sexes (ibid. 42). This argument is reminiscent of Deleuze and Guattari's observation that a work horse has more in common with an ox than with a race horse (ibid. 283). This variability seems to reinforce Protevi's point – and the key one I take from Deleuze and Guattari (ibid.) that both the social AND the biological must be viewed as virtual and therefore variable or changeable fields. But once I think of population studies and statistical species-norms, all I see is the potential for the use and abuse of data, for socio-political engineering, for the reinforcement of social stereotyping. And all I feel is my nomadic self starting to move towards a becoming-Butlerian, despite my stated reservations about socio-linguistic constructivism. Military training programmes have taken up behaviourist operant conditioning techniques to facilitate the suppression of a protoempathic aversion towards killing in soldiers (Protevi 2009: 173). This suggests that the rejection of a crudely mechanistic behaviourism in favour of concepts such as neural plasticity and decentralised nonlinear dynamical models has yet to be acknowledged by those forces that seek to engineer human behaviour in the service of the state. And although optimal and pessimal limits for the horse are mentioned in the passage referred to above in Deleuze and Guattari, species norms are not. Instead, they refer to 'unknown assemblages' and not knowing what a body can do prior to its participation in an assemblage – including one through which a more powerful body might be composed (ibid. 284).

Protevi proposes a political economy of consciousness to counter neoliberal efforts to render the effects of subjective agency irrelevant and produce 'rational (predictable) behaviour' by inducing fear of isolation in a population that is fundamentally prosocial (ibid. 182, 189). This alternative conception of human nature where prosociality is predominant, and premised
on a capacity for protoempathic identification, clearly challenges the depiction of competitive individualism as inherent or innate (ibid. 189). Protevi seeks to naturalise social cooperation by demonstrating how it is engendered and reproduced in the 'reciprocal causality of emergent social groups'; his intention is to enter the debate about human nature with 'eyes peeled for racist and sexist assumptions' (ibid. 188 - 9). No one who has read the entire book could doubt the sincerity of this conviction. But just how ingrained those assumptions actually are is unwittingly demonstrated when even Protevi cites research into primate mother-child relations in support of his arguments about prosociality and human solidarity (conceived as Aristotelian philia or love) (ibid. 187). Why choose a species that doxa understands to be genetically similar to homo sapiens, or immediately below us in popular teleological evolutionism, while simultaneously confirming the lack of any categorical difference between the natural and social in a Deleuze-Guattarian ontology? Why not mention the Harlow and Suomi (1971) monkey experiments that substituted a cloth caregiver for the real thing and found less behavioural pathologies than occurred in the event of premature isolation from a primary caregiver; or the kindergarten behaviours (collective and cooperative care of young) evidenced in other mammalian species? Although it is not what Protevi intends, this reliance on primate research is evocative of Butler's critique of the inability of Žižek (1989: 69) to let go of the 'rock' of castration or the centrality of the phallus (1993: 197 – 198). From my feminist perspective, emphasising the diversity of forms of infant care would undermine attempts to naturalise a socially prescribed maternal role. I would point out that it is Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 38) who argue against Lorenz and the idea that some forms of social organisation of species are superior to others based on their behavioural
proximity to our own. Why then would genetic proximity to homo sapiens imply superiority over other species? Nevertheless, they do link ethology and Spinoza in their interpretation of the latter's reference to what bodies can do (ibid. 284) – hence Protevi's reliance on species norms as limits. Molar aggregates are statistical aggregates which imply the efficacy of the group and that of aggregates in influencing the behaviour of individual subjects, in opposition to the view that such aggregates are merely composites of pre-existing subjects. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is the biological that is political because it is through socio-bio-political processes that the biological becomes personal.

My ambivalence towards science clearly contradicts the generally positive attitude of Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 202 - 203, 206). Am I oversensitised to the issue of fascistic import that Varela (2002) raises? If feminist research finds prevalence rates showing that the majority of female members of the human species experience abuse during their life time, as I recall some studies once doing and still doing overseas, then what is the species norm or what will doxa make of such information? If evolutionary affective neuroscience draws on such prevalence rates to liken abusive stepfathers to incoming infanticidal stallions, how will dissemination play out in the popular domain? I have written that abuse functions as a personal heuristic but I am also aware of the confusion it induces in my thinking. Is this evidence of stultitia (cf. p.56 - 57) – the restlessness that manifests as inability to wholeheartedly commit to any one theoretical or epistemological perspective? Or evidence of my capacity for critical and independent thought? Do I want to let go of my cynical feminism? No, I do not. My own experiences of repressive and controlling behaviours within a toxic familial environment, and contact with the darker side of prescriptive theories and models, are heavily implicated in this impulse to
question and keep moving that I am unlikely to ever lose. And this is not such a
bad thing. I want my own students to question far more than they do. I welcome
transversal thinking – the ranging across registers (biological, social,
philosophical, literary, psychoanalytic and psychiatric) in Deleuze and Guattari
and the freedom promised by the concepts of rhizomatic thinking and nomadic
writing. We need more becoming-anti-oedipal and more ‘molecular woman’ (cf.
p. 131) if academia is to subvert the fascistic potential of molar identity that is
founded upon the reification of the molar aggregate.

What then do I make of Deleuze and Guattari’s reference to primordial
’soup’ in the context of the neurobiological? And the frequent references to the
brain in the later collaboration of Deleuze and Guattari (1994). My own feeling is
that Deleuze and Guattari anticipated published research into neural plasticity
(e.g. Kandel 1998: 457 - 469) in understanding the unpredictability and
complexity of neural pathway formation and the implied reversibility or
malleability of those pathways in the complex interaction of exogenous and
endogenous factors. We are talking here about a probabilistic and open or
decentralised network that defies any type of determinism. So ‘soup’ does not
imply complete randomness as in ancient cosmogony, but a complex system
that can become predictable in the longer term (i.e. qualitatively predictable but
defying detailed quantitative prediction) (Protevi 2009: 6). Protevi draws on
complexity theory to describe assemblages as functional wholes subject to
stratification and destratification depending upon the negative and positive
feedback loops in operation; the former restore stability (homeostasis) and the
latter move the system to a threshold at which an alternative behavioural
pattern becomes possible (ibid. 6 – 7). My sociological sensibilities lead me to
cringe at terms like functional whole, but Protevi explains in some depth how
complexity theory precludes any implication of an organic unified whole or suggestion that there is an analogy between the microcosm (individual organism or subject) and the social macrocosm - a judgment of God (ibid. 9). What I find particularly useful in Protevi is the attention to fear and depersonalisation (ibid. 50, 187), fear and its impact on physiology across different temporal scales, the co-emergence of emotion and cognition, unconscious affective evaluation (ibid. 25 - 26), how intense episodes of fear constitute 'affect programs' that operate pre-discursively (ibid. 26, 187), and how affect is inherently political (ibid. 50). I understand – my own body knows, why Scarry (1985) posits a body that is anterior to language. And Protevi provides a vocabulary that allows me to make sense of that feeling in supervision meetings of the 1990s - that they were bizarre or unreal at times: 'Intensity is felt both positively and negatively, as inviting or repelling or even as simply strange, as in the sensation of being off-kilter, when things do not make the sense that they ordinarily do' (ibid. 51). Intensities can be read as approaches to 'switch points', but in negative situations where we can retain control of our reactions, we elect to stay below the threshold or 'on this side of irrevocable change' (ibid.). I should have walked away after the first meeting. At the institution in question, critical theory had been separated off from sociology into a different school and 'outsider women' were outlawed following the determination of permissible orthodoxies. And I was far too busy, for far too long, playing the game of seeking acceptance as a mature student / professional woman to prioritise intellectual integrity. I should have reached for Patti Smith’s Babel (1978) after that first meeting instead of hanging on in there before finally allowing myself to cross that threshold marked ‘irrevocable change’ / withdrawal. The phrase cognitive dissonance (Holligan 2005) fails
dismally to capture the affective and embodied nature of this earlier academic experience.

'Sacred thrills' is a reference to the Kantian sublime which is presented as a form of spiritual tourism in Protevi (ibid. 80). It is drawn from a passage where Kant differentiates between fearfulness and fear (Kant 1987: 269 cited in Protevi 2009: 80). The point here being that I was in a position to walk away from a toxic academic situation that was diminishing my power to act (as the exercise of freedom of thought). But it took a long time to do so and a long time to forgive myself for doing so. Playing the game is a loaded issue however for someone with my background. In referring to the Kantian sublime, I am also alluding to the sensation of physical insufficiency in situations where walking away is not an option. I feel now that I should let Butler and Protevi have the last word. I have followed both in re-presenting their arguments as a denaturalising and naturalising stance respectively, but there are commonalities that can be identified. Butler maintains that discursive performativity requires what it cannot abide (1993: 8, 188). And when Protevi states that 'the negative affects of panic and rage – and the milder forms of fear, anger, anxiety, and sadness – are the emotions most susceptible to political manipulation' (ibid. 187), he is also positing a required negative – the tendency towards prosociality and the related fear of the social isolation that arises when contemplating any refusal to be manipulated, and that therefore encourages compliance (ibid. 182).

Alternatively, Szaz should perhaps have the last word; Szaz viewed biologically determinist psychiatry as inevitably coercive and his was one of those outsider voices that were friends to me, and that kept me amused, in my darker teenage years: 'If you talk to God, you are praying. If God talks to you,
you have schizophrenia' (1973: 113). God never did respond to my requests for assistance. We remain incommunicado. Instead, I will mention Broca's area of the brain – the one required for putting feelings into words, and the one compromised during periods of high neuro-endocrinological arousal in response to a perceived threat: in other words, the traumatised can indeed experience speechless terror (Van der Kolk 2002). And this has absolutely nothing to do with foreclosure. The latter is the necessary exclusion of the real that is postulated as a universal and ahistorical originary trauma related to individuation, and construed as a condition of language and sociality within a psychoanalytic theory where to resist oedipalisation is to risk psychosis. While I appreciate Butler's criticism of Žižek's reduction of events like the Holocaust to this originary trauma, and her demand for consideration of the historical specificity of different forms of traumatic events (1993: 202), I cannot see how theories that render the body a logical function of language can be utilised at an individual level, i.e. in the sense - making and affect-modulation of someone who has experienced severe trauma of either a sexual, physical or psychological nature. Some of my students will eventually work in the field of gender-based conflict-related trauma and violence. Should I tell them that a word is just as injurious as being abducted, enslaved, raped or otherwise maimed? Would Natascha Lampusch (cf. p. 130, 144) imprisoned at ten years old and subjected to deeply humiliating sadistic rituals, concur?

After so much science and logic, it is poetry and a gentle Nile breeze I find myself craving. I need the power of nature. I need to saturate every atom. There is no possibility, of course, of a last word, as Nietzsche maintained. The gradual refinement of a Christian conscience that had connected God, morality, and truth, eventually produced the 'self-overcoming' of metaphysics, theology,
morality, and positivistic science in a revaluation of truth itself (Nietzsche 1974: 357). And it was a madman (ibid. 125) that Nietzsche reiterated in writing:

‘You see what has really triumphed over the Christian god: Christian morality itself, the concept of truthfulness that was understood ever more rigorously, the father confessor’s refinement of the Christian conscience, translated and sublimated into a scientific conscience, into intellectual cleanliness at any price. Looking at nature as if it were proof of the goodness and governance of a god; interpreting history in honor of some divine reason, as a continual testimony of a moral world order and ultimate moral purposes; interpreting one’s own experiences as pious people have long enough interpreted theirs, as if everything were providential, a hint, designed and ordained for the sake of the salvation of the soul: that is all over now’

(ibid. 357 cited in Cox 1999: 18)

The quest for ‘intellectual cleanliness’ is purportedly evidence of a residual theology – the continuation of an ascetic ideal, and indicative of a continuing faith in the metaphysical value of ‘truth in itself’ (Nietzsche 1887 / 1966: 24). It was positivistic science that Nietzsche critiqued not modern experimental science, but a culturally pervasive ‘unconditional will to truth’ (ibid.), or desire for divine truth, is held to persist as an ‘unconscious imperative’ (1974: 357).
Wanderers, free spirits and dancing stars

In this final plateau, I apply Deleuzean and Deleuzo-Guattarian concepts in recognising that I will resolve the tension of my epistemological conundrum affectively. I demonstrate the non-linearity of thought and problematisation by moving across, and within, very different knowledge-production paradigms. I am able to do so with an unprecedented ease, which underscores the importance of a pedagogic practice that ensures students are granted opportunities for experimentation. This plateau is equally a rejection of the suggestion (Wellington ibid.) that writing which is experimental for the student concerned should be permitted as a prelude to universal conformity to prescribed generic models of good academic writing. This is not, I believe, what Richardson (1997: 93 - 94) was advocating when describing how such experimentation can improve more conventional academic textual production.

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When I write of needing to immerse myself in a de-deified nature and the poetic, it is because both provide a freedom from: 'the control of the rational mind and its desires to pin down, record, make sense, construct some sort of narrative' (Gannon 2004: 113). I am seemingly driven by two powerful forces that now play out in academia as an epistemological conundrum; hence the tension reproduced here between the self-professed naturalising and de-naturalising positions of Protevi and Butler respectively (cf. p. 158), and my ambivalence about narrative realism (cf. p. 47) and aspects of science. Those forces are the need to make sense of abusive behaviours and the equally, if not more powerful, need to move on from their fall-out. The former fuels my interdisciplinary tendencies thereby enriching the life of my intellect. At doctoral level however there is no modular course structure to hide behind and I am writing for a single supervisory team with divergent epistemological loyalties. I therefore risk charges of epistemological inconsistency in wanting to bring the poetic in from the cold - to develop an interest in experimental writing as a method that disrupts the sense of being ‘nailed down to a dominant reality’
(Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 177). Nevertheless, inducing the affective production of a (re)newed self and transforming the 'I feel' and the 'I think' is the embrace of life that no memory can negate (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 18).

What am I saying here? That I have needed my powers of reasoning, and always will, to problematise (and politicise) situations that make no sense or that disorientate me in the toxicity of their lived experience; hence my appreciation of Deleuze's account of his youthful experience of learning about 'the identity of thought and liberty' (2004: 77), and of Richardson's reference to sociological sensibility - the acknowledgment that sense-making usually demands contextualisation however provisional (1997: 2). Both resonate strongly with me given my own, intermittently pressing, need to question and make sense of seemingly bizarre familial, social, and higher educational dynamics. For Deleuze, this sense-making is not a voluntaristic option but an ontological condition of all of life: 'problematization' (1968 / 2004: 249). For Nietzsche, it was 'evaluation' and 'interpretation' (1967: 560, 616). Yet I am also strongly drawn to the 'poetic politics of resistance' and exploration of 'shifting subjectivities' (Gannon ibid. 108). This is despite the fact that the privileging of language, emphasis on discursive constitution of subjectivity, and attention to competing discourses in constituting dominant realities associated with poststructuralism – feminist and otherwise, does not appear to rest too easily with the naturalism of Deleuze and Nietzsche. So my interest in writing practices and the poetic is not confined to private encounters with specific female poets - as an escape from, or antidote to, the rationality of academia or my own tortuous (as in potentially infinitely regressive) sense-making. After writing my last piece, I was invited to explore the concept of theoretical
assemblage as it might facilitate connections and permit me to pursue the continuities between Deleuze and Cixous for example, without triggering the self-mortification around epistemological purity that the ascetic ideal dictates. Nietzsche is right about unconscious imperatives (ibid.). They can be energy sinks that work, so easily, to stifle creativity and experimentation – the rhizomatic impulse. So I remind myself that, contra Protevi’s (2009: 44) insistence that epistemology matters, Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 51) state that it does not. And for Nietzsche, there was no world other than the natural world, and the interpretation of which it is composed. Nietzsche is distinctly ‘anti-epistemological’ (Cox 1999: 242) in his rejection of both foundational truths and a knowing subject that is prior to interpretation – one who strives to view the world ‘from the outside’ when only views ‘from the inside’ are possible (Nietzsche 1886 / 1966: 36).

I am unsure what a ‘rational mind’ is beyond the sense in which I have deployed it here – a power of reasoning that has assisted my own sense-making in situations where the capacity to question, to identify contradictions, to assess alternative explanations, to contextualise and so forth has been a matter of self-preservation. I hesitated before using the latter phrase. I am definitely not contradicting my endorsement of Tami Spry’s criticism of survivor narratives (cf. p. 40). Such narratives suggest, I maintain, an underhanded Social Darwinism that individualises events and thereby dilutes their political import. Nietzsche was highly critical of a distinctly unDarwinian teleological ‘adaptationism’, regarding it as a reintroduction of the ‘argument from design’ that Darwin explicitly rejected (Cox 1999: 226; Nietzsche ibid. 12). A conscious desire to survive, or bodily sense of the need to struggle for survival, was viewed by Nietzsche as symptomatic of atypical conditions of extreme distress that
represented a temporary imposed limitation on the 'really fundamental instinct of life' which is 'growth and expansion [or] the will to power which is the will of life' (1974: 349). The drive for self-preservation is not therefore indicative of a universally applicable or ontological state. On this account, narratives of survival and adaptation are not causes for therapeutic congratulation. Political contextualisation is one possible, and potentially more appropriate, therapeutic objective. 'Let us beware of superfluous teleological principles!—one of which is the instinct of self-preservation' (Nietzsche 1886 / 1966: 13).

There are many therapeutic alternatives to adaptationism and reductionism including: philosophy for Nietzsche (cf. p. 40), political contextualisation for White (2007), and the poetic for Speedy (2005). And affect, and therefore the body, is implicated in each; sense-making should consequently not be identified exclusively with rationality. I want to disrupt the binary of rationality and bodily intuition or knowing, and to explore the poetic as a form of sense-making that functions as a third space (Olkowski 1999) between such binaries. Or better still, to have done with this particular binary for once and for all. I see the poetic as a form of experimentation and problem resolution that is a (re)newing, a becoming - that moving on from what can never be changed but only rewritten in a (re)writing of the flesh. Events happen but our narratives necessarily change as new resources are brought to the sense-making process - as our lives change, as we change, as our subjectivities shift in the assemblages through which we become. The revision of linear narratives is not always the most emancipatory resource at our disposal however and I feel powerfully attracted to those writing practices associated with feminist poststructuralism. I am eager to follow Cixous and Gannon into a landscape of poetic language and the unconscious. But I want to
take Deleuze with me. Like Nietzsche who once wrote of Heraclitus: 'in [his] proximity I feel warmer and better than anywhere else' (1872 / 1966: 3), and contrary to my desire to be a thorough-going 'pagan' (Lyotard 1989: 123), engaging with the texts of Deleuze is how I have negotiated that passage between the abusee's valorisation of truth and integrity and the impulse to experiment that moving on entails – between the refusal to be 'pinned down' by postpositivism or narrative realism and my use of an autobiographical genre that is troubled (Lather 1993, 1995, 2004) by Gannon (ibid.). Deleuze is my metadiscourse (Lyotard 1979 / 1984), the most recent friend (Gale and Wyatt 2009: 224) who I understand to be saying: Go with the dice that life has thrown you! Be brave enough to throw the dice! (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 248). Assemble and become! Move on!

Nietzsche too writes of becoming as a dice game (1881 / 1982: 130) and I will return to this image. My current interest in Nietzsche was prompted by an observation of Spinks (2005: 178 – 179 in Parr 2005) that Deleuze's conception of subjectivity as the 'habit of saying “I” and “Me”' (Deleuze 2006: 365) owes more to Nietzsche than to Hume and the former's attention to reason. If my powers of reasoning are precious for historical reasons, then Nietzsche offers an alternative position that decouples reason from those conventional standards of rationality and objectivity that Nussbaum defended against a 'feminist assault on reason' (1994: 59). According to Nietzsche, my power to reason is simply my ability to explore and evaluate 'a variety of perspectives and affective interpretations' (1887 / 1966: 12). The 'intellectual conscience' so valued by Nietzsche is one that refuses uncritical acceptance of dominant perspectives or existing frameworks and, in that sense, is able to understand varied perspectives and differing affective interpretations; in the same passage
Nietzsche urges experimentation with 'new or forgotten' interpretations (ibid.).

This is not the 'Man of Reason' rejected by Genevieve Lloyd (1984):

'The strongest and most evil spirits have so far done the most to advance humanity: again and again they have rekindled the passions that were going to sleep—all ordered society puts the passions to sleep—and they reawakened again and again the sense of comparison, of contradiction, of the pleasure in what is new, daring, untried'

(Nietzsche 1974: 4)

That Nietzsche refers to affective interpretations indicates the embodied nature of knowing which resonates with the conflation of 'I think' and 'I feel' in Deleuze and Guattari (cf. p. 183).

I follow Alcoff (1995: 1-26) here in offering another treatment of reason. I concur with her characterisation of Nussbaum's argument as highly dogmatic in its claim that a specific concept of reason should always be retained. To retain a mind of one's own (Antony and Witt 2002) is, in Nietzsche's terms, to restore the 'innocence of becoming' (1888/1968: Errors: 7–8). It is to recognise the contingency of interpretations in opposition to epistemologies that pin us down to methods of generating knowledge which presuppose the neutrality of language, objectivity, and a capacity for logic in the production of purportedly timeless and disinterested truths. Antony (2002: 110-153) argues that feminist writers like Jaggar (1983) and Flax (1987) mischaracterise both the rationalist and empiricist traditions in failing to acknowledge the extent to which analytic philosophy has discarded aspects of both. Feminists have consequently, it is claimed, misidentified analytic epistemology with empiricism and neglected more rationalist options (Garry 2004). Cox (1999: 114-115) also argues that both the analytic and Continental philosophical traditions now acknowledge that: 'our knowledge is not an edifice built upon a foundation of indubitable beliefs but
rather an interpretative web of mutually supporting beliefs and desires that is constantly being rewoven'; hence his characterisation of a 'holistic empiricism' as one that recognises the situated historically variable nature of knowledge (ibid. 115). And Garry (2004) too suggests that the category of feminist empiricism introduced by Harding (1986) is too broad in scope since the methodologies that qualify as holistically empiricist differ significantly from logical positivism – a philosophical methodology which once sought to dehistoricise truth through precisely the assumptions of linguistic neutrality, objectivity, and the valorisation of logic already referred to. I am not convinced however and consequently tend to use the terms positivistic and postpositivistic interchangeably. As Passmore (1967: 57) states, logical positivism is 'as dead as a philosophical movement ever becomes. But it has left a legacy behind'. It is the same legacy that requires us to address issues such as researcher values and bias via positionality in doctoral research proposals whatever our chosen qualitative method. And scientific holistic or contextual empiricism (Longino 2002: 122, 145 - 148) will continue to require the selective isolation of variables as entities from multiplicity (Nietzsche 1974: 112).

Harding critiqued the concept of a value-free objectivity that presupposes a researcher able and willing to: 'constantly police the borders of a gulf, a no-man's land, between himself as the subject and the object of his research, knowledge, or action' (1991: 158) - one who possesses what Hartsock (1983) succinctly dubbed abstract masculinity. The level of generality of Cox's argument glosses over the continuities in both practice and theory between logical positivism and postpositivist methodologies. And I note in this context that Nietzsche rejects both positivistic and pragmatic conceptions of truth: the former because only affective interpretation is possible and the latter because
the knowledge thereby generated has a tendency to assume the identity of a
given – to ossify and reify (Nietzsche 1888 / 1968: 2). I do not intend to map
developments in feminist philosophy here however. As Garry (ibid.) states, the
two principles that inform the work of all the writers cited in her discussion of
analytic feminist philosophy are: PHILOSOPHY MATTERS. GENDER
MATTERS. I make no apology whatsoever for dramatising by capitalisation.
Philosophy is a vulnerable discipline within the neoliberal managerialist higher
education regime (Faust 2008). And I detest the thought that in years to come, I
will like Richardson (cf. p. 48), be writing about an ironic or convenient
coincidence – in this case, that philosophy departments were disbanded just
when students needed them most, or when Foucault’s prediction that the
century would be Deleuzean looked increasingly accurate (Reggio 2007: 145). I
also feel that feminist poststructuralism matters precisely because it
foregrounds issues of normative dualism and abstract individualism (Jaggar
1983: 40, 42), and provides an anti-essentialist interpretation of gender that is
compatible with the non-foundationalist metaphysics of Deleuze – where
difference is affirmed, the flux of non-teleological becoming assumed, a
polymorphous sexuality implied, and a ‘logic of sensation’ evidenced (Deleuze

Nietzsche would, I suspect, portray the dogmatism of Nussbaum’s
reference to a feminist assault on reason (Nussbaum 1994: 59) as a denial of
the ‘uncertainty and interpretative multiplicity of existence’ (1974: 2) and a
refusal to experience the ‘trembling’ – the affect, the ‘craving and the rapture’
that questioning and experimentation with new modes of thinking can invoke
(Nietzsche 1974: 2). Even if it were possible, which Nietzsche refutes, the
suspension of affect would be to ‘castrate the intellect’ (1887 / 1966: 12);
objectivity as contemplation without interest is therefore dismissed as a 'nonsensical absurdity' (ibid.). When Nietzsche declares: 'Let us be mummies! Let us represent monotonous-theism by adopting the expression of a gravedigger' (1888 / 1968: *Reason*: I), it is the eradication of the body through the rigid hierarchised binaries or dualisms found in Christianity, traditional metaphysics, and Kantianism in the search for ahistorical truths that is being parodied and that we are urged to abandon. Like Deleuze, Nietzsche often adopts an intense and polemical writing style; both resisted any form of dogmatism that inhibits enquiry or questioning: 'interpretation that permits counting, calculating, weighing, seeing, and touching and nothing more—that is a crudity and a naiveté, assuming that it is not a mental illness, an idiocy' (1974: 373). Both viewed thinking and writing as forms of experimentation, or as 'experimentation with intensities that foster patterns of becoming' where creativity is understood as 'a multiple and complex process of transformation, otherwise the flux of becoming' (Braidotti 2005: 307 in Parr 2005). The importance of affectivity in Deleuze's thinking about becoming cannot be underestimated. Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004) prioritise affectivity in their theory of subjectivity which emphasises the specific temporality of the embodied human subject. I should now outline the role of forces in both Nietzsche and Deleuze since it is through such forces - or degrees of affectivity that are receptive to encounters with other affects, that becoming or transformation occurs (ibid.). Recall that Protevi (cf. p.190) describes powerful affects as potential switch points thus implying the multi-layered but distinctly embodied character of the changes that affect can effect.

Cox outlines the Nietzschean influence on Bataille (1988). The latter argued that the dynamic force of both nature (growth, sexuality, procreation,
struggle, and death) and culture (production, form-giving, creativity, and play) reflect the superabundance of energy in the biosphere and the compulsion to expend it (ibid. 231). As in Deleuze, neither the human or nature, nor the organic or inorganic is ontologically privileged. Becoming however is privileged over being. Nietzsche's will to power is univocal in that human life is 'translated back into nature' (1967: 692); both are characterised as being in perpetual motion, driven by attraction, repulsion, tension, resistance, integration, disintegration, assimilation, incorporation, and alliance: life is a relation of forces or 'dynamic quanta, in a relation of tension to all other dynamic quanta' (1967: 635; Cox 1999: 238). Although Cox therefore portrays the will to power as a unifying theory, it is one which: eschews transcendence in favour of interpretative knowing - the 'death of God' (1974: 344), emphasises change and becoming rather than being, and that underlines contingency, multiplicity and chance (ibid. 238). For Nietzsche, Darwin emancipated nature from being, essence and God, and emphasised chance, random variation, and time.

Nietzsche retains the materialism of Darwin whilst extending this rejection of being, essence and God to both language and subjectivity through a polemical 'assault' on the concept of mechanism as matter in motion; this concept implies the passivity of matter or otherwise static entities, and what Nietzsche considered an erroneous concept of motion (Cox ibid. 217). Will to power is the continual rearrangement of assemblages of forces, thus evoking the theory of assemblage in Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 155). And Deleuze describes the eternal return as the 'power to affirm divergence and decentring' (1969 / 1990: 302). 'Nature must be thought of as the principle of the diverse and its production [] that does not assemble its own elements into a whole' (ibid.). It is precisely this principle that informs feminist poststructuralist theories

Nietzsche argues that our faith in being, matter, or substance – in entities that have acquired the status of ‘thinghood’ (1888 / 1968: Reason: 2), derives from ontological, psychological, and linguistic prejudice. The privilege of being is, as Cox (ibid. 217) states: ‘inscribed in the very structure of our language’. It is language that assumes ‘the ego as being’ and ‘the ego as substance’ (Nietzsche ibid. 5); and it is language that:

'projects this faith in the ego-substance upon all things—only thereby does it first create the concept of "thing." Everywhere "being" is projected by thought, pushed underneath, as the cause; the concept of "being" follows, and is derivative of, the concept of "ego." [ ] I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar' (ibid.)

The subject does not exist outside of interpretative becoming as some transcendental source (or objective spectator). For Nietzsche, any such suggestion is tantamount to claiming God-like status and we therefore remain in a ‘shadow of God’ (1974: 108) for as long as we believe otherwise. This is why will to power should not be confused with free will as a property inhering in the speaking and thinking subject since for Nietzsche: ‘the deed is everything’ – there is no ‘doer’ behind the deed (1888 / 1968: Reason: 5) as required by the abstract individualism critiqued by Jaggar (ibid.). I want say here that my
feelings about Butler's conception of the relation between the body and language (cf. p. 159) remain unchanged. I am not about to recant. Nor have I fallen victim to a masculinist 'adversarial paradigm' (Moulton 1993: 149) in refusing to see the body as an 'effect' of, or not anterior to, language (Butler 1993: 11; 1997: 5). There is no unidirectionality posited in Nietzsche; 'effects' are what happens when forces are at play and this applies to any kind of force (1886 / 1966: 36). Butler (ibid. 224) cites Nietzsche (1887 / 1966: II: 12) on the 'continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations' in support of a linguistic constructivism (the body as an effect of language). But Nietzsche is actually arguing against a misreading of Darwin as a teleological adaptationism:

the entire history of a "thing", an organ, a custom can in this way be a continuous sign-chain of ever new interpretations [Interpretationen] and adaptations whose causes do not even have to be related to one another but, on the contrary, in some cases succeed and alternate with one another in purely chance fashion'

(ibid. cited in Cox ibid. 227)

If I find Gannon's work attractive (ibid.), it is because no such unidirectionality is implied; references to the flesh rather than the body evoke the Deleuzo-Guattarian (1972 / 2009) challenge to the oedipalised or privatised body as unitary organism. Writing unfurls memories that are stored in the flesh (Gannon ibid. 112 - 113); language does not write the body. So when I wrote of (re)writing the body, I was referring to a 'flux of becoming' (Braidotti ibid.) that defies such oppositions and their hierarchical organisation. I was thinking too of affectivity. And since Deleuze makes no categorical distinction between writing, painting and thinking (Braidotti ibid. 306), I will mention Helle Winther here. Witnessing an improvised performance of 'data' where Winther responded bodily to the transcript from which she read (Winther 9th September 2008), was
one of the most extraordinary academic experiences I have ever had - a short-lived but profoundly affective encounter, an event, an assemblage. There were other events at that conference that I could, and perhaps should, have attended given my academic interests at the time. But then there is nothing stable about the complexes of power - that tension between forces, in Nietzsche’s view (1886 / 1966: 19; 1967: 492). And rather like Judge Schreber and his ‘so that’s what it was’ moment (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 18), I felt that the right force had won and knew what I had been missing. Bodies. Affectivity. I now see my presence at Helle Winther’s performance as a divine accident, however chaotic my learning choices seemed to me back then. I am mindful that Nietzsche once wrote: ‘one must still have chaos in oneself to give birth to a dancing star’ (ibid. Prologue 5) - a chaosmos of our own (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 208). This is, of course, where the title of this piece of writing comes from.

Nietzsche wrote: ‘He who has attained to only some degree of freedom of mind cannot feel other than a wanderer on the earth—though not as a traveller to a final destination: for this destination does not exist’ (1878 / 1991: 638). Is this the ‘rational mind’ that would ‘pin down’ and be pinned down (Gannon ibid.)? Or one that values experimentation as much as Deleuze did (1980 / 2004: 166 – 167), or indeed, as Gannon does (ibid. 113). I think of Deleuze as an intellectual nomad determined to seek out joyful connections in his learning, and I imagine him as someone who knew much about relational learning long before his collaborations with Guattari. I think of Cixous like this too.

Cox insists that Nietzsche’s naturalism (the refusal of onto-theological or metaphysical posits) means that relativism is avoided; poor and better interpretations are distinguishable through affective evaluation (ibid. 70). Contra Protevi’s assertion (2009: 189) that a theory of consciousness is required in
order to rectify a perceived omission in theories that highlight affect, Nietzsche's refusal of binaries (reason-nature, mind-body, consciousness-instinct, and so forth) means that thinking or 'being conscious' (1886 / 1966: 3) is 'merely a relation of [ ] drives to each other' (1974: 333), and reason is a 'system of relations between various passions and desires' (1967: 387). As Cox points out, it is not a question of supplying a theory of consciousness that is lacking, but of accepting that Nietzsche is resisting the construction of binary oppositions and insisting that consciousness is a 'residuum' of bodily processes – of impulse, passion, instinct and desire (ibid. 76 – 77). It must be remembered that, for Nietzsche, the organic process presupposes interpretation and that breathing is consequently no less an intellectual activity than the production of meaning (1967: 643; Cox ibid. 240). Nietzsche (1878 / 1986: 2) would concur with Gannon (ibid.) that the body cannot be erased through the abstractions of high theory, and the writing of Cixous is premised on this principle. Intuition, sensuality and aesthetic understanding is ultimately to be preferred to 'the ghostly land of schemata, the land of abstractions' (1873 / 1979: 88 - 90), and to the positivist desire for certainty and scientific reductionism. 'Against positivism, which halts at phenomena—"there are only facts"— I would say: no, facts is precisely what there are not, only interpretations' (1967: 481); there are no unmediated 'brute facts' (1887 / 1966: III: 24), and there is no God's eye view (Cox ibid. 111) of the world. Nietzsche regards linear causality (the identification of cause and effect) as the 'arbitrary division and dismemberment' of what can only be 'a continuum and a flux of occurrences' (1974: 112). Before I continue, I feel that I should clarify Protevi's demand for a theory of consciousness. The objective is two-fold: to understand episodes of violent rage where the body functions in the absence of consciousness of its actions (where consciousness
is assumed to be located *within* a rational cognitive subject), and crucially, to evolve a theory of consciousness that is informed by political economic factors (ibid.). The production of those capable of military violence through training that involves brutalisation and incitement to rage is a key concern of this text.

For Nietzsche, positivism and what Garry (2004) terms a foundational style of metaphysics are 'secret allies' (1887 / 1966: III: 24); both remain faithful to the concept of a world 'as it really is' (Cox ibid. 92). Against Kant's transcendentalism, which posits *a priori* categories of cognition that we impose on a sensory world purportedly unknowable in itself, Nietzsche accuses 'Reason' of producing mistrust in our senses and insists our senses 'do not lie' insofar as they grasp the 'becoming, passing away, and change' that *is* the world (1888 / 1968: *Reason* 2). Christianity is deeply implicated here too since, as Cox mentions, modern rationalism ultimately surrenders to religious faith. It is God who: guarantees all knowledge in Descartes, distinguishes better from worse and actual from merely possible worlds in Leibniz, exists as the sole substance of which all else is an expression or attribute in Spinoza, and provides the ultimate unity and ground of all possible experience in Kant (ibid. 199). Returning to the Platonic opposition between essence and appearance evidenced in Kant, Nietzsche refers disparagingly to object *x* (cf. p. 98) as 'a dead mask that one could place over an unknown *x* or remove from it!' (1974: 54). Kant's antithesis of 'thing in itself' and appearance is dismissed as untenable (1967: 552). Nietzsche accuses Kant of being an 'underhanded Christian'; the positing of a true world behind appearances - a noumenal world, constitutes a 'symptom of the decline of life' (1888 / 1968: *Reason* 6). It is how Kant avoids letting go of God and the soul. The latter, for Nietzsche, is 'only a word for something about the body' (1968: 1).
I have already written about the enduring influence of the Platonic form in neoliberal managerialist higher education regimes where thesis production and assessment is more about conformity to a pre-defined template or a dead mask than learning through experimentation. I am reluctant to labour this point further other than to reiterate that a rigid hierarchical ordering is necessarily involved in this authentication process: God, Man in the image of God, the monstrous feminine and animality (understood literally and metaphorically) (cf. p. 166).

Nietzsche argues that any conception of Man as a 'fixed form' (1878 / 1986: 2) which privileges the faculty of cognition in a purportedly timeless hierarchically organised dualism is more indicative of a human need for security:

'"The inventive force that invented categories laboured in the service of our needs, namely of our need for security, for quick understanding on the basis of signs and sounds, for the means of abbreviation:—"substance," "subject," "object," "being," "becoming" have nothing to do with metaphysical truths' (1967: 513)

Cox maintains that it is Nietzsche's admiration for modern experimental science (as the questioning of all truths) and his naturalism that dictates the presentation of his polemical ideas as hypotheses; they also account for Nietzsche's refusal to posit two realms of existence and instead to view language, logic and reason as sensual and empirical in origin (ibid. 85). This is why Nietzsche posits a 'fundamental human drive' towards the 'formation of metaphor'; the same processes of, for example, invention, incorporation and assimilation are involved such that to dispense with metaphor in thought would be to 'dispense with man himself' (1873 / 1979: 88):

'This drive is not truly vanquished and scarcely subdued by the fact that a regular and rigid new world is constructed as its prison from its own ephemeral products, the concepts. It seeks a new realm and another
channel for its activity, and it finds this in _myth_ and in _art_ generally. This drive continually confuses the conceptual categories and cells by bringing forward new transferences, metaphors, and metonymies' (ibid. 88 - 90)

To reiterate: Nietzsche makes no categorical distinction between thinking, the production of metaphor and meaning, eating and breathing. This naturalised ontology permits Nietzsche to endorse aesthetic understanding or 'intuitive man' (ibid. 89 - 91) as closer to Darwinian thinking than to other modes of thought – as an anti-theological extension of non-reductionist empirical science and not one element in a reifiable dualism that promotes the latest fixed form of Man.

If art is considered dangerous by Plato (cf. p. 120) – 'the instinctive deifier' and 'slanderer of life' (Nietzsche 1887 / 1966: III: 25), it is precisely because, for Nietzsche, art affirms sensuality, materiality, experimentation or the continual production of new interpretation(s), and therefore acknowledges the contingency and multiplicity of life (Cox ibid. 65). Art rejects the 'ascetic demand for desensualization' in its celebration of creativity and transformation (ibid. 65) and, like the poetic, it is the 'refinement of hesitation' and 'art of keeping alive' (Cixous 2007: 15) that is also Nietzsche's death of God - the demise of Being and transcendent grounding principles. To allude to Deleuze and Guattari (1994: 64): the Cartesian 'idiot', who thinks as an engagement in pure abstraction and therefore _is_, is more idiotic than was hitherto supposed. An ontology of becoming precludes the ego as substance, as pre-existent matter somehow detached from thought, as essential self, as a unified whole comprised of homogeneous parts, as Being; it defies characterisation in a perpetual displacement, a 'way of going which doesn't mean getting there' (Cixous ibid. 17), a _moving on_ because that is all there is in all of its materiality.
and sensuality – a ‘world of relations’, a ‘world in itself’ (Nietzsche 1967: 568) in all its difference and becoming other.

Cox (ibid. 202 – 204) turns to Derrida and Deleuze to clarify why Nietzsche refers to becoming as ‘chaos’, and to distinguish a Nietzschean ‘chaos’ from the Kantian ‘manifold‘; the latter is conceived as a mass of sensations upon which order is imposed as a condition of intelligibility – a primordial ‘soup’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 56) that our innate cognitive faculties can readily convert into recognisable dishes with common categorical recipes. Derrida (1978: 279) identified and rejected the metaphysics of presence or Being that dominates the Western philosophical tradition and developed the concept of différance – the differing and deferring of Being and presence that follows from the death of God. Cox claims that Derrida provides a ‘better name‘ (ibid. 203) for the complex notion of becoming since ‘différance’ undermines the image derived from Heraclitus of fluidity, of the river, of the soup. It is allegedly more suggestive of a Nietzschean ‘assemblage of differences’ (ibid.) within which becoming is a productive ongoing tension between forces, i.e. a conflictual or agonistic movement where there can be no original identity, unity or simplicity. Différance embraces two senses of difference: that within the order of the same or self-change and non-identity (the continual self-differing or becoming other that renders definitive characterisation impossible) and that where the one is simultaneously the other. The latter evokes Roethke (1908 – 1963), the episodically schizophrenic or manically depressive academic-poet - philosopher whom I read about in my late teens and whose observation - that to go forwards is to go backwards, I have always remembered. Memory is powerful. Derrida writes of roads that go up and down at the same time (1976: 50). I wonder what happened to Roethke. And I note
that I am still deferring my outline of a Deleuzean take on memory but know that it can wait. Cox also states that differance emphasises that becoming is not something that happens to ‘beings’ but is constitutive of them (ibid. 203 - 204). As in Nietzsche, Deleuze, Cixous, and Gannon, there is no arrival at a pre-destined point, no telos, no linearity, no cycle. There is no arrival and the movement towards not getting there is errant, contradictory and complex. Never arriving makes us human, all too human, but it also places us back with the animals (Nietzsche 1968: 14), with the earth, with language and writing – perhaps especially with writing as the phrase ‘physio-writing’ in Cixous (2007: 22) implies. There are no boundaries or dualisms intended here. On the contrary, like Nietzsche: ‘We laugh as soon as we encounter the juxtaposition of “man and world,” separated by the sublime presumption of the little word “and”!’ (1974: 346). Cixous (1976: 875 – 893) laughed too but Nietzsche may have been one of the objects of her derision.

Cox (ibid. 207 - 208) goes on to discuss Deleuze’s adoption of the Joycean term chaosmos (cf. p. 206) which is intended to underline the contrast between theologically - informed conceptions of chaos and post - theological ones. I think immediately of the doubled-pincered lobster in Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 45) that can be read as signifying a de-deified nature, and as a metaphor capturing the complexity of the content-expression relation in all its Derridian difféance – the doubled action of difference within the same and of non-identity. And I am reminded of the principle of the prevailing middle (ibid. 290) where there can be neither origin nor end; it is evocative of the idea that meaning can never be fixed but is always, necessarily, deferred (Derrida 1978: 113). What I do not think of - however long I physically contort before my keyboard, is ‘world views’ or how Deleuze grasps the ‘complication’ (Cox ibid.)
207) of innumerable irreducible hermeneutic horizons. I understand what Cox intends; he wants to undermine readings of Nietzsche that imply a Kantian position whereby knowledge is limited to a phenomenal world constructed through innate individual cognitive powers (ibid. 170 - 171). But I am unsure why Cox believes that a hermeneutic reading dispenses with an implied abstract individualism and the associated sociological problem of then explaining the relationship between the social and individual. I am thinking now of the object-subject dualism and the transcendental idealism evidenced in Husserl's phenomenology (Moran 2000: 92) which also presupposes what must then be explained, and which subsequently privileges language to overcome such abstract individualism: how else do atomised cogitos communicate? However invaluable my sociological sensibility has been, and may continue to be at times, I endorse Gannon's view (ibid. 107 - 108) that a life-writing practice is needed that: 'dislodges sociology as the pre-eminent frame for understanding feminist autobiography' and expresses the 'fragmented and tenuous self'; and which recognises flesh as inextricably bound up in a becoming through writing that can only be 'intersubjective' or inter-affective. As Nietzsche stated:

'Duration, identity with itself, being are inherent neither in that which is called subject nor in that which is called object; they are complexes of events apparently durable in comparison with other complexes—e.g. through the difference in tempo of the event (rest-movement, firm-loose: oppositions that do not exist in themselves and that actually express only variations in degree that from a certain perspective appear to be oppositions. There are no opposites: only from those of logic do we derive the concept of opposites—and falsely transfer it to things)'

(1967: 552)

I only wish Cox had mentioned the non-foundationalist metaphysics of Deleuze. However profound the influence of Nietzsche on Deleuze's thinking (Spinks
ibid.), the distinction between traditional foundationalist and non-foundationalist metaphysics (Garry ibid.) is important; differing political imperatives follow from Nietzsche's antipathy towards metaphysical thinking and Deleuze's concept of the virtual. Political imperatives are easily forgotten amidst academic pressure to 'pin down' (Gannon, ibid.) or, to paraphrase Cox (ibid. 203), to definitively characterise 'a' position and construct a linear narrative around it in defiance of Derrida's différance and Deleuze's law of the prevailing middle. I ask myself, having admired the phallogocentric (Cixous 1976: 885) dexterity of Cox's work: what happens to the body, to affectivity, to sensuality, to materiality, to relationality, and to metaphoricity as the production of meaning and the body - soul in these obligatory displays of academic craft? Writing inspired by Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari is, as Braidotti maintains, NOT the 'self-assertion of a rationally ordained imaginative subject, rather its eviction' (ibid. 306). It is a rhizomatic subjectivity that is able to sustain the 'impact of affectivity' and this is not achieved 'dialectically within a dominant mode of consciousness' (ibid.). A lengthier quotation underlines what is at stake here:

'The singularity of this rhizomatic subjectivity rests on the spatio-temporal coordinates that make it coincide with nothing more than the degrees, levels, expansions and extensions of the "outside" as it rushes head-on, moving inwards and outwards. What are mobilised are one's capacities to feel, sense, process and sustain the impact in conjunction with the complex materiality of the outside; a sort of fluid but self-sustaining sensibility, or stream of consciousness that is porous to the outside' (ibid. 306 – 307)

Stream of consciousness is a modernist literary style of writing associated with authors like James Joyce and traditionally overcoded as feminine (ibid. 307). It disrupts both the presupposition of a unified self-transparent subject or cogito and the narrative realist genre that accompanies that presupposition. It reveals

I should explain that phallogocentrism is a (re)working of the concepts of phallocentrism (Derrida 2000b: 14 – 21; Cixous 1976: 879) and logocentrism associated with charges of essentialism and biological reductionism in the purported linking of sex, gender, modes of thought, and writing and language (Weedon 1999: 26 - 50). Logocentrism is the Saussurian privileging of speech and concomitant dismissal of writing as a vehicle for representation of the spoken (Saussure 1972 / 1983: 24). Phallocentrism – a term coined by Ernest Jones (Gallop 1982: 16 – 18), is commonly deployed in critiques of a Lacanian psychoanalytic theory that privileges the Phallus and castration (Cixous 1976: 884, 885, 879). Phallogocentrism conveys the primacy of, and connections between, specific terms within the binary oppositions pervading Western thought and culture (Cixous ibid. 879). Butler (1990 / 2006) captures the theoretical debates, and something of the political atmosphere, that prevailed during the late 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s, so I will not dwell on the diversity of politicised feminist interpretations within this period. It is precisely the refusal of consistency, and insistence on the freedom to (re)think ‘a’ position, that is compelling in Cixous. The self-emancipation from repression and abuses of institutional and interpersonal power that Cixous has always sought requires this. I follow Cixous in resisting attempts to reduce freedom to a political signifier (Butler 1997: 160). A poetic-political imperative informing feminist poststructuralist theorising and writing is that of speaking and writing the unsayable, or what cannot or should not be said or written, in order to challenge
repressive marginalising exclusionary practices, as evidenced in the academic writing of Richardson (1997), Gale and Wyatt (2009), and many others. Such writing contributes to the radical plurality of ideas, methods and genres that should be available to students in higher education. I am only too aware of the politics of labelling – the imposition of dead masks that can deter engagement with primary sources. This accounts for my adoption of a Nietzschean principle (1974: 319) in exploring why I once found the concept of phallogocentrism so objectionable, and why even now I find phrases like ‘white ink’ (Cixous 1976: 881) vaguely chilling. My familial history hardly encouraged celebrations of either the feminine or of female reproductive biology. I recoiled at De Beauvoir’s (1949 / 1953 / 1972) suggestion that being drawn towards the natural world, and finding a freedom there, was evidence of greater proximity to nature by virtue of my reproductive biology. I still do.

Concepts like phallogocentrism felt similarly restrictive. Or rather, I worried that women would forever be confined to poetic side-swipes at a masculinised language which ultimately they could not escape or which reduced the feminine to a ‘subversive undershadow of the Symbolic Order’ (Mansfield 2000: 89). So although my body can feel the musicality of my writing (Barthes 1976: 220; Cixous ibid.), and like Cixous, I love to write ‘with my eyes closed’ (Conley 1984: 146), my embodied thinking is insisting that I find another way of articulating that rhythmic energy. It is not a semiotic ‘chora’ (Kristeva 1977: 57, 1998: 143) or a language deriving from, and seeking to return to, the maternal body (Barthes 1982: 119; Cixous ibid., 1980: 9). I prefer the flows and intensities of Deleuze and Braidotti’s ‘fluid but self-sustaining sensibility’ (ibid.) where I am filled with a sense of movement that cannot be limited, a becoming without end, and where I am transported to thinking spaces I prefer to go to.
This is not to say that I did not once read authors like Kristeva; her texts remain on my bookshelf. And I laughed when I read Deleuze and Guattari's comment (1980 / 2004: 265) that they had always found Jung far more profound than Freud could ever be. I had to acknowledge the system of knowledge - apartheid (Conquergood 2002) that I adopted during my undergraduate studies. Kristeva was initially confined to my 'leisure reading only' category but later allowed through the academic checkpoint since Freudian (re)workings were so fashionable at that time - but only to visit a Gender Studies module, while her work continued to be debarred from entry into mainstream Sociological Theory, as was Jung's on epistemological grounds.

My doctoral reading now includes Cixous – particularly The Book I Don't Write (2007: 9 - 30). But not Irigaray, beyond a brief piece in a treasured feminist theory anthology on the sex that is 'not one' (1980: 99) that still shocks me in its apparent biological reductionism (and now disappoints in its failure to recognise those older African women amongst whom I live and work who may once have been pharanoically circumcised – what does no lips mean?). Such is the prejudice of which Nietzsche (1974: 57) writes. And I mean mine. I have elected not to read Irigaray's more recent work. And I should emphasise that only I was responsible for the reticence evidenced in my undergraduate selection of texts for citation purposes. My tutor was a seminal figure in the establishment of a Gender Unit at the institution concerned. I question now why I so readily presented lengthy essays on the finer points of Marxist theory to this tutor's predecessor - who had barely heard of Althusser (1966 / 1969, 1970, 1971) and Gramsci (1971), thereby risking rejection as a potential academic, yet refrained from introducing feminist texts. I was policing the very boundaries I now seek to subvert in all their guises. This demonstrates why phrases with
forceful performative potential – like ‘white ink’ (Cixous ibid.) were so necessary back then, and remain so. They force thinking; they shift the ground(s); they disrupt cliché thinking; they demand attention to feminist values. Hence the image of the warrior in Nietzsche (1881 / 1982: 370) and Deleuze’s observation (2004: 260) that the nomad must sometimes seek to remain in the same place in order to resist re-territorialisation; i.e. to preserve an alternative thinking space for others to step write into.

'A new image, or philosophical concept, is an affect that breaks through established frames and representations. It illuminates a territory through the orientation of its coordinates: it makes visible / thinkable / sayable / hearable forces, passions and affects that were previously unperceived'

(Braidotti ibid. 307)

Creativity here is technological (how?), geological (where?) and ethical (where are the limits set and how can altered states or processes of change be sustained?) (ibid.). Feminist poststructuralist theorising and writing shows me how. So does the writing of Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari. I have looked to both for support of my own creative experimentation and when interrogating, or engaging reflexively with, my writing and pedagogic practices.

The Cixous (2007) text I now regularly return to is profoundly affective: Helle Winther (ibid.) on paper, in the paper, in the writing, in my body, in my thinking. I feel Cixous is a ‘private thinker’ (Deleuze 2004: 77) despite her collaborative style of working, and her troubling of the subject – object dualism through the concept of the entrenous – the in-between (1976: 883). If there is a paradox here – that private thinking is achieved through collaboration, then Cixous might advise me to forego anguish about paradox (Conley 1991). And Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 28) would remind me of the ‘logic of the
AND' and that there is no dialectical contradiction here. I return just as frequently to writing by Deleuze (originally published in 1964) which opens: 'The sadness of generations without "teachers"' (2004: 77). Deleuze writes with reverence of Sartre and his role as a 'private thinker', along with Nietzsche; he notes Sartre's profound influence upon a generation who were consequently taught a 'new way to think' (ibid. 77 – 78). The philosopher now so closely identified with becoming, and thought without image as an anti-totalising strategy, writes:

'what is missing today, what Sartre knew how to bring together and incarnate for the previous generation, were the conditions of totalization: a totalization in which politics, the imagination, sexuality, the unconscious, and the will are all united' (ibid. 79)

The 'private thinker' is one who defies the 'moral order, the "representational" order [that] has closed in on us' and the 'fear' upon which it depends; and who 'requires a world that contains a certain minimum of disorder, even if only revolutionary hope, a seed of permanent revolution' (ibid. 78). And if such private thinkers become our teachers, it is because they come to us in an 'agitated world' and end our 'solitude' (ibid.) in an overcoming of our own situation (ibid. 79; Nietzsche 1974: 357) that is, paradoxically, both individual and collective in nature. In a statement that is suggestive of the concept of the untimely, Deleuze observes:

'We speak of Sartre as if he belonged to a bygone era. Alas, we are the ones who in today's conformist moral order are bygone. At least Sartre allows us to await some vague future moment, a return, when thought will form again and make its totalities anew, like a power that is at once collective and private' (ibid. 79)

And Deleuze cites Sartre on the purpose of writing. The writer:
‘must address a public that has the freedom to change everything, which implies, beyond the suppression of social classes, the abolition of all dictatorship, the perpetual renewal of categories and the continual reversal of every order, as soon as it starts to ossify. In a word, literature is essentially the subjectivity of a society in permanent revolution’

(Sartre 1947: 162-163 in Deleuze 2004: 78)

This language may seem dated to those who did not live and read through the 1960s. Or the 1970s, before phrases like ‘self-emancipation’ were dismissed as evidencing a repression hypothesis. The latter refers to criticism that emancipatory discourses assume the very liberal humanist subject or essentialist self they seek to decentre - deconstruction made to eat its own tail. Moi (1985 / 2002: 100), for example, later criticised Cixous for an implicit essentialism and failure to provide a historically and contextually specific analysis of the situation of women. It is surely the case that ‘early Cixous’ is evocative of De Beauvoir’s arguments about reproductive capacity and immanence (Lloyd 1984: 100 - 101); and that her depiction of mother-daughter relationships is idealised (my own experience precludes such idealisation). Cixous, however, also writes of men who are not afraid of their femininity (1976: 885) and of the mother as metaphor (ibid. 881 – 882); she has also consistently declined to define l’écriture feminine on the grounds that definition is impossible (ibid. 883). Such ambiguity or ambivalence allows Cixous to avoid theoretical and political debate that would only stifle or inhibit the self-emancipation and becoming through others that she has consistently strived for. Like so many who recognised the impact of Freudian ideas in popular thinking, Cixous, and Deleuze, needed to know whether psychoanalytic concepts and theories could be (re)worked in the service of a difference cause. Anyone familiar with the prescriptive Freudian notion of polymorphous perversity, which is presented as a developmental stage that children normally (read: should) grow out of on their
way to sexual maturity, will understand how both Cixous and Deleuze appropriated and transformed this concept into political imperatives: the tantric egg of Deleuze and Guattari implies a diffuse sexuality, or sensuality, that escapes the phallic economy (symbolic or otherwise), and bisexuality in Cixous is outlined as follows:

'This does not mean that in order to create you must be homosexual. But there is no invention possible, whether it be philosophical or poetic, without the presence in the inventing subject of an abundance of the other, of the diverse: persons-detached, persons-thought, peoples born of the unconscious, and in each desert, suddenly animated, a springing forth of self that we did not know about -- our women, our monsters, our jackals, our Arabs, our fellow-creatures, our fears. But there is no invention of other I's, no poetry, no fiction without a certain homosexuality (interplay therefore of bisexuality) making in me a crystallized work of my ultrasubjectivities. I is this matter, personal, exuberant, lively masculine, feminine, or other in which I delights me and distresses me. And in the concert of personalizations called I, at the same time that you repress a certain homosexuality, symbolically, substitutively, it comes out through various signs -- traits, comportments, manners, gestures -- and it is seen still more clearly in writing'

(1980a: 97 – 98)

Gannon's use of the concept of the unconscious (ibid. 119) – as a 'subterranean map of relations' and not a repository of repressed instinctual individualised but familially - orientated drives, is indicative of the shift in thinking about the unconscious. The latter is implicated when memory unfurls from the flesh and when forces vie for articulation – inevitably erupting into the text of self - writing (ibid. 113). Freudian reductionism, normative neurosis, and linear causality are displaced and (re)placed elsewhere on this account; and dream analysis becomes an exercise in poetic nomadic subjectivity in the production of an embodied textuality (ibid. 119). I suspect, at this point in my writing, that academic convention might demand fuller exposition of these shifts in thinking – a taxonomy of thought or the mapping of a terrain noting seminal
figures and excluding others. Right now however, I can feel myself tensing and sensing the possibility of another form of infinite regress. So I refuse to go there. I am assembling. I am moving on. God! I am imagining my own version of The Dinner Party.... but it is not Judy Chicago’s (1979).... it belongs to no ONE.... I am reserving the best places for Deleuze and Cixous but when I look again it is a library of plates and I am shouting I am not a fucking librarian! I have too much history! Too many places to set, too many invitations to send, how can I invite everyone when some I have forgotten and some I cannot forget? And what about the Deleuzian tangle!? All I can be certain of is that I am not the unknowing trainee of neoliberal managerialism and that the diversity and intensity of writing by Deleuze, and now Cixous, has corresponded to my own ‘modernity ‘(Deleuze ibid. 77)..... there were innumerable modernities before this one.... I want to show the chaosmos of the personal (Cixous 1976: 892) not implode under its weight.... defy the ‘demon of interpretation’ (ibid.).... I need to be a dancing star, a free spirit, a wanderer, a nomadic subjectivity..... I crave those sacred thrills .... what happened to becoming-scholar?..... I am reading about Montaigne (1533 - 1592) (Foglia 2009) right now.... Cixous did that (2007: 28).... Nietzsche was influenced by him too.... and I read that Montaigne could move between philosophic concept and personal anecdote with great ease.... I cannot ... self-writing becomes a minefield strewn with dead bodies that I must tiptoe around.... but I have citational support now for students who can, and want, to go there..... without imploding, without tripping over the dead bodies. What is becoming - imperceptible if it is not a self - overcoming, a self - (re)newing that is simultaneously and paradoxically both singular and collective – a moving on in which others are deeply implicated and that is empowering in its totalisation (as Deleuze once defined it). This is (MY) learning. Cixous will
insist on meditations over abstractions and taxonomies, and resist the
identification of themes across her lifetime's work or even a single text; and
where she has engaged in a more expository style of academic writing, the
position will be contradicted, undermined, disrupted in subsequent works; it is
the flux of becoming that matters – exploration, meditation, experimentation. To
pin down and to be pinned down is to celebrate death rather than the
abundance – the excess of energy, which is life itself (Bataille 1988). I take
meditation to imply an activity akin to Nietzschean interpretation and Deleuzean
contemplation; an affective processing that is fast or slow, rhythmic or irregular,
that involves a tension of forces – tort or fluid, and where connection with the
Proper Names (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 24) of academia is precisely that:
connection, relationality, reciprocity, the appreciation of a lifetime's work in all
its diversity, and not restriction to abstraction or the extraction of disembodied
positions or key arguments. At the outset of my research into Deleuze, and then
Cixous, I noted their pedagogic practices and collaborative projects; it was a
provisional contextualising that amplified my interest in their writing and
thinking. When Cixous engages with Derrida, she describes their first meeting
and her reactions; it is not a purely cerebral engagement.

Freedom is the sacred in Cixous. It is more than a theme.

Phallogocentrism conveys the belief that, in the prison house of language
(Jameson 1972), some are more imprisoned than others. Or some thing is more
imprisoned than some thing else, and what it is can vary according to purpose:
reclaiming the organism, its history and the molar identity of Woman (Deleuze
and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 304) or challenging the denigration of the feminine (in
Woman or in Woman and Man) (Cixous 1976: 879). I will come back to this
thing, this it, since Cixous (2007) meditates on the status of the it in this text.
And Derrida, her close friend, insists that ‘It must be written’ (1981a: 279) (my italics) and inverts the privileging of speech over writing as the mere recording of the former (1967 / 1976: 144, 295). We have seen that – where ‘we’ are those with philosophical and academic problems to resolve (Scheman 1993: 7), that for Nietzsche, God died but was resurrected and lives on in grammar – in the illusion, and delusions, of the sovereign subject (1967: 488); and in those of the detached observer which is our forgetting that we inhabit the world and that the poetic is how we accomplish that inhabitation – aesthesis, esthétique, the aesthetic, not episteme, sensation not semantics (Barthes 1982: 225). I now want to question the opposition that Cox (ibid. 203) sets up between chaos as différance and the chaotic as fluidity before I say more about language specifically. It is différance that ensures the fluidity, the productivity, of the poetic in the meditative and allusive writing of Cixous (ibid.) – the sense of process without telos as I read her, the affectivity, my dissolution as an oedipalised organism and (re)composition around the new affects that philosophical images and words evoke (Braidotti ibid. 306).

Cixous, like Barthes (1976: 225), was influenced by Jakobson (1960: 356, 358) and the notion that the poetic is constituted by an aesthetic signifier which is affective – that mobilises heterogeneous sensation as well as destabilising meaning (Oboussier 1995: 117). The latter outlines the neurological syndrome of synaesthesia as relevant to the metaphoricity found in Cixous and Barthes, and in a manner reminiscent of my turning to Protevi and a scientific register in search of a theory of the body with which to supplement that of Butler (cf. p. 158). Unlike me however, Oboussier acknowledges that this outline can only function as an ‘intertext’ designed to ensure an ‘open’ text - one that declines to pin down or be reductive (ibid. 122). Defrommont (1990: 116) is
cited on the marginalisation of metaphorical thinking as a distraction from the 'pure vision of abstractions' in seventeenth century rationalism, and concomitant feminisation of such thinking. This denial of the corporeal basis of thought removes it from the flux of becoming, prioritises separation over continuity, and pre-empts recognition that metaphorical thinking can rattle the bars of, or severely distort, the prison house of language in exceeding the purportedly fixed repertoire of the latter (Oboussier ibid.); in undermining grammar as god-maker (Nietzsche 1886 / 1966: 17). Cixous however was determined to hear the call of things themselves (1979: 117 -118).

Cixous, like Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 73) confronted the 'imperialism of the signifier', i.e. structuralism as a theory of everything, the Derridian notion that discourse is everything (1978: 280), and the Saussurian dichotomy of word (signifier) and referent (signified) (Portis-Winner 1999). Each removes us from the world that can only be inhabited in a relation of proximity (Levinas 1969, 2000) and through assemblages that bypass the subject-object dualism (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 73). Cixous applies Heidegger’s concept of the entrenaus (Shiach, 1991: 60) in two senses: to refer to the 'expanded intersubjective economies' (Oboussier ibid. 124) that subjectivity as relationality implies, and to conceive of the relationship between words and their referents as a direct physical relationship such that when we use the word sea we smell and taste salty seaweed and feel the energy of waves. The word - referent relation in Cixous is a reciprocity – a giving and receiving of knowledge through the senses, or as Oboussier (ibid.) states, a 'mobile crossing' where smell and taste or a synaesthetic confusion of the senses foregrounds the body and lets us grasp the materiality of things in themselves. It is symptomatic of our alienation from language that words so often feel 'dried up, embalmed, and
reduced' or inadequate to their referent (Oboussier ibid. 125). For Cixous, as for Nietzsche, metaphoricity is the signing of the body in, or rather with, the material world; knowledge can never therefore be a matter of abstraction – of knowledge purified of contamination by the sensual and the material. In a passage in Illa (1980b) Cixous describes how, as a child who had not discovered proper and common nouns, she would find her way in an Algerian market using her senses. As Oboussier (ibid. 126) puts it, Cixous writes towards a direct sensory contact with the world where she lives and with what surrounds her; she lives the colour and the smells that she moves through without compartmentalisation of the senses, and without the separation that words imply. This is the de-deified nature and the poetic that I escape to. It is how I stay in the elusive present moment and catch the scent of the future, the yet to come.

I am affected by the fluidity of Cixous' movement and sensing – the continuity of her becoming with the market, by the seamlessness of her movement between the then and will be of memory, and by her metaphoricity that is the fluidity of language as meanings proliferate without end – without telos or finality. Raschke defines postmodernism as: 'the lightning storm of the twentieth century that at last became lyrical' (2003: 1) and identifies Bataille as a 'writer / creator' rather than the artist - philosopher envisaged by Nietzsche who also wrote of the 'hardness' of creation (ibid. 4). Bataille wrote of the 'incomplete' nature of being and truth, and of knowledge as a 'huge architecture in deconstruction and construction' (1961 / 88: 42 cited in Raschke ibid. 2 - 3) long before Derrida. Writing here is a flowing signature that explores signifying possibilities and thereby deconstructs what Derrida (1982: 195) terms
logocentrism – the grand narrative of Greco-Christian onto-theo-grammatology.

Bataille’s writing is described thus by Raschke (ibid. 4):

‘Like all signatures, it is unique, a rhythm and a “fractal geometry” of projections and eruptions, of intricate breaks and flows [in which] logos becomes rhetor’

The latter is a flux of ‘intimations and signs’ and a ‘retreat from the advancing armies of scientific, cognitive, and discursive precision’; hence Bataille is as likely to write of the reddening sunrise of female sensuality as of philosophy (ibid.). And for Bataille, like Nietzsche, it begins with the birth of art that is also a self-overcoming – the overflowing of life beyond its forms and boundaries. The earliest art is therefore aboriginal for Bataille (1955 / 1988) as it does not strive to record, but is symptomatic of ecstasy, excess, festivity prior to eschatology - the doctrine of judgement, the birth of prohibition and transgression. Raschke (ibid. 5) states: ‘Theology is to art as taxidermy is to the procreative process’ because to avoid mediocrity art must capture this transgressional impulse.

Bataille (1955 / 1988) links art with sacrifice; both contain a festive transgressive exuberance in their exhibition of excess, and both imply a quest for self-transcendence or a sacred instant which is achieved through sensual transgression from prescribed routines. Primitive art ‘created the world’ (Bataille 1955: 130) that it figured prior to the institutionalisation of sacred forms and rituals that sought to curb the impulse to aesthetic transgression. Raschke (ibid. 7) discusses the role of those ‘extremes of eroticism, obscenity, cruelty, and violence’ in Bataille’s writing and concludes: ‘Thought can only accomplish its task when it ponders the unspeakable’. Bataille deploys perversion and an apparent fixation on bodily fluids as a trope for the fluidity of thought and language, for the mobility of signifiers, or rather, in order ‘to make our notions fluid’ – to shock us into thinking outside of tired frames and into (re)examining
those cruel practices that keep us from the art of keeping alive. If postmodernism is a religious act for Raschke, it is because the signifier is the apotheosis of the sacrifice in all its exuberance. Raschke also argues that the theory of the gift, which Cixous takes up, originates with Bataille (1988) not Heidegger, and that the concept of the 'general economy' in Bataille (which is not an economy of scarcity, demand and exchange but one of excessive giving) was intended to trouble existing discourses and signifying economies (ibid.). Given that Bataille began writing his journal of 'poetic self-mortification' (Raschke ibid. 2) entitled Guilty (1961 / 1988) in 1939, as the Nazis assaulted Poland, it is self-evident which discourses and signifying economies Raschke is referring to. Bataille meditates on 'themes' relating to Catholicism and the logocentric tradition from which it emanates after beginning: 'The date I start (September 5, 1939), is no coincidence. I'm starting because of what's happening, though I don't want to go into it. I'm writing it down because of being unable not to' (1961 / 1988: 11).

It is difficult to comprehend the enormity of it used in this context given it's affective potential. Raschke implies that the 'abdication' of language evidenced in Bataille's statement: 'I won't speak of war, but of mystical experience' (ibid. 12), and in the metaphysical particularism of Deleuze, is a defiance of a speech that was once so excitable (Butler 1997) it rendered systematic genocide possible. Some thing that is almost too unbearable to contemplate. Some thing that requires we become the new God-makers (Hale ibid. 52) and create the world anew, or as Hilfrich (2010) implies in comments on Cixous, to keep making it anew as the exiles from certainty and completeness that twentieth century events have made us. Bataille wrote:
'A few Christians have broken from the language world and come to the ecstatic one. In their case, an aptitude has to be supposed which made mystical experience inevitable in spite of Christianity's essential reliance on speech' (ibid. 4)

This aptitude is reminiscent of the Nietzschean wanderer who has some thing chaotic inside them that leads them to question and to experiment. ‘Aptitude’ here strikes me as problematic. On this account, it would easy to reduce any wanderer, free thinking spirit – in the popular sense, or dancing star to their social context thereby producing a sociological version of ‘so that’s what it was!’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 18). Or to engage in some other form of reductionism. This is precisely the linear causality in liberal humanist self-writing that Gannon (ibid. 121) is writing against and that Cixous rejects. Braidotti asserts that all women know this state of nomadic subjectivity, but avoids the metaphor of exile on political grounds and instead posits the nomad as a figuration conveying ‘political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity’ (1994: 23). My own nomadic writing has led me to write of an abusee’s sense of exile from everyday life. Exile seems appropriate. I use the term abusee to avoid the V word (cf. p. 40), though it too could be used reductively and does not begin to capture the singularity and complexity of the events prompting its adoption. Can such experiences be interpreted as explanatory principles or defining features of my identity? Which identity is that? There are many. They are always changing. When I read Cixous (2007) it is the movement, the fluidity, that I am caught in and surf; I become with that wave, I move on. There is no quest for some primary or originary trauma that I would make my theory of everything or the missing piece in a puzzle of the Law’s making. I am not a problem to be solved, and like Cixous (1976), and Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009), I reject the Law(s) that would make me One. I will
laugh like the medusa of Cixous (1976) at the suggestion that I necessarily lack some thing and let my body do the thinking and the writing in all of its desire that is not lack. Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 25) state:

‘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 that 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’

The medusa of Cixous (ibid.) is a metaphor for multiplicity. It also emphasises the productive nature of desire in opposition to this traditional concept of desire as lack which both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory assume. So to accuse Cixous of essentialism is perhaps to misunderstand the rhetorical strategy deployed: logos becomes rhetor (Raschke ibid. 4) in the feminine writing - l'écriture feminine, Cixous proposes. In a strategy that is not dissimilar to the parodic practices of Butler (1990 / 2006: 200), Cixous adopts the very binarised categories she wishes to deconstruct: it is subversion by appropriation, the transformation of a negative into an affirmative. On this account, l'écriture feminine represents the other voice of libidinal feminine sexuality that gives the world creativity and an otherness that is separate from those structural positions that locate desire and expression through anatomical division. Cixous can be read as rectifying (flattening and disrupting) the hierarchical structure of psychoanalytic and linguistic binaries that render women passive and unknowable / inaudible / invisible. That Lacan describes the phallus as a signifier not an anatomical organ hardly matters; the pertinent question is how much more freedom from oppressive structures can be generated from this shift towards the Symbolic in Lacan? The medusa
laughs derisively. Is he becoming mad? How can a medusa point out anything in her multiple condition? She can write though. And find a freedom for her tangled dis-integrated body there – in the affective and deconstructive fluidity of that writing, in the metaphoric productivity that wonders what an ‘arbitrary’ metaphor (Deleuze, 1985 / 1989: 129) is. Why should she care? She is a paradox – both singular and multiple.

Deleuze knows this (ibid. xxvii). It is there in his writing too – the same problems: how do you write outside of tired frames without using metaphor? How do you disrupt the psychoanalytic connection between desire as lack and metaphor and metonymy? You get rhizomatic. You go with the flows and intensities. You come to writing and you let it come to you. You assemble. You connect. You do not separate. You rebel. You write your way through or around the checkpoint of: Lacanian Phallus this way / no Lacanian Phallus that way (Rose 1982: 29). Self-mortification, as required by the Law(s) that instil guilt, fear, and thoughts of death, is outlawed on this slippery slope without parameters, without fixed meanings, without immutable structures. You slide unashamedly past phallogocentric discourse with your jouissance intact. You say to men who fear the abyss that Freud prescribed for Man and Woman: The ‘litany of castration’ (Cixous ibid. 891) no longer applies. So you get writing (cf. p.42). I am alluding here to Joyce, the modernist writer studied by Cixous (1969 / 1976), and the ambivalence his writing evoked – appreciation of its fluidity but dismay at the familiar Freudian themes of guilt and death that inform it.

The ‘insurgent’ (Cixous ibid. 883) body must write itself, or rather, the feminist insurgent must write from the body in order to overcome prescription, oppression, and silence – to laugh at rules that fix standards (Cixous ibid. 884). The body of one’s own is a mind of one’s own as it was for Bataille. The
recurring literary figure of a woman made mad through confinement or imposed passivity is symptomatic of an enduring suppression of feminine creativity for Cixous (ibid.). I remain, however, unable to respond positively to the figure of a mother - artist - creator (Cixous ibid. 884 - 885), or the positing of a pre-Oedipal land of 'mother's milk and honey' (Moi 1985 / 2002: 114). Some thing stops me in my writing tracks. I do not recognise myself in this image of Woman as perpetual giver suffused with maternal love. For Cixous (ibid.) it is the body's memory of an originary maternal love which renders it an 'intimate recipient [that] makes all metaphors possible and desirable'. But this seems to re-introduce the very notion of desire as lack that Cixous was so anxious to deconstruct. It is the 'pre-Oedipal causality' rejected by Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009: 37). Cixous has moved on however and so must I. I prefer to think of metaphor as what the body does with the forces, affects, and energy generated through encounters with others and with Life – with the excess of Bataille (ibid.), and the productive desire and potentialities of Deleuze (ibid.). I want to suggest however that the mode of writing that Cixous engages with - that privileges an embodied yet open-ended depersonalising (or deconstructive) process or flow over logical exposition, accords with the interpretation of life as an undivided creative flow. The latter is found in Bergson (1896 / 1994) and influenced Deleuze (Colebrook 2005: 304). And both Cixous and Deleuze reject a structuralist linguisticsim that renders thinking as structured by, or limited to, what can be thought within language (ibid.).

The concept of radical immanence which Deleuze derives from Spinoza's univocity (cf. p. 17) precludes the separation of mind and body as distinct substances. Both univocity and the Nietzschean eternal return imply that completeness is unattainable (Colebrook 2005: 292) and Cixous' deconstructive
writing embodies this principle. Cixous' edenic conception of language (Oboussier ibid. 125) precludes any suggestion that Derrida's influence has resulted in a linguistic constructivism or idealism. It was heavy reliance on metaphor in Derrida's own writing that prompted me to reconsider metaphoricity in Deleuze. Becoming in Deleuze is about actualising new modes of affective interaction not signification (Braidotti ibid. 304). And the form of receptivity Cixous proposes (ibid.) is clearly affective – having the potential to bring about heterogeneous multiplicities that disrupt hierarchical binaries. I shall provide examples of metaphor in Derrida that may explain my ambivalence towards abstract masculinity, and towards the style of academic writing with which it associated, that I so often adopt yet feel compelled to subvert. Why, in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, I am ‘schizo’ (ibid. 40) in sometimes wanting to be ‘at the limit of social codes’ and allow desire to break through the ‘Great Wall of China’, i.e. ‘to create a new polyvocity that is the code of desire’ (ibid.) and in which the body is deeply implicated. Like Bataille, Deleuze and Guattari refer to an energetic surplus or ‘income’, ‘a share that falls to the subject’, and ‘that comes its way as something left over’ (ibid.). Familiar socially prescribed signifying chains are disrupted in the action of the ‘desiring - machine’ or process of desiring - production: through breaks in flows. When writing of the unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari state: ‘How very strange this domain seems, simply because of its multiplicity – a multiplicity so complex that we can scarcely speak of one chain or even of one code of desire’ (ibid. 38). The process involved is described as analogous to that which causes an infant’s regurgitation of surplus milk (ibid. 41). Deleuze and Guattari insist that this illustrative example is drawn from a different register but not intended metaphorically: ‘The desiring-machine is not a metaphor’ (ibid.). It is univocity and radical immanence that prevent the
unconscious being reduced to an operation specific or unique to language or signification. This is the naturalism that Cox (ibid. 207, 215) identifies in both Nietzsche and Deleuze. In a treatment of Kafka’s Joseph K (Deleuze and Guattari 1975 / 1986), the unfaithful recorder is one who remains in the same register, tells only one story, and defies the conditions by which information is legitimised (Gardiner 2007: 244). It is not about pure textuality. ‘To withdraw a part from the whole, to detach, to “have something left over” is to produce, and to carry out real operations of desire in the material world’ (ibid.).

Hence, Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009: 43) write of ‘polyvocal and transcursive inscriptions’ on the surface of the body without organs and Joyce’s process of re-embodying – a ‘reweaving’ of fragments that defy any totalisation and affirm the irreducibility of multiplicity. Any search for a unifying final signified or meaning is futile. This is also why Deleuze emphasises the productive nature of texts – their capacity to affect; and why Cixous (2007: 13 - 14) meditates on the status of it. The hidden referent sought in Freudian analysis can never be found because, for Cixous and Deleuze-Guattari, it simply is not there. There is only a continuous process of becoming, repetition with difference in the distanciation of the plural self from what it has been told to be in the past and is supposed to be in the future according to the Law of the Father (Lacan 1966: 852) in its numerous guises. In Derridian terms, it is an endless differing and deferral of being (1981b: 43, 2000a: 282 - 305). For Nietzsche, we must struggle to make the force of an alternative interpretation felt; for Deleuze and Guattari (1975 / 1986: 19), we must make one register strange through its translation into another; and for Derrida (1992: 191 -199) we must understand that all narrative or Law begins with fiction. We are not required to dig ever deeper in search of a Real buried meaning, or to wait to remember what we
cannot yet know because we cannot remember what it is that we do not yet know as Platonic (re)collection would have it (Hale 2003: 40 – 41). Why then do I fear my writing has not passed through Plato’s Idea and passed the test of divine perfection? Who will say if it is a pale imitation – a false copy and not the Real thing? ‘We want to dig past, mine and blast our way back to the original autographs and eventually to the breath of God. Or the death of God. Metaphysics is violent indeed’ (ibid. 42). For Deleuze, we can never truly begin, or authentically repeat, only try to repeat a copy of a copy of a copy (1969 / 1990: 303); hence the concept of the folding of meaning that prevents repetition from being taken as a matter of identity and contradiction (1968 / 2004: 77). But we still write and interpret as if Paradise existed – a land before ‘innocence and guilt, before good and evil, before knowledge of the original and the copy’ (Hale ibid. 46).

Hale asks what it is to represent – to ‘re-pre-sent: the present already given in the past and given again in the future’ and suggests it is Deleuze and Guattari’s War Machine – the endless return of becoming where the present never is because it is always slipping into the past and not yet realised in the future (ibid. 46 - 47). I mention this now because I still have not outlined Deleuze’s take on memory. But I want to provide a context for my examples of important Derridan metaphors; they are highly evocative of bygone presents – say ‘veil’ and I immediately think of Patti Smith and Robert Mapplethorpe (Institute of Contemporary Arts London UK 1983). Memory is powerful. The veil is the ‘secret of a face which is no longer even a face’ (Derrida 2002: 317); it is the unattainable and impenetrable Present, Real, Thing we want to tear the veil from in order to uncover an original pristine state but cannot. It is what Hale then identifies as Kant’s sense – the boundary between things and propositions,
the impenetrable boundary between the concept and the thing-in-itself that connects mind and matter, subject and object, self and world (ibid. 48). Sense as in perception (the senses), and meaning and reason (the concepts we apply), are summarised by Hale thus: 'Our senses connect us to the world of things but forever bar our way to knowing those things apart from that very thing that connects us to them' (ibid.). Cixous disagreed when she (re)membered 'finding her way along the perfumes' of an Algerian market (cf. p. 226). The Kantian kingdom of purity is policed by this veil (ibid. 49) which 'hides, shelters, protects' (Derrida ibid. 315) what is purportedly unreachable. Writing here is the production of veils that, according to Derrida, we are condemned and commanded to produce (2002: 316 - 317). Yet he too says: 'Of course, I still dream of resurrection' (ibid. 351): veil-fatigue. I know this feeling. I have already said that life was easier as a devout disciple of scientific, and then structuralist, Marxism; before I became the Fallen – the guilty, as feminist theory shook my faith and the tongues of Babel lashed my flagging conviction. I find my way along the perfumes of texts these days; it is how I found Deleuze and why I felt that I had always known him. Life changes when the only question is: What Does This Text Do? What Affects Are Produced? For whom? It is terribly sad – for me that is, that he never did write the book he had planned on Marx. How I would have enjoyed that text – the Book He Didn't Write. I always detect a lingering fondness when Marx is mentioned or invoked. Am I imagining that? Is it my own nostalgia speaking? The point is to change it! If only I really knew what it was. Back then it was an era, a life, a becoming, a totalisation in both of Deleuze’s senses. I recall many nights of undergraduate reading trying to convince myself of the materiality of language. Coward and Ellis (1977) helped. And Patti Smith: Jesus died for somebody’s sins.... but NOT MINE (Horses,
1975). I floated like a signifier after that. Until Deleuze, that is, who offered an exorcism and a baptism, not one or the other but both all at once.

Which brings me to the promised metaphors that constitute an 'endless circumscribing' of faith (Hale 2003: 51) because to do otherwise – to posit the Truth, is not possible. I like this idea. I need something sacred, however slippery and necessarily evasive that thing is; it stops being sacred when I try to put it into words. It is about affect and retaining some mystery in life; and both Nietzsche and Deleuze knew just how big such small words can be. Should I ask: What is Called Sacred? Like Heidegger (1976) writing about thinking, then follow Hale (ibid. 56) in wondering: did he mean the word or the thing, or thinking as a calling? What happens when I try to define or circumscribe what I hold sacred? - becoming with nature and the poetic, the self-eviction that is becoming (Braidotti ibid. 306). It is the self-eviction that I hold sacred. How would I capture 'holey space' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 537) - Derridan gaps in meaning, escapes from the fixity of meaning, hunger for the eviction of socially ascribed identities, the desire for no identity at all, for a blank space to be filled at a later date? I do not try. I rely instead on it and it then makes sense – a gossamer film of sense, a fine line that is a surface demarcating sense from non-sense (Deleuze 1969 / 1990: 66 – 67) that is really a folding (1986 / 2006: 80 – 81) in which affect and the other are deeply implicated. Mapplethorpe pierced his nipples on camera. I cried when he died. I felt betrayed when Patti turned religious. So what would happen if I tried to write it down – to pin it down? Derrida wrote: 'Sometimes only a pen, but just as well a stylet, or even a dagger' (1985: 176) and 'the pen, when you have followed it to the end, will have turned into a knife' (1981a: 300). That same pen is the 'very possibility of change' (Cixous 1976: 879).
Sexual and biblical metaphors proliferate as Derrida demonstrates the violence that naming and writing involve when we strive for Truth: 'The styled spur traverses the veil it tears it in order to see or produce the thing in itself' (1981a: 188). For all its violence, such writing is doomed to fail for Derrida; to succeed would be tantamount to an impossible self-rape. We can cut and tear all we want but all we can ever do is roll in the folds that join and divide (Hale ibid. 55) – folds on the plane of immanence or the tissue of sense; so the relentless thrusting forward of the pen in a quest for certainty (Hale ibid.) - for presence, for the final word, is distinctly phallogocentric (ibid.). 'With pointed little daggers, stylus, needles we poke and push, stitch and sew on this veil what we covet, what we desire and what we crave. In a word: our passions' (ibid. 57). Aristotle claimed to know what Man desires: the certainty of knowledge (ibid. 54). But do we find it when we mark the blank whiteness of a page? When so many gaps and spaces remain? Meaning could not be located there if this were not the case. I still read symptomatically; it became a habit that Althusser and Balibar (1970: 28) instilled and that the Deleuze who wrote in 1968 and 1969 has reinforced. We all seek meaning through the gaps and the silences of the text. Today I look for meaning and affect, but it depends on the writing as to which is most precious. I look for pedagogic and political implications too. Poststructuralist feminist theory undermines thinking that denies the corporeal basis of thought, that cuts and tears, and implies a prescriptive rigidity that militates against inclusion.

'Not being able to distinguish, attribute, appropriate, separate was scandalous in my youth. Love without racial differences. Without sexual differences. I owe all my fears and books to my short-sightedness. The dreams turned up. More strangers. It took me a while to welcome them'

(Cixous 2007: 17)
The medusa laughed for many reasons and asked if Derrida's 'love and murder' (1981a: 213), and Bataille's guilt (1961 / 1988), was all there is. Cixous told and showed ways in which writing can be suffused with life and creative uncertainty, not preoccupied with death and guilt: 'It was a way of going without telling. It was a way of going which doesn't mean getting there' (2007: 17). So did Deleuze (1968 / 2004) and Deleuze-Guattari (1980 / 2004). Much later Cixous writes:

'I have deposited in the Bibliothèque Nationale in my name and under this name a certain number of texts, especially some of the youngest – which one might perhaps call the oldest – that I doubted when first they came to me, came like letters from a foreign county on my paper, were books and that I could pass as their author'

(2007: 11)

It is precisely this de-centring, de-individualisation or deconstruction of the knowing subject and a valorisation of chance in the becoming of the subject that Badiou (1997 / 2000: 3) criticises in Deleuze and Guattari. Chance is evidenced in the non-expository, open-ended or exploratory style of Cixous that welcomes strangers as they arrive unannounced. Inspired by the writing of Clarice Lispector (Cixous 1979: 117), this style reveals an imperative to remain in the present and live every moment. Memories evoked by association or that arrive by chance form part of that present. As Cixous states: 'You don't choose whom to be haunted by' (2007: 12). Nietzsche adopted the image or metaphor of the agon – or contest (Acampora 2002: 1 - 4) to convey the non-teleological processes involved in the struggle of 'contestants' or forces for interpretative ascendancy, i.e. to challenge both the onto-theological positing of divine purposive construction and the positivistic emphasis on predictive calculability.
Nietzsche's 'divine accidents' (1968: III iv) affirm that becoming is a 'game of chance and necessity' (Cox ibid. 211); chaotic becoming is non-purposive becoming. It is chance that is affirmed in the formation of assemblages conceived as interactive relationships, co-functioning, or sympathetic symbiosis (Dema 2007).

'Life is not your history—those who have no charm have no life, it is as though they are dead. But the charm is not the person. It is what makes people be grasped as so many combinations and as so many unique chances from which such a combination has been drawn. It is a throw of the dice which necessarily wins, since it affirms chance sufficiently instead of detaching or mutilating chance or reducing it to probabilities. Thus through each fragile combination a power of life is affirmed with a strength, an obstinacy, an unequalled persistence in the being'

(Deleuze and Parnet 1977 / 2002: 5)

Excessive stratification that works to limit connectivity, or slow the continual productive breaking down of assemblages, constitutes a denial of the logic of becoming and the inevitable role of chance in assemblage formation and deformation (Dema ibid. para. 8). Becoming involves chance encounters, but more importantly, it implies dissolution of the subject-object dualism. The lines of flight or escape thereby generated cannot be predicted as A becomes B at the very moment B is itself taking a line of flight and becoming something else; it is mistaken therefore to view this process as an exchange: 'with Mozart's birds it is the man who becomes a bird, because the bird becomes music' (ibid. 73). The concept of intersubjective economy in Cixous aims to capture a similar constructive or generative dissolution. Given that Cixous rejects the emphasis on death and guilt in philosophic thinking and writing, I note that Badiou (ibid.) detects a similar fixation in Deleuze and Guattari's work and questions their vitalist orientation:
'if the event of thought is the ascetic power of letting myself be chosen (the Deleuzian form of destiny) and being borne, qua purified automaton, wherever hubris carries me; ... and if, therefore, powerful inorganic life is the ground both of what arrays me in my limit and of what incites me, insofar as I have conquered the power to do so, to transcend this limit: then it follows that the metaphor for the event of thought is dying, understood as an immanent moment of life'

(Badiou ibid. cited in Dema ibid. para. 13)

It seems that Badiou, in a manner evoking the concept of phallogocentrism, simply cannot tolerate the implied loss of sovereign control (as in a rationally informed free will) that a theory of radical de-subjectification entails. There is a conflation of theory and subjective experience of ourselves here that Deleuze and Guattari avoid. It is a confusion of Braidotti's self-eviction in becoming with self-abandonment as a conscious self-selected or initiated state – an act of free will with an ontological condition. Badiou appears unable to grasp the distinction between a philosophical principle and a political imperative, or how they might be related, even though this is precisely the criticism levelled at Deleuze. As a former Marxist, I have no such problem. Badiou perversely appropriates Deleuze's argument that death as deformation is logically and empirically integral to the process of becoming and wilfully misapplies it; and Nietzsche's critique of the ascetic ideal is similarly appropriated and misused. Dema (ibid. para.14) rejects the interpretation of the virtual as destiny, or an operation of pure chance that precludes any determination, as does Protevi (2009). Badiou's mention of the ascetic ideal of purity is notable however; in discussing becoming that involves the inorganic and ethical agency, Badiou refers to unnatural or monstrous couplings (Dema ibid.). I sense here that the traditional metaphysical division of the human into half-Man and half-beast, with its concomitant denigration or suppression of the corporeal, is rearing its head.
And that Badiou's focus on the inorganic as prohibiting ethical agency is disingenuous, or rather, it is morality (normative prescription) and not ethics that is ultimately at play. Dema challenges the charge of vitalism made against Deleuze and Guattari by Badiou and argues that a strategic vitalism is present in their writing (ibid. para.19). It is a (re)worked version of vitalism however. And I follow Cixous here in wanting to preserve, and sometimes savour, some mystery of life. Must I strive to become a Badiou-style automaton that seeks to know everything? When Cixous suggests that others might prefer the word 'diabolical' where she adopts 'divine' (2007: 25), I take this as an affirmation of corporeality and contingency, and a demand for freedom from the form of logic that Badiou deploys as a sparring contestant determined to have the last word. Badiou also asserts that the virtual implies a wholesale disengagement from reality (Dema ibid. para.14). How easy it is to invalidate through the invocation of psychosis. Whose reality is this? And is not the boundary between sanity and madness as fine a tissue as that between sense and non-sense? In Nietzsche, reality is simply a quantity of force (Deleuze 1962 / 1983: 40).

For Deleuze, as for Nietzsche, all knowledge is interested and therefore ultimately strategically creative, including empiricism (1969 / 1990: 17 – 18; 1990 / 1995: 122; Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 54) where 'the aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (creativity)' (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: vii). Passionate relational learning is celebrated and not denigrated as a deviant mode of academic life, as Deleuze's writing on Spinoza indicates; it is a Spinoza that denounces 'all that separates us from life' and 'all the falsifications of life' (1970 / 1988: 26), i.e. those values and abstractions which disparage life such that: 'we can only think of how to keep from dying, and our whole life is a
death worship' (ibid.). Passionate learning is positively embraced: 'Spinoza is the Christ of philosophers, and the greatest philosophers are hardly more than apostles who distance themselves from or draw near to this mystery' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 60). I have sought to reproduce the humility evidenced here when engaging with Deleuze, despite my pen relentlessly – phallogocentrically, thrusting forward so often in its fearful attention to prevailing assessment criteria. As Spinoza would have it, I am an effect and not a cause; the latter belief results in an illusion of consciousness simply because my thoughts and actions affect me (Roffe 2010), even though I am produced as a thoroughly socially embedded subject through a folding of the outside. Both Spinoza's dictum and self-production as folding mean that my academic concerns are theoretico-practical, i.e. about understanding the forces at play in my thinking, seeking joyful relations and creative engagement, and rejecting transcendent distinctions that inhibit my learning. Most of all, my writing should evoke the sense of movement that I want my learning to be (1990 / 1995: 25 - 33). It must be allowed to dissent.

'If you're talking about establishing new forms of transcendence, new, restoring a reflective subject as the bearer of rights, or setting up a communicative intersubjectivity, then it's not much of a philosophical advance. People want to produce "consensus", but consensus is an ideal that guides opinion, and has nothing to do with philosophy' (ibid. 152)

Or with learning, I would add. It is no stranger to neoliberal managerialism however (Davies 2005). Cixous, like Nietzsche and Deleuze, understood that we need polemic and faith: 'I admit I asked God for help. God is created for these sorts of struggles. Fear makes him necessary' (2007: 18). Perhaps this is my calling as a mature doctoral student who has too many places to set in her dining hall of personally seminal texts – to always be a dissenting voice. And
DISSENT MATTERS. It can take many forms. Braidotti raises another dimension of nomadism by proposing nomadic concepts – those which transgress disciplinary boundaries (ibid. 23).

The history of philosophy has always been the agent of power in philosophy, and even in thought. It has played the repressors role: how can you think without having read Plato, Descartes, Kant and Heidegger, and so-and-so's book about them? A formidable school of intimidation which manufactures specialists in thought – but which also makes those who stay outside conform all the more to this specialism which they despise. An image of thought called philosophy has been formed historically and it effectively stops people from thinking.

(Deleuze and Parnet 2002:13)

All thought is politicised for Deleuze and 'stupidity' is the privileging of a priori ways of relating to the world – particularly those excluding corporeality (1953 / 1991:109) and reifying a world in flux (1962 / 1983: 106). I think, but cannot really know, that I found Cixous (1976) compelling because, like Deleuze, she showed and told. Deleuze wrote about women reclaiming their bodies and politics, but also supported Cixous when she failed to acquire the profile within academia that her writing warranted. Deleuze very publicly credited Cixous with inventing a new way of writing that demanded a different way of reading (1972 / 2004: 230 - 231). Following Deleuze's death, Derrida (2001: 192 -195) wrote: 'I'm going to have to wander all alone'. It was this relational character of thinking and learning I sought to express in my textual eruption earlier; and the consequent difficulty, or impossibility, of identifying – chronologically or otherwise, all those events and textual relations that have influenced my doctoral experience and resulted in a text that shows the immanent activity of association (1953 / 1991: 25) not just my academic craft. The rhizomatic text has no structuring principle that rigidly determines its
content and form. Such writing is therefore the poststructuralist unsaid of the neoliberal managerialist academic regime. It shows a multiplicity of affective connections, allows the writing to wander, and feels the 'vibration' of concepts which, contra scientific functions, are non-propositional (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 117); it is evocative of naturalism as Lucretius conceived it. Naturalism here refers to the potentially demystifying or de-mythologizing role of philosophy as a denouncement of 'the forces which need myth and troubled spirit in order to establish their power' (1969 / 1990: 278) – that negate life. Roffe (ibid.) reminds me that Deleuze's naturalism should not be understood as opposed to constructivism. Deleuze states: 'Naturalism [ ] directs its attack against the prestige of the negative; it deprives the negative of all of its power; it refuses the spirit of the negative the right to speak in the name of philosophy' (ibid. 279).

The pertinent issue for thinking is not the stupidity of others but what makes stupidity possible (1968 / 2004: 189); any originary myth instituting dualisms that function as normative prescriptions qualifies as stupid in this sense. I need alternative images of thought, different logics of practice, and rhizomatic modes of writing precisely because hegemonic ones operate at a social and unconscious level; they function 'all the more effectively in silence' as the exercise of power (ibid. 207). This is why I think of my doctoral writing here as The Thesis I Don't Write, and show - perhaps more accurately, the tension between The Thesis I Do Write and The Thesis I Should Write.

On the subject of naturalism, had I remembered everything that I had read in The Logic of Sense (1969) before inviting Butler and Protevi to an allocated place at the table of my epistemological conundrum, I might have written very differently. But I did not. Instead I reproduced their characterisations of 'a' position relating to biological reductionism. This writing is included here
because it was my thinking at the time of writing - yet another episode in my singular doctoral experience where I have been troubled by a tension between an ethical mode of writing and the 'adversarial paradigm' (Moulton 1993: 149) academia valorises. Memory is powerful. It has taken a long time, and copious writing, to reach a point where I feel able to revisit Deleuze's take on time and memory without complicating matters too much with an abusee's valorisation of truth and integrity, and without invoking the thoughts that Badiou (ibid.) sarcastically says Deleuze says I must wait for like an automaton. I am with Deleuze on this one. I do not conjure thought and memory at will. I only wish I did. So the singular doctoral experience that is mine, and only mine, has indeed become a 'laying bare' (Cixous 1976: 881) of issues in my learning that may or may not be relevant to others. This learning is evidence of the chaos that 'complicates everything' and 'expresses the perpetual displacement of sense' which is the cosmos of that learning (Deleuze ibid. 150, 151). My thesis suggests that 'difference resists its yoke' (ibid. 155). The prevailing middle (Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 242) precludes a conventional conclusion with key arguments forcibly stated in a manner that would contradict the nomadic learning and related writing practice which I have shown here. To think is to create 'but to create is first of all to engender “thinking” in thought' (Deleuze ibid. 185) through shocking encounters. It now seems inevitable that those encounters which forced my thinking long ago would trouble my writing here. Once I stopped perceiving the doctorate as delivery of a fixed result – as a thinking and writing space, it became what Deleuze terms a 'free ground' – one in which a dogmatic image of thought no longer prevails: becoming - scholar can be likened to becoming-mad on this account, or what happens when the self contemplates itself outside of tired epistemological frames (ibid. 190).
Artaud knew this, and this is why Deleuze saw a nascent transcendental empiricism in the writing of the former (ibid. 185).

Finally, I come to Deleuze’s (re)working of the language of memory. As always, my reading has been interested and I will attempt to address loose ends – those questions which I anticipate others may ask. Why, for example, have I not drawn heavily on Kristeva’s concept of the subject-in-process in discussing Cixous? I can explain this prejudice with reference to traditional treatments of the writing of Proust – specifically his novel In Search of Lost Time (1913 - 1927), and to Deleuze and Guattari’s (1975 / 1986) philosophical engagement with that text. Deleuze is ultimately concerned with the micro-political aspects of memory – becoming as the overcoming of memory; both he, Guattari, and Cixous reject the Freudian tradition that encourages reductive readings of Proust – those which purportedly identify a preoccupation with death in his texts and that are fascistically denigratory (imply a desire for power over another). Kristeva (1996) reads Proust as displaying a depressive, morbid and erotic attachment to the past and to death, and Bataille (1988) finds Proust striving to achieve a state of pure dissatisfaction; the Freudian death-drive is pivotal in such analyses. Deleuze, by contrast, transforms the death instinct by refuting the Freudian model of conflicting drives where the tendency to regression, as the impulse to return to an inanimate state of matter, is a necessary component in a posited energetic duality. This conflictual oppositional model of the unconscious is based on a scientific objective determination of death and is replaced in Deleuze with an unconscious that questions and problematises. Deleuze offers a non-material concept of death as the non - being wherein every affirmation is nourished (1968 / 2004: 138) and one that corresponds to the ‘the pure form – the empty form of time’ (ibid. 137).
This (re)working of the Freudian death instinct desexualises Eros such that the positng of erotic attachments to, or unhealthy fixations with, the past is prohibited. Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009: 298, 330) dismiss the death drive as a transcendental or abstract principle, and later suggest that Proust was not intending to somehow regain time but to become the 'master of speeds to the rhythm of his asthma' (1980 / 2004: 300). This notion of different speeds derives from Bergson (1896 / 1994) and bears on how Deleuze thinks of memory and time. The latter is the power of difference or becoming whereby we move from the virtual to the actual (differenciation) - from what Colebrook (ibid. 33) describes as all the potential creations and tendencies to actualised events. The time we experience is radically split in consequence, i.e. there is pure time or pure memory which is virtual, and actual lines of lived time (ibid.). Yet the former must coexist with what we take as the present or that present would never pass. We can therefore think of pure memory or pure time as a condition of experience. Pure time can also disrupt our everyday world as when a singular memory from the past becomes intrusive. It is precisely because memory is real and coexists virtually with the present that such disruption occurs.

The writing of Cixous (2007) is suggestive of time as a flow where virtual memories are actualised as she writes – it is a movement between the virtual and actual in her own becoming and testimony to the transformative power of writing; her texts are mercifully devoid of the self-justificatory argumentation that Reason, and neoliberal managerialism, has demanded of us. We glimpse 'schizzes' (Deleuze and Guattari 1972 / 2009: 266) or mobile fragments of a nomadic subjectivity in flux, creative lines of flight, and divergent series of becomings. I decided not to repress all the memories that arrived uninvited as I
read and wrote. Contra Freud, we repress because we remember and do not remember because we repress (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 18). Why should I repress or exclude such memories when their inclusion demonstrates the very philosophical concepts that inform the writing? Similarly, I also elected not to exclude powerful signs from the world around me - as if the doctoral experience occurred in some hermetically sealed space or vacuum. Earlier allusion to the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church may have struck some readers as an inappropriate Deleuzo-Guattarian translation, and others as linked by association to the abuse of academic power (Richardson and St. Pierre 2005: 965 - 966); or as a rejection of the Law of the Father (Lacan ibid.) in its many guises. But I was living in Africa at the time of writing and wholly dependent on a world television news service that is highly repetitive in its broadcast content. There was no escaping this topical issue. Nor did I want to. The feminist poststructuralist imperative - say the unsayable, evolved with good cause and is even more relevant when many believe that the child protection box is now ticked and indifference to the plight of child abusers is the less 'self-indulgent' option. What happened to heart (Pelias 1999) and the crisis of Reason (Merleau-Ponty 1960 /1964)? To speak the unspeakable is to challenge the familiar scenario: 'I spoke to no one for fear “it” showed' (Cixous 2007: 14). And, of course, the nagging irony since I began writing about my doctoral experience is that I have indeed excluded much personal material according to pre-existing academic writing conventions, even as I have written an academic text about those who have successfully defied them.

I shall address memory and ‘speeds’ or duration by considering time and movement. What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity, and this contraction is both a contemplation and the auto-satisfaction of that
contemplation' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 96). The human organism is constituted by numerous such processes that render action and the active subject possible. Yet these ‘thousands of little witnesses’ or ‘selves’ remain ‘hidden’ to that subject even as they permit a sense of ‘self’; as Deleuze states: 'it is always a third party that says “me”' (ibid.). Contraction and contemplation, as conceived by Deleuze, clearly involve differing speeds or durations – different presents, depending on the species, organism, and part of the organism:

'It is need that marks the limits of a variable present: 'The present extends between two eruptions of need and coincides with the duration of a contemplation' (ibid.). The living present is the domain of passive syntheses - of need and habit. Deleuze emphasises this does not imply passive receptivity of sensation but the problematisation of a field - a 'question-problem complex' related to the exigencies of life (ibid. 99) where both organic and psychic life are held to rest upon habit. Hence the ‘larval subject’ or the ‘dissolved self'; contractile contemplation constitutes the organism itself before it constitutes sensation: 'the world of passive syntheses constitute the system of the self', i.e. 'the self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification' (ibid. 100). In this sense, the body or human organism is indeed anterior to language (cf. p. 59), but Deleuze suggests that there is a self whenever a ‘contracting machine’ that draws a difference from repetition is functioning. The passive synthesis of habit constitutes time as a living present but one that passes; consequently, Deleuze argues that there must be another time in which the first synthesis of
time can occur – habit as the foundation of time requires a ground, and it is memory that is held to ground time (ibid. 101). Active synthesis implies the active faculties of 'reflective representation, memory, and intelligence'; to contemplate is to question (ibid. 99). Deleuze distinguishes however between a derived active synthesis and a more profound passive synthesis of memory: 'It is memory that grounds time', or memory that is the fundamental synthesis of time which constitutes the being of the past – 'that which causes the present to pass' (ibid. 101). 'The past is not the former present itself but the element in which we focus upon the latter'; the 'was' is the past in general while what 'has been' is the particularity that we focus on (ibid.). The past in general is the pure or transcendental a priori past that is the condition of possibility of our experience of a 'present present' and of the reproduction of a former present; when we focus upon a former present, that former present is present in the 'present present', so we cannot visualise the relation between these different presents as successive instants in a linear conception of time, but should instead think of an 'embedding' of presents and a 'present present' that reflects itself at the same time that it forms the memory of a former present (ibid. 102).

Deleuze draws on Bergson (1896 / 1994) in exploring the paradoxes involved in thinking time and memory: the past is not constituted through the arrival of a new present, since again, if this were required the former present would never pass: 'No present would ever pass were it not past "at the same time" as it is present' (ibid. 103). Hence the first paradox of contemporaneity of the past with the present that it was: 'Every present passes, in favor of a new present because the past is contemporaneous with itself as present'; the second paradox is that of coexistence – if each past is contemporaneous with the present that it was, then 'all of the past coexists with the new present in relation
to which it is now past' (ibid.). For Bergson, Deleuze states, the 'present present' is simply the entire past in its most contracted state; the past is the synthesis of all time of which the present, and the future, are only dimensions – it no longer exists but 'insists' as the final ground of the passage of time (ibid.). This is why Deleuze speaks of a past that never was present; it never was in the sense of not being formed 'after' (ibid. 104). It is posited as an 'already-there' or presupposed; the new present emerges through the contraction of the past – the third paradox of pre-existence. The fourth paradox involves an infinity of levels; Deleuze invites us to consider what we call repetition within a life or destiny – the sense of successive presents that play out the same life:

‘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, resonances and echoes, objective chances, signs, signals and roles which transcend spatial locations and temporal successions. We say of successive presents that they 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 levels’ (ibid. 105)

Our empirical presents are constituted by these relations of succession and simultaneity, of contiguity, causality, resemblance and even opposition; the noumenal character of those presents derives from relations of virtual co-existence between the levels of a pure past, each present being no more than the actualisation or representation of one of these levels (ibid.). ‘In short, what we live empirically as a succession of different presents from the point of view of active synthesis is also the ever - increasing coexistence of levels of the past
within passive synthesis’ (ibid.). Deleuze is referring here to an illustrational diagram provided by Bergson and this is outlined below.

Both Bergson and Deleuze want to challenge the Kantian conception of time. Kant developed a linear model that placed events in time through the imposition of an a priori form on sensory experience, thereby replacing the cyclical notion of time where it is events that are constitutive of time. Since logically nothing can return on this Kantian account, an active process of synthesis is required that allows us to make sense of events and Deleuze terms this memory. Deleuze argues that both circular and linear models reduce repetition to the law of the identical, thus rendering repetition a secondary process in relation to time; the former entails the synthesis of difference into identity and the second necessitates such a synthesis. For Kant, the active synthesis involves a radical splitting or fracturing of the subject into the 'I' of memory as the process of synthesis and the passive self that experiences sensations; defining the passive self purely in terms of receptivity assumes that sensations are already formed before being organised according to the a priori forms of their representation (Kantian space and time); it also means that Kant unifies the passive self by depriving it of the activity of synthesis (ibid. 121). Contra Kant, Deleuze defines receptivity as the formation of numerous local selves according to the processes of contemplation or contraction; this account allows for the possibility of experiencing sensations, the power of reproducing them, and the valuation of pleasure that underlies the passion of repetition (ibid.). Deleuze’s dissolved self is therefore somewhat different to the fractured but unifying and therefore transcendent self of Kant. Having examined the first synthesis of time: that of habit and the cyclical model of time, where time is constituted as a living present through a passive foundation on which past and
future depend, and a second: that of memory, where time is the pure past and the ground that permits the passing of one present and arrival of another, Deleuze proposes a third where time is constituted as the future (ibid. 117). The latter is derived from Nietzsche's eternal return and it accords with a Deleuzean ontology in which nothing repeats as a return of the identical and everything differs from itself: 'The subject of the eternal return is not the same but the different, not the similar but the dissimilar, not the one but the many' (ibid. 153). The time of the eternal return is that of the future, and of novelty and becoming. It is movement. It is where repetition functions as a condition for action.

Roffe (2010) summarises Deleuze's treatment of Proust (ibid.) as diametrically opposed to a phenomenological method, and as an anti-logos, since a static transcendental ego that functions as the necessary unifier of experience is precluded. Instead, there is a receptive subject that is responsive to sensuous signs, and one that (re)creates experience through differing and unique interpretations of that experience. In this context, Deleuze follows Nietzsche in criticising previous philosophical images of thought for a 'tracing' method, and for the promotion of a model of recognition of the Same. The former implies that empirical consciousness and common sense inform philosophical concepts of the self in line with political orthodoxy, while the latter, following Bergson, confuses recognition of an object with thinking:

'we may as well distinguish between two kinds of recognition – that of the cow in the presence of grass and that of a man summoning his memories: the second can serve no more than the first as a model for what it means to think' (ibid. 171 – 172)

Hence: 'Recognition, everyday banality in person' (ibid. 171). In Kant, the transcendental synthesis of apperception is directly induced from an empirical
apprehension, and the empirical subject is replaced with a self that is fractured in linear time; the latter involves a pure time thereby linking the Kantian subject with the second synthesis of time identified by Deleuze. I found this second synthesis problematic when first reading Deleuze on time and memory; my instinctive reaction, as always, was to consider the implications for abusee testimony and I could not get further than depiction of the present-past as a construction of a moment which logically could not have occurred. My understanding now is that if memory relates to a present that has never truly been present, this is due to the radical fracturing of the Kantian subject whereby the active synthesis of instants produces meaning from passing moments through the retrospective construction of a form in-itself of things which did not exist in that form prior to the representational operation (Roffe 2010). The feminist movement changed my interpretation of events - I looked back at past events and made sense of them differently. The events themselves had not changed and yet somehow they had in that process. To go backwards is to go forwards. Bergson might say: duration equals memory plus the absolutely new (Lawler 2003: ix).

Deleuze (1966 / 1991) looked back to Bergsonism whilst around him others, like Derrida, entered language as the Heideggerian house of being, or rejected the mystery of life in favor of the rigorous science of Husserlian phenomenology (Lawlor and Moulard 2010). I appreciate Bergson's frustration with dualisms and attempts to trouble the idealism - realism divide that we are still obliged to speak to or position ourselves in relation to (Soulez and Worms 2002: 124). The difference between matter and memory is one of degree – both involve images and appearance is all we have; the image is more than a representation and less than a thing (Lawlor 2003: 9, 42). For Deleuze (1991: 255...
115 – 118), Bergsonism insisted on the primacy of memory and on the multiplicity of the data of consciousness, and therefore offered an alternative to a phenomenology that privileges perception and presupposes a unified consciousness to which discrete sensory data is presented. This multiplicity of data is what Bergson terms duration and it is thoroughly temporal, in opposition to the Kantian organisation of sensory data by an assumed unitary subject with an innate cognitive capacity to impose spatial and temporal categories in an invocation of a 'pure and empty form of time' (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 108).

Bergson differentiates between perceptual images that are present, actual, and extended and memory images which are past, virtual, and unextended. Bergson is able to define consciousness and freedom through the separation of time and space; it is in the duration that we can speak of the experience of freedom precisely because we are able to evoke and insert memory images into the temporal flow where nothing is immutable (Lawlor ibid. 53; Lawlor and Moulard 2010). Time is mobility; it is moving on; freedom is mobility. The subject does not stand outside either the real or the flow of time. For Bergson however, the image that differs from others is that of the body. It is another image in the continuity of perceived things but we also experience affect: 'Yet there is one image that contrasts with all the others in that I know it not only from the outside by perceptions, but also from the inside by affections: it is my body' (1896 / 1994: 169).

The concept of qualitative multiplicity is one of the concepts used to explain the embedded character of the relation of the subject with – not to, the world. Such a temporal multiplicity implies heterogeneity, interpenetration, continuity, progression, and not juxtaposition and dialectical negation (ibid.). An image that Bergson deploys to illustrate this phenomenon is that of an
encounter between two people involving sympathy; a heterogeneity of feelings is involved which defies any neat separation out of emotions as discrete juxtaposed and sequential components of the event. Duration here can be partially explained with reference to another of Bergson's images – that of a tape being drawn between two spools (1946 / 1992: 164 -165). Bergson points out however that this image is potentially misleading as it implies a homogeneity such that the tape could be replayed and remain the same, whereas he wants to emphasise that no two moments in conscious being can be identical. This illustration is highly pertinent to Bergson's take on memory. Duration implies a conservation of the past and difference as we do not simply re-cognise the same experience; instead, our memory expands as time moves on and new moments are added. The past is not static and unchanging in this sense. Lawlor and Moulard (ibid.) offer a further example: Tuesday is different from Monday because Monday only includes itself and Sunday, while Tuesday includes itself, Monday, and Sunday. Duration is memory, or the prolongation of the past into the present, on this account. In another image, that of an elastic band being stretched to a point that represents our 'now', Bergson invites readers to focus on the action of the hand doing the stretching; the movement (duration) is continuous, differentiating or heterogeneous, yet indivisible (ibid. 165). Just as Nietzsche questioned the division of matter and motion, Bergson argues that the object can only be abstracted from a movement or duration which is continuous in an operation that erroneously negates or subordinates time (ibid.). Hence duration is pure mobility which no image can adequately capture and, of course, it is the latter part of this argument that Deleuze (1985 / 1989) challenges in his second text on cinema. The colour spectrum is also discussed
by Bergson however in order to underline the paradoxical nature of qualitative multiplicities: there is unity in multiplicity (Lawlor and Moulard ibid.).

Bergson is critical of institutional pressures to spar over concepts and take sides (1946 / 1992: 175 – 176), but this tendency is attributed, as it is in Nietzsche and American pragmatism, to the relative status of knowledge and crucially to its interested nature. Both Nietzsche and Bergson however seek to go beyond a pragmatic ontology. Bergson introduces the concept of intuition (1896 / 1994: 184 – 185) and consequently adopts the phrase ‘true empiricism’ (1946 / 1992: 175). Intuition is described as sympathy (ibid. 159) or an entering into the infinity of durations (material and otherwise) that the flux of becoming is. It is an intuition of what is other and through which we become. In Deleuzean terms, we can only ever contract a part of this flux and never grasp it as a whole without resort to transcendence (to God, Self, or World) and the order of the Same, thereby stifling novelty. Intuition is memory, not perception, for Bergson; and as with Deleuze, it is representationalism that must be overcome – the separation of subject and object, of external observer and the ‘out there’, of mind and inert matter. So Bergson replaces perception with the image in order to move beyond the idealism and realism divide; matter is not reduced to our representations nor is it endowed with the power to create representations in our minds – perception is thereby ‘re-attached’ to the real (Lawlor and Moulard 2010). We convert images of duration into interested representations through selection, but the image is held to exist virtually in that representation, hence the ‘necessary poverty’ (1896 / 1994: 38) of the perception of conscious beings for Bergson.

‘If you abolish my consciousness ... matter resolves itself into vibrations, all linked together in uninterrupted continuity, all bound up with each
other, and travelling in every direction like shivers [ ] In just the same way
the thousands of successive positions of a runner are contracted into one
sole symbolic attitude, which our eye perceives, which art reproduces,
and which becomes for everyone the image of a man who runs’ (ibid.
208 - 209)

Unlike habit-memory (the body’s memory of acquired sensory - motor
movements), the pure memory of personal history is both unconscious and
mobile, as Bergson’s image of the cone (ibid. 152, 162) is designed to suggest.
‘Contemplation’ (ibid. 163) here is the integral movement of memory between
thought and action, where thinking is the process by which the unconscious
pure memory moves forward into singular images and the movement is one
from duration - multiplicity and interpenetration, to fragmentation; and it is
always potential or virtual. A second movement is required – that from these
singular images to the generalities that precede action – ‘contraction’ (ibid. 168).
The same movements occur in literary creativity. Bergson explains habit-
memory in corporeal and spatial terms – as attention to the practical necessities
of life. This accounts for continuity but not for diversity, discontinuity and
creativity; hence Bergson’s attempt to evolve a philosophy that accounts for
both. It is intuition which provides us with knowledge of what Bergson (1911 /
1998) terms the élan vital – the creative impulse common to all of life.
Mechanism is rejected as teleological, as in Nietzsche and Deleuze, and
Bergson (ibid.) explains diversity and species differentiation on a similar scale to
Deleuze and Guattari (1980 / 2004: 68) using the concept of complexification of
life, whereby the human species is said to have required a somewhat different
relation between consciousness and matter to survive. Lawlor and Moulard
(ibid.) suggest that the intelligence Bergson attributes to the human species is
intended in a pragmatic sense – as a relation with the real rather than an
intellectualism or the dogmatism so criticised by Nietzsche. Bergson also argues for the virtual persistence of instinct, and it is this that enables intuition to constitute our way of becoming with the world. Nevertheless, human intelligence is analytic in its practical orientation, dealing with quantitative multiplicities characterised by homogeneity, and thereby results in a tendency for us to lose touch with the vital impulse. Creative and spiritual modes of knowing and relating are compromised accordingly and it is only when vital interests are threatened that the tendency to intuition predominates.

Another element of Bergson's criticism of Kant resonates with Deleuze's conception of chaos; order is not imposed but involves a duality of order and disorder just as the notion of chance requires that of necessity (1896 / 1994: 232). Bergson (ibid. 268) argues for the complementarity of differing modes of knowing and different types of knowledge, just as Deleuze and Guattari (1994) do not denigrate science and recognise its pragmatic function. Yet ultimately, it is intuition, literary and artistic creativity that are favoured as in Nietzsche, since they can bring us closer to the vital impulse and therefore to what Bergson terms absolute knowledge. Like Nietzsche, Bergson will charge philosophy with (re)engaging with the creative impulse. Bergson however is seeking to connect the life of the spirit with that of matter in order to establish the absoluteness of knowledge (defined by its coincidence with absolute becoming), and to do so through realisation of the complementarity of metaphysical thought and scientific knowledge (Lawlor and Moulard 2010). When Deleuze declares himself to be a metaphysician and a vitalist, it is this Bergsonian project that he evokes, and a Bergsonian conception of metaphysics not the reified categories of Kant. The same divergence in philosophical thinking is evidenced in Bergson's criticism of Kantian morality (1935 / 1977) which is portrayed as a
closed repressive morality born of a static religion, and associated with maintaining social cohesion to avert threats to social stability. In an analysis that evokes the concept of projection, Bergson suggests that the suppression of intuitive ways of knowing that pragmatic analytic intelligence demands, and ensuing separation from the creative impulse, results in the externalising of a fear of disorder. Such fear stems from one’s own illicit desires and an excessively punitive morality that limits deviation through moral obligation. For Bergson, Kantian valorisation of the rational derives from a psychological error that is then translated into a universal moral theory, but the basic desire for community and related inclination to conformity this entails is retained. 

*Fabulation* refers to the production of hallucinatory images of a god who watches over us and provides the security that Nietzsche identifies as a basic human need. The ‘impetus to love’ is, by contrast, associated with an open morality and dynamic religion that is genuinely inclusive or universal and derived from ‘creative emotions’ (Bergson ibid. 96). Unlike emotions which are responses to a sign, such as sight of a loved one, creative emotion occurs in the absence of such signs and finds expression in creative production. Creativity here implies disequilibrium given the disruption to habitual intelligence which embeds us in concrete life, and it is noteworthy that Bergson looks to madness as a heuristic to account for such states as do Deleuze and Guattari (1972 / 2009). The source of creative emotions is intuition, and for Bergson, such experiences are mystical, spiritual, and result in action; they are therefore associated with religion which is not doctrinaire but open to the impulse of life. Contra analytic pragmatic intelligence which forecloses creative emotions, the latter can enrich the former through processes such as contraction and condensation. Bergson maintains that the two sources of religion and morality
(desire for community and creative emotions) should be thought of as a duality of forces – as complementary expressions of life (ibid.). While Lawlor takes up the Deleuzean focus on Matter and Memory that permits Bergson’s philosophy to be read as one of immanence, McLachlan (2005: 365) argues that Two Sources of Religion (Bergson 1935 / 1977) calls into question the relation between immanence and transcendence - a claim supported by noting the influence of Bergsonism on Levinas (whose concept of fecundity is derived from Bergson’s *élan vital*).

Deleuze and Guattari address the human need for security indirectly (1980 / 2004: 298) when warning against over de-territorialisation that might result in a regression into the undifferentiated. Lawlor (2003: 62) notes the absence of a theory of alterity in Deleuze and Deleuze-Guattari. I suggest however that the concept of becoming as symbiosis (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 52) renders this unnecessary, as does a monism that permits becomings with the inorganic and non-human:

‘If everything is alive, it is not because everything is organic or organized, on the contrary, because the organism is a diversion of life. In short the life in question is inorganic, germinal, and intensive, a powerful life without organs, a body that is all the more alive for having no organs’

(Deleuze and Guattari 1980 / 2004: 499)

The human subject is however a ‘monstrous being’ insofar as it can occupy a more considerable place in time than in space; Deleuze writes of an enlarged perception, one enlarged ‘to the limits of the universe’ and that ‘breaks with the identity to which memory rivets it’ (1998: 71). Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 206) also warn of the danger of falling into the black hole of involuntary memory and of becoming as forgetting (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 66). What is suggested here is
that art is mistakenly associated with memory when in fact what is experienced as remembering is another form of becoming. The mastery of speeds referred to earlier is about movement or mobility and the development of new registers of thought and action:

'The question of speed is important and very complicated as well. It doesn’t mean to be the first one to finish; one might be late by speed. Nor does it mean always changing; one might be invariable and constant by speed. Speed is to be caught in a becoming that is not a development or an evolution. One would have to be like a taxi, a waiting line, a line of flight, a traffic jam, a bottleneck, green and red lights, slight paranoia, difficult relations with the police. Being an abstract and broken line, a zigzag that slips “between”'

(Deleuze and Parnet ibid. 40 – 41)

Speed can perhaps be explained by reference to a passage entitled Memories of a Plan(e) Maker (Deleuze and Guattari ibid. 292 – 300) where two types of plane are contrasted. The plane of transcendence is described as a ‘hidden principle’ or transcendent compositional principle; it can only be inferred but ‘causes the given to be given’ and exists as a supplementary dimension (n + 1) to that to which it gives rise; it is a design or mental principle that is teleological and concerns the ‘development of forms and the formation of subjects’ (ibid. 293). This is a plane that concerns structure and genesis: ‘Life plan(e), music plan(e), writing plan(e), it’s all the same: a plan(e) that cannot be given as such, that can only be inferred from the forms it develops and the subject it forms’ (ibid.). The thesis that I did not write would have begun with a key proposition or argument to be unfolded, fleshed out, and supported throughout a text that positioned me as a knowing academic subject with a pre-defined and readily identifiable position on Deleuzean and Deleuzo-Guattarian philosophy. Instead, I have sought to be the master of the speeds of the rhythms of my own learning
and lay bare the collective assemblages (past and present) within which I have become. Perhaps learning is only haecceities where: ‘Nothing develops, but things arrive late or early, and form this or that assemblage depending on their compositions of speed’ (ibid. 294). Nevertheless, I feel that my impulse to experiment and show the fragmented status of the learning subject has been limited by my own sedimented assumptions about academic writing that presuppose a unified learning Self and a style of writing that demonstrates the ‘upright nature’ (Deleuze 1968 / 2004: 172) of its Being.

So it would be misleading to present my writing here in illustration of the second type of plane – that of consistency or composition, posited by Deleuze and Guattari. This plane is one of immanence and also referred to as the plane of Nature, of non-contradiction, of non-consistency, and an abstract design rather than a mental one: ‘Its number of dimensions continually increases as what happens happens’ (ibid. 295). It is thus:

‘a plane of proliferation, peopling, contagion; but this proliferation of material has nothing to do with an evolution, the development of a form or the filiation of forms. Still less is it a regression leading back to a principle. It is on the contrary an involution, in which form is constantly being dissolved, freeing times and speeds’ (ibid.)

If it is a ‘fixed’ writing plane, Deleuze and Guattari also insist that fixed does not mean immobile here: ‘it is the absolute state of movement as well as of rest, from which all relative speeds and slownesses spring, and nothing but them’ (ibid.). It is Aeon – a non-pulsed and floating time, experimentation against any kind of interpretation (ibid.). It is a ‘war machine’ that defies the ‘harmonious development of form and a regulated formation of the subject’ and that may cause a ‘confusion of feelings’ (ibid. 296). Nietzsche is mentioned, not because
his aphoristic style speaks of fragmentation, but because of his freeing of non-pulsed time – 'Ecco Homo has only individuations by haecceities' (ibid. 296 – 297). The objective of the plane of immanence is 'nonvoluntary transmutation' and the production of different affects upon each reading (ibid. 297).

Although these two planes are initially presented as an opposition, Deleuze and Guattari (ibid. 297) insist that we continually move from one to another – between stratification and destratification:

‘The plane of consistency is the body without organs. Pure relations of speed and slowness between particles imply movements of deterritorialization, just as pure affects imply an enterprise of desubjectification. Moreover, the plane of consistency does not pre-exist the movements of deterritorialization that unravel it, the lines of flight that draw it and cause it to rise to the surface, the becomings that compose it. The plane of organization is constantly working away at the plane of consistency, always trying to plug the lines of flight, stop or interrupt the movements of deterritorialization, weigh them down, restratify them, reconstitute forms and subjects in a dimension of depth. Conversely the plane of consistency is constantly extricating itself from the plane of organization causing particles to spin off the strata, scrambling forms by dint of speed or slowness, breaking down functions by means of assemblages or microassemblages’ (ibid. 297 – 298)

This notion could be read as evocative of a Nietzschean contest of forces, Bergson’s duality of forces, the Derridian and Althusserian duality of presence and absence, and a Bergsonian method of constructing abstract poles but subsequently positing a duality of forces that has been attributed to Platonic method (Lawlor and Moulard 2010). I once read it against a sociological frame and described it as a Weberian abstract or ideal continuum. My understanding of rhizomatic thinking and theoretical assemblages is that such linkages are appropriate. It is about connections not intellectual purity. And yet, I am still somehow troubled by such a strategy. It felt infinitely preferable to produce
independent papers on feminist poststructuralist theorising for example, where I could go, or become, with the flows and intensities and not get caught up in anguish about ultimate incompatibility. Such a strategy would have expressed my fragmented self (academic and otherwise) and appreciation of Gannon’s refusal to be pinned down. I wanted to explore the ever-enlarged perception that is my academic subjectivity without the pressures created by my internalisation of the ascetic ideal long ago, and the epistemological conundrums that so frequently follow from that embedding in the pedagogical culture of yesteryear.

My learning has been rhizomatic. I have gone willingly with Deleuze, to Cixous whom he supported, to Nietzsche and to Bergson whose work influenced him. Bergson rejected the prioritisation of language over intuition, the former being viewed as a product of human sociality that, perhaps in the manner of Cixous, downplays the immediate data of consciousness and the senses. I end here with two quotations from Braidotti whose ‘positions’ at the time of writing capture something of the tensions that my own mobilisation of the concept of theoretical assemblage has generated:

‘The subject is but a force among forces, capable of variations of intensities and inter-connections and hence of becomings. These processes are territorially-bound, externally oriented and more than human in span and application. I am not saying this in a spirit of conceptual purity, as nothing could be further removed from my hybrid nomadic habits. It is rather of great importance to us all that we do not mistake Deleuze’s call for active dis-obedience on the anti-Oedipal model for conceptual confusion and theoretical anarchy. Deleuze is an extremely rigorous thinker – the greatest of his generation and a towering figure in world thought. The least we can do to do justice to his work is to be as careful with our readings as he was with his writings. The best way to explore this difference between Deleuze and the linguistically-based thinkers of difference like Lacan and Derrida is to look at their respective philosophies of time. Divergent temporalities are at work: psychoanalysis
is caught in the backward-looking authority of the past. Let us think, for instance, of the role of memories in the constitution of neuroses and, through the necessary mechanisms of repression, of the subject itself. The hysteric is per definition the one who suffers from unsustainable memories. Rhizomatic thought, on the other hand, is future-bound and relies on a revised version of the Bergsonian continuous present in order to sustain a vision of desire as plenitude, affirmation and becoming' (2005 / 2006: para.19).

'Bio-centred posthumanism and non-western neo-humanism can be travelling companions along productive axes of transposition. The point of this cartographic move, which aligns theoretically diverse positions along the same axis, is to facilitate the transposition of the respective political affects that activate them. I do like putting the “active” back into “activism”. This transposition is like a musical variation that leaps across scales and compositions to find a pitch or a sharable level of intensity. What matters to my thought is the affective dimension, the affinity, not the political or theoretical correctness' (ibid. para. 26).
Conclusion(s)

In my introduction, I characterised the doctoral student as a *singularity* produced through the play of forces that constitutes the supervisory *assemblage*, and subsequently distinguished *rhizomatic* and *arborescent* assemblages, presenting my current supervision as illustrative of the former and markedly different from a doctoral experience in the 1990s in its capacity to support research and learning as informed experimentation.

I adopted abuse – specifically physical violence, as a heuristic in a non-linear nomadic process of inquiry that permitted a very personalised or singular consideration of the materialism - idealism dichotomy. The concept of univocity became pivotal in resolving an affective tension as I moved between disciplines and particularly after I joined a Faculty of Education where no one epistemological paradigm prevailed. Theoretical loyalties are matters of identity, and I was not satisfied with arguments that there are differing ways of knowing the world (e.g. logico-scientific or narrative), or with a linguistic constructivism that reduces both the social and natural worlds to forms of narrative.

I explored criticisms of hylomorphism and found them relevant across the disciplines that I know and love (sociology, animal behaviour, and most recently educational philosophy and theory) and other interests such as trauma theory and art. Hence: my depiction of the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage as a site where learning is something that occurs *with* not *to* the student; my refusal to see my relationship to the natural material world as one of linguistic construction; my experimentation with a poetic - philosophical style of writing that is suggestive of the flux that I experience learning, nature, and language to be; my frustration with obligatory invocations of embodiment; and my intended
future research into a philosophy of science that speaks to all of my interests and undermines any tendency to portray them as homogenous enterprises organised around a single epistemological antagonism.

Non-linear writing permits issues to be addressed in novel ways and novelty here, I emphasise, also means new for the student concerned. The text was intended to be machinic – embodying and performing its pedagogical import, yet not merely an address to the elect – those already familiar with the perspectives, concepts and vocabulary mobilised. I clearly favour doctoral pedagogic practice that fosters the capacity to resist orthodoxies of any persuasion. Hence my writing reflects a conviction that the passional - polemical and poetic - philosophical are no more or less relevant to this objective than other modes of academic writing. The freedom to engage in informed experimentation with differing modes does however require supervisory support and collaboration. My own experience has been that this process of supported experimentation has enabled me to clarify my thinking and write with greater clarity for publication purposes concerning reflective practice, student writing and pedagogic strategy.

The resistance to pre-given normative models of supervision, research and the doctoral experience evidenced in my writing is linked to the theme, or rhizo-structural thread, of madness which I have pursued across the thesis, and to the intensive style of writing which I sometimes adopt. The latter conveys the affective absorption in ideas that I want my learning to be – but I am also following Isabelle Stengers in seeking to put the adventure back into science. This claim may seem incongruent given my concern with the poetic or aesthetic. Yet as Gilles Deleuze has observed, what we now regard as scientific orthodoxy may once have been rejected as madness or irrationality. Laurel
Richardson and Van der Kolk have not, to my knowledge, been charged with lunacy; but neither has avoided accusations of disciplinary heresy. Nomadism and phrases like creative escape should not be interpreted as implying complete absence of determination; hence my reference to the knots of arborescence inevitably found in rhizomes in the opening plateau. And my interest in the concept of the mesopolitical as the level or site of practice where creative engagement is more likely to be with very detailed institutional regulations and procedures; and where creative problem solving is specific to both milieu and student. It is illuminating to consider the pedagogic practice of Deleuze in this respect. Whatever his wider political objectives, the practices which he introduced may not strike us as particularly radical today. I understand that these included the setting up of lectures as debates in order to disrupt the image of teaching and learning as a matter of faithful transmission. I sought to introduce the spirit of such an exercise in the plateau on Butler and Protevi. Learning is, as Stengers argues following Deleuze, more a matter of relay transmission – picking up the baton and running with it rather than striving to faithfully recreate it. And, of course, this creativity in thought is not confined to any one field of knowledge.

The rhizomatic supervisory assemblage functions to support relay transmission as the production of creative solutions. But Stengers, like Braidotti, also insists that the pedagogic role is one of ensuring the art of dosage – insisting on engagement with what might otherwise be over hastily rejected. The somewhat repetitive nature of the earlier plateaus, which draw on critiques of neoliberal managerialism, illustrates this point as I was often left asking: So what? What next? Where to from here? I conclude from this experience that the concept of the meso level is just as applicable to thinking – to knowledge
production undertaken by the doctoral student which has to be more than the restatement of dichotomised positions. This is why Stengers interprets the final collaborative text of Deleuze and Guattari as an honouring of what made philosophy a matter of identity and an affective adventure for Deleuze – why he chose to do philosophy. It was a classroom encounter with Plato.

I too felt the need to honour those thinkers that captured my imagination in my youth, and some that did not, and was able to do so by conceiving the thesis as a body-without-organs, as a site of inscription for affective connections. I mention Marx, De Beauvoir, and many others in this context. Stengers shocked me in also suggesting that Guattari did not, in fact, co-author What is Philosophy? It was the same impulse to honour the latter’s contribution to his thinking that prompted Deleuze to add Guattari’s name. And this act ensured an enduring reminder of his conviction that knowledge production is a question of heterogenesis. This was defined in my introduction as something new created in between two or more terms which nevertheless retain their heterogeneity, when I stated the key proposition which has informed this thesis: a rhizomatic supervisory assemblage operates heterogenetically to support knowledge-seeking as an ongoing creative relational process. Many of my sedimented assumptions about doctoral pedagogy, and previously unquestioned theoretical loyalties, were challenged through this relational or collaborative exercise. I conclude that the rhizomatic supervisory assemblage is one where the tensions between such assumptions and loyalties are free to multiply and complicate a student’s thinking. This is where the productiveness of my current supervision lay, rather than, as I once expected, in sharing closely-matched interests with a single supervisor.
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