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**Men's Work:  
Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy  
In Psychology**

**At Massey University, Manawatū,  
New Zealand**

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## Abstract

Family violence continues to be a harsh reality for many families, whānau and communities around New Zealand. The primary aim of this project is to produce new possibilities for the violence prevention sector by linking theory and community practices supporting men, and their families, with pathways of change in relation to their cultural, gendered, socio-economic, and religious experiences of the world. In partnership with Gandhi Nivas, a community-based organisation providing early intervention support services to families in the Auckland region, I collaborate with men accessing Gandhi Nivas for support to bring to the fore an ethics of care empowering non-normative processes of change towards non-violence. Informed with the philosophies of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I provide an autoethnographic analysis of fieldwork experiences, 1:1 interviews, and a weekly men's social support group, expanding on Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory to privilege narratives of events, felt experiences, and embodied memories of different institutional, legal, political, and socio-cultural forces conditioning men's every day social worlds. With narratives as a form of re-remembering men's sticky networks of affective memories, I experiment with nomadic subjectivity as a cartographic methodology capable of tracing sensorial data with enlivening moments of bodily sensation.

This is not a straightforward task.

A complex project, I craft a mosaic of affective connections with selections of notes, transcripts and events reverberating flows of materiality that produce changes to specific social, political, gendered, and cultural locations, enabling me to reflexively analyse what experiences follow me, what social processes I have articulated, and what processes are left off the page. I elaborate an understanding of nomadic subjectivity as a tactic enabling me to bear witness to both men's capacities for violence and non-violence within men's social world, by unfolding affective memories with a series of textually connected hesitations, pauses, and irruptions of social forces conditioning how we experience the world. Informed with Deleuzian political thought, nomadic narratives help me materialise different, unpredictable arrangements of fluxes, flows, and forces with indefinite processes of individuation, providing different potentials, capacities, and limits past the limits of normative knowability. Retrospectively evoking the complexities of following the affective movement of men, which we bring out into the community and to others, this

research positions non-violence not just as the absence of violence, but as an iterative process of embodying variations in arrangements and connections of thought processes, propelling alternative modes of relations empowering an ethics of care and concern for others through which violence becomes less possible, reduced, and mitigated.

Engaging with an organisation that celebrates difference within ethical frameworks of care informing a diversity of professional practices and experiences, this collaborative, community-oriented research project embraces embodied understandings of change processes men experience whilst in the care of Gandhi Nivas, and puts to work DeleuzoGuattarian non-normative subjectivities of affectivity and intensity as entry points to resonate embodied materiality I cannot know—but feel. With men invoking *becomings* of non-violence unable to be represented with normative masculinities and hegemonic notions of violence and non-violence, writing a nomadic subject enables me to attend to how different experiences of forces act on and through us, affirming empowering productions of a self with the material and discursive possibilities of men's daily life.

## Acknowledgements

I would foremost like to thank the men who have contributed to this thesis. Your desire to join a research project, accompanying me on an uncertain journey without a destination nor a map, whilst in the midst of immensely challenging circumstances during a time of upheaval, continues to bewilder me. Thank you for permitting me to join you in the whare during the initial stages of field work, where the purpose of my presence was often hazy and unformed. Thank you for gifting me your time to conduct interviews, where we experimented with making sense of the inexplicable. Thank you for accompanying me through the uncertain possibilities of a Men's Group, putting your faith in me by spending long afternoons and evenings in kōrero together, helping unfurl new ways for men to support each other. A truly collaborative effort between men at the whare, using the word contribution feels immensely inadequate here. Your generosity and commitment to helping other men through our all-too-fleeting time together has produced a fruitfulness that far surpasses the confines of this thesis.

To my supervision team, Mandy Morgan, Leigh Coombes, and Ann Rogerson of Massey University, I want to acknowledge the risks you've taken in supporting my work. Your guidance has helped me navigate the complexities of change, and giving an account of one's self...and not for the first time. Beginning a lifetime ago, when I was but an outspoken undergraduate student seeking to make sense of the challenges posed by my experiences of life, the unfettered kindness, compassion, and care you bring to my life continues figuring my *becomings* with a joy of new capacities. I want to acknowledge, though, the touch of your counsel and mentoring reaches the far corners of my life, only some of which is apparent in the *here and now*. On the cusp of change yet again (and again and again), the relief of finishing this thesis is overwhelmed by thoughts of what now becomes possible—and for this, I want to thank you.

I would like to acknowledge the Gandhi Nivas staff, who continue to inspire me with their care for men, and their families, in troubling circumstances. This research project was made possible not only with your trust in me, but also by the multitude of ways you have brought me into your shared community. The selfless-ness you demonstrate is only surpassed by your capacity to care for others. I am both proud and humbled to have become part of the whānau, and in no small way a bit nervous of the responsibility and accountability that comes with it.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the family and whānau that have sustained me through the financial, social, and personal strains that come with an extended period of academic study and research. Your support through the rigours and discomfort of my theoretical travels, when joined with your capacity to tolerate my incessant desire to enliven our shared lives together with posthumanist philosophies, is boundless. Your cheerleading continues helping make possible much of my life's events, for which I am forever grateful.

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## Research Timeline and Major Events

01 February 2020	PhD Qualification Start Date
03 March 2020	First Meeting with Sahaayta
25 March 2020 14 May 2020	New Zealand Nation-wide Lockdown Social Distancing Restrictions Lifted
26 May 2020	First Visit to Gandhi Nivas Whare (Ōtāhuhu)
26 June 2020	Low Risk Ethics Notification (4000022892: Fieldwork)
21 January 2021	Massey University Human Ethics Approval (NOR 20/69: 1:1 Interviews, Men's Groups)
27 January 2021	PhD Confirmation Event
21 April 2021	First Interview (Wiremu-Ōtāhuhu)
21 April 2021	Second Interview (Cameron-Ōtāhuhu)
29 April 2021	Third Interview (Josh-Papakura)
15 May 2021	Fourth Interview (Robert-Ōtāhuhu)
18 May 2021	Fifth Interview (Ansh-Ōtāhuhu)
20 May 2021	First Men's Group (Ōtāhuhu)
29 May 2021	Sixth Interview (Sunil-Te Atatū)
29 May 2021	Seventh Interview (Talan-Papakura)
4 June 2021	Eighth Interview (Jack-Te Atatū)
16 July 2021	Ninth Interview (Kingi-Papakura)
23 July 2021	Tenth Interview (Nīkau-Ōtāhuhu)
17 August 2021 3 December 2021	New Zealand Nation-wide Lockdown Auckland-specific Restrictions Lifted
15 December 2021	Eleventh Interview (Doug-Ōtāhuhu)
17 December 2021	Twelfth Interview (Jack-Te Atatū)
5 April 2023	Thirteenth Interview (Jack-Te Atatū)
13 April 2023	Fourteenth Interview (Jack-Papakura)
23 April 2023	Fifteenth Interview (Jack-Te Atatū)

## Prologue

### *Retooling Psychological Analysis*

I want to begin with premise of familiarising a reader with useful information with which to engage this writing. Born, educated, and trained in Western philosophies and psychological practices, writing with *Deleuzian* philosophy and *Braidottian* ethics is a constant bustling with unfamiliar *ontogenetic positions* (Tucker, 2012). Rather than providing a *descriptive* study of human behaviour, cognition, and experience, with models and theories pre-figuring (human) phenomena and ways of being with universal qualities and generalisable properties, this research re-conceptualises *individuals* as products of ever-changing assemblages of *forces* and *flows*, and to borrow a Deleuzian term, individuals, in this sense, become a *multiplicity* of ontogenetic positions as we *embody* different *assemblages* of forces and flows. This thesis, then, is a *political* narrative of introducing new *modes* of existence for those involved in the research project, and traces ontological shifts that we *sense*, conditioning our experiences of the world as series of relational and processual *events*. Posthumanist and feminist theory are strategies I use for retooling psychological enquiry with a capacity, following Tucker, to provide a critical analysis capable of privileging men's experiences of forces and flows as *individuating processes* "which are at once biological, social, material, and psychological" (p. 779). Rethinking psychology as an analysis of individuating processes, actualising what Tucker refers to as "material-propositional happenings that form everyday life" (p. 778), becomes important as participants in this study, including myself, arrive through a myriad of institutional, legal, political, and socio-cultural forces bringing into being life altering events of violence in the home.

But I am getting ahead of my self. Men's Work is a complex project, and I need to remember movement of thought conditions changes to our understandings of life events, which helps me situate a need to break open what Men's Work *was*, and *is*, from what Men's Work *has become*, as different entangled *lines* of thought. Starting again, this project began with an intention to understand men's experiences of change processes to better explicate how we engage with therapeutic support. In part, this arose as an extension of my professional career within the criminal justice and health sectors across the United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand, helping men and boys with histories of violence make changes in their lives. I began fieldwork in 2020, working with Gandhi Nivas, a community organisation supporting men in precarious circumstances by

empowering change processes with an ethics of care unlike any professional practices I had encountered before. These experiences, which I documented with fieldnotes, were early attempts at representing unfamiliar, confusing, uncertain, and often perplexing encounters with men accessing Gandhi Nivas for support, and to bear witness to bewildering happenings occurring within these therapeutic spaces. My notes became *textual experiments* with posthumanist feminist thought to address a question of *how* men engage when they come to Gandhi Nivas, and to provide a theoretical basis to my understandings of how these services work—to better inform my engagement with men accessing these services.

After enduring what felt like interminable social distancing requirements as a result of New Zealand's pandemic responses throughout 2020, which, in a matter of speaking, disrupted my efforts at relationship building and meant unpredictable interruptions were a constant threat to my fieldwork activities, eventually I felt “prepared” to discuss with men embodied knowledge of change processes relating to their experiences of accessing Gandhi Nivas for support. After securing ethics approval in January 2021, I immediately began working with Gandhi Nivas staff, identifying men who may be interested in, and benefit from, participating in this research project. Eleven men subsequently agreed to participate in 1:1 interviews, contributing over thirty hours of recorded interactions over an initial period of eight months. All participants were offered an opportunity to continue their involvement through multiple interviews, which became an invitation to revisit any of the topics or issues we discussed and “update” me with changes in their lives through follow up sessions, resulting in one participant contributing three further interviews over the course of this project. I also began offering a weekly support group to men experiencing change. The group's formation was theoretically grounded on a notion that each group would potentially entail a different gathering of men, and rather than offering a prefigured notion of what *social support* meant for men, the needs and desires of different

assemblages of participants would become conditions from which the Men's Group would emerge<sup>1</sup>.

This brings me back to Tucker (2012), whose work elaborating a *psychology of individuation* informs my resistance to the tenacious assumptions of neoliberal individualism in which the individual who began this research project *differs* by *place*, *space* and *time* from the person conducting interviews with participants many months later, and the man reflexively writing *here* and *now* about his experiences. Braidotti's (2011a) nomadic subjectivity is a concept of posthuman thought enabling me to privilege events, felt experiences, and embodied memories of every day social worlds not easily resolvable with normative thought, to make sense of change processes. A psychology of individuation, Tucker emphasises, brings moral and ethical benefits when embodying material-propositional happenings provides *sense making* past the *limits of normative knowability*. Privileging forces and flows men experience in everyday life *offers* our modes of existence, offering a *multiplicity* of ontogenetic *subjective positions* rather than the *singularity* of a normative *individual*. To my understanding, ontogenetic positions have different potentials, capacities, and limits, which brings to the fore different limits to my theoretical knowledge and familiarity with post qualitative research practices over the course of this research project, conditioning how I understood my work *at any particular time*. Similarly, this helps me recognise men are able to sustain different affective capacities, different understandings of *material-semiotic* experiences, and different accounts of the political locations they inhabit when embodying a multiplicity of forces and flows, with a multiplicity of ontogenetic positions affirming different possibilities of

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<sup>1</sup> Where included in this writing, the names of participants and staff members have been changed. As part of providing informed consent, participants were made aware that the details of their participation is confidential and given the option to choose a pseudonym to protect their privacy. Whilst staff were not given an opportunity to choose a pseudonym, the use of pseudonyms for staff not only ensures their privacy but also encourages men to share freely by limiting the possibility individuals would be able to be identified through narratives of particular experiences, activities, and events. Men were made aware the limits of confidentiality meant I would alert staff of any safety concerns, such as if men appeared to become emotionally distressed or disclosed past experiences of relationship abuse and violence towards others whilst participating in research activities. Participants were informed should they disclose any active planning for violence, or present an imminent danger to themselves and others, immediate action would be taken, with staff and the local police informed of all relevant information, including personal details of the participant and others involved. These safety protocols were discussed verbally and provided in writing to participants at the beginning of the research, and regularly discussed throughout their participation to build trust. Regular conversations with staff occurred through our daily interactions and team meetings, ensuring staff were also made aware of the limits of confidentiality throughout the research activities as well.

becoming non-violent with an unpredictable mix of embodied memories and material experiences of social worlds.

Beginning again with a notion that this thesis is a zig-zagging pattern of writing my encounters with different forces and flows from which possibilities of non-violence emerge, my narratives follow non-linear patterns of thinking through the tumultuous flow of time, with *writing a cartographic methodology* which enables the production of *affective* connections to map my own change processes. Writing parts of this thesis years ago, a multiplicity of ontogenetic positions present a tension, though, that concepts, such as affective flow, were less familiar, less refined, less sustainable in textual narrative forms when I began this research. If different capacities of ontogenetic positions limit embodied experiences of things I can feel—and know—conditioning what textual narrative forms become empowered, and what experiences become less possible, less likely, or less sustainable. Following this thought further, nomadic writing becomes a creative process of tracing *affective moments that connect*—before I came to understandings of change processes I experienced.

A kind of *prodromal writing*, nomadic narratives are an ethnographic strategy that since writing begins *in the middle* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), my fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and narratives of Men's Groups are responses to questions, such as *what am I in the middle of?* and *what am I and others doing?*, before becoming aware of the effects of our participation in the research project. The selection of notes, transcripts and narratives included in this thesis are important, as these provide traces of chance encounters with what work has been, or is being done, that creates the conditions for data. Yet, it is unclear what counts as data here, as the traces, the work done to produce traces, and the written document itself becomes a mangle (Jackson, 2017). This assemblage of *human and non-human elements* becomes important not in terms of being able to identify each *component*, but by our *becoming* together. As Jackson puts it, “[t]he point in analyzing mangled practices is not what they are but what they do” (p. 476), with the figure of a mangle offering insights into the un-representability of writing as an assemblage of embodied knowledge production practices I am barely aware of. An ontological position of writing from the mangle/middle enables me to reflexively analyse what experiences follow me whilst I'm writing these texts, yet, prodromal writing becomes an embodied process which does not always locate *where* thinking which figures my writing *occurs*. In other words, it is not always clear what processes I have articulated,

and what processes are left off the page, only some of which are drawn to the attention of the audience of this thesis as evidence of change.

### *Methodological Becomings*

Narratives trace affective experiences of change processes, only some of which make their way into my writing, by remembering *patterns of thought* that follow me *between* events throughout the research project. The selection of narratives and notes which form this thesis are my *textual work of composing* change processes on the page, in terms of *where* and *how* recorded/transcribed exchanges, fieldnotes, and narratives both produce and (re)produce practices I *embody* with my work with men. Privileging space *between* temporal locations activates *fleetingly uncertain* embodied memories, rather than prefigured and fixed objects of thought, bringing about processes destabilising previously taken for granted understandings of ourselves and others, and social processes we find ourselves in. Eschewing the familiar, a nomadic mode of remembering brings about writing processes where I *disidentify* with previous understandings of experiences, which would more or less prefigure and identify what to write. These memories become a series of textually enlivened political locations, yet, rather than a set of locations which produce a singular map, narrative textual locations create a *multiplicity* of possible maps. In a nomadic mode of remembering, writing is a methodological practice of *territorialization* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) through which I am able to bring myself into my research with ethnographic analyses of notes, transcripts, and narratives of engaging men and Gandhi Nivas staff. These maps (re)produce what I have done, and am doing, through processes I have both articulated and not articulated. It is important here to resist a notion that the gaps that form with embodied practices also intimate what I have not done; narrative memories are a purposeful *selection* of events, *cartographic* points which *materialise* my self within *indefinite* processes of individuation. Narrative memories provide an affective logic that welcomes gaps in thought, as gaps bring to bear possibilities of movement with empirical selections from within an ongoing and continually altering series of events. These gaps are not the same as a normative subjective experience when knowledge production practices are informed with a linear collection and interpretation of experiences relating to coextensive objects. Revisiting Tucker (2012), gaps help me understand life is “a processual movement through any number of these series” (p. 781) of events; gaps are where *life*, as a matter of *sense*, takes place.

Gaps and nomadic *sense making* brings to the fore a capacity for me to embody what Deleuze (1998) refers to as “the shame of being a man” (p. 1) as *conditions* of authorship for this thesis. Nomadic subjectivity is a tool for enabling critical analyses of how we, as professionals and community members, with specific cultural knowledge production practices privileged by academic disciplines (psychology) and social sectors (violence prevention), become implicated in change processes as unfolding assemblages of interacting forces and flows. Nomadic subjectivity helps me orientate shame as a set of coordinates, enabling me to *embody*, and therefore *affirm*, shame with my felt experiences of being unable to prevent men and boys from wreaking havoc on our communities through their use of violence against women and girls, and my participation in the captivation of society where men and boy’s problematic behaviours are pharmaceutically medicated, incarcerated, and physically restrained (Arrigo, 2013). Shame also helps me situate the ineffable presence of violence throughout my life, affirming both life experiences of multiple loved ones committing suicide after developing terminal genetic disorders—and my desire to stop suicide as patterns of violence in which men in my family cause unimaginable harm to the women and children they leave behind. I propose memories of these experiences, not to represent an *existential condition* from which I hope to extract knowledge so as to *overcome* these experiences, nor to provide *insight* for how a reader might enter into this research project, more I want to bring to the fore a swarm of different forces and flows as a *composition of passions* (Braidotti, 2011b) with which to elaborate individuating processes providing narrative sense to ontogenetic positions taken up throughout this thesis.

Introducing myself as an assemblage of passions, another tension arises; what possibilities are brought to bear by you, dear reader, what opportunities are afoot in joining me? Imagining my self as an assemblage of forces and flows, Deleuze (1994/1968) reminds me the audience of this writing is itself an unpredictable, and unknowable, assemblage of *interacting affective intensities* as well, and, together, we become capable of new modes of existence with different *affective* capacities. A particular worry is not so much the audience will be hostile towards narrative writing, feminist politics, and posthuman analyses unfolding this research project, more that this thesis will *do nothing at all*. With a capacity of *affect* to *effect* changes in our understandings of material-propositional happenings of everyday life, what I refer to throughout this thesis as experiences of *bending, glow, rifts, irruptions, hesitations* and *pauses*, and *new middles*, I understand this tension with a fear that this thesis does not *affectively* engage the

audience, does not produce an effect, however unintended, as unintended effects are also welcomed as chance opportunities to precipitate events outside of my control.

I also do not want to define *effecting change* as changes in thinking which acts *against* a terrain of thought, either. This tension is not founded in a worry the audience finds this research unhelpful, uncritical, unproductive, or unscientific, that it does not “change something”. Nor is my worry that this research needs to be useful, as material for the establishment and construction of *new* theories and practices with specific pre-figured outcomes, even ones with a moral purpose such as eliminating violence against women and children. Emerging from a set of premises and conditions different from established forms of knowledge and understandings of power, I hope this assemblage of productive encounters with men in the violence prevention sector becomes *a brick*, as Massumi puts his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), *both thrown from and thrown at* experiences of dogmatic professional practices derived from existing theory. An act of creation which eschews normative knowledge production practices of reproduction and description, this thesis conditions new modes of experience and capacities for change with concepts destructing problems by inventing new solutions that also create new, different problems. Working within the current frame, to condition new *ways of thinking* and *new modes of experience*, my work is a *becoming* of wondering with men experiencing violence in the home; what can a body do?

### *A Return to Praxis*

The conceptual multiplicity of gaps helps me revisit some of the connections I have traced here, conditioning further possibilities of movement that I revisit throughout this thesis. If gaps need not be filled, erased, avoided, or bridged, can I move into some gaps? What new modes of existence become possible, what new modes of experience become empowered, in other words, what *new capacities for change* emerge with experiences of gaps? This is a figure of thought that has become enlivened, in a very normative sense, in terms of academic, professional, and personal possibilities emerging with my participation in this research project.

Much as men become aware of prodromal effects of non-violencing before understandings of change processes we experience, iteratively recurring embodied questions have lingered, in different forms, throughout my participation.

*What am I in the middle of?*

*What possibilities for different engagement practices with men and boys emerge from my participation?*

*What possibilities emerge with men's participation in this research project?*

*What am I doing that creates the conditions for future research?*

Wondering what a body can do also presents further tensions whilst working with men in the violence prevention sector. Often, challenging men's community-oriented and cultural knowledge practices becomes a multiplicity of *ethical* tensions when previous trainings, practices, and learned experience suggest serious consequences for the men themselves. With nomadic subjectivity creating conditions for further, uncertain self-becomings by putting *difference* into action with affective conditions seeding change processes, new modes of existence and new modes of experience empower *unforeseen* changes in both men's capacities for violence and non-violence within their social worlds. It is not always obvious what I am bearing witness to with men's relationships with their partners, and their whānau, except through my own sense that I *could* have or *should* have said something, or said something *different*. This means the limits of men's participation in this research also limits my capacity to bear witness to the possibilities of violence that emerge with men's becomings. With subjectivities becoming known with *individuating* processes of affective experiences and encounters, rather than knowledge of affect known *through* the individual subject, challenging what I think is potentially unhelpful, if not harmful, to their loved ones' experiences can be difficult. Put differently, men's participation, including my own, whilst not devoid of therapeutic potential, form part of a material-semiotic knot in which new social relations emerge un-surveilled. With participation hopefully enabling *new* affective politics for men, conditioning social relationships with an ethics of care and concern for others, the *fruitfulness* of our participation has effects which only emerge, *afterwards*. In this sense, this thesis is not only a narrative of re-remembering, that is, re-encountering embodied memories, in order to *sense* the *becomings* of my becomings, as an *analysis* of *embodied* becomings, this thesis traces men's sticky networks of affective memories, only some of which are remembered, that is, sustainable, in textual form.

So, I want to begin yet again by wondering what conclusions can be drawn with textual connections in the midst of my own change processes, with a thesis which follows non-linear patterns of thinking through the tumultuous flow of time? What affective political

locations will an audience of nomadic narratives experience with narratives retelling partial affective memories of working with men? I invite you to consider engaging this work as an *iterative process* which requires re-creating this research project *now* with the commensurate experiences I have encountered in the years of working with men and their whānau experiencing violence in the home in the flux of uncontrollable change processes. Thinking of the creative political space produced with affective memory, I wonder, is there a *becoming* of Men's Work, as an unfolding series of textually connected *hesitations, pauses, and irruptions* of social forces conditioning how we experience the world, that returns me to a professional praxis? What does becoming non-violent with men feel like, how would we remember it...and how else can we wonder what a body can do?



# Chapter 1

**This is how it should be done: Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161)**

Explaining his relationship with Michel Foucault, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1995) tells us both men were on the same side, as they “set out to follow and disentangle lines rather than work back to points...to catch things where they were at work, in the middle: breaking things open, breaking words open” (p. 86). Philosophy, then, according to Deleuze, is always thinking of being in the middle, seeking to extend outwards along lines of thought towards the emergence of other formations. The work of a philosopher, Deleuze explains, is the invention of new concepts that can be followed even further to break open yet more words. Deleuze’s philosophy does not produce a subjectivity that privileges the surveying of a scene with individual subjects and objects, deploying beginnings and endings delimiting a totality of experience. Instead, one must begin in the middle where one is, Deleuze submits, and only hope to follow a line of thought to somewhere else within a density of entangled affective lines. Asking myself a question of where to begin writing an autoethnographic account of my experiences in the violence prevention sector, this is a complicated task. If to begin is to start in the middle, which affective lines can become conditions giving rise to my embodied experiences?

### **Ruptures, Breakages and Smooth(ing) Space**

Trying something new, untested with uncertain ramifications, let us start with the power of an affective feeling, that is, of *yearning* to create discursive locations giving rise to my embodied experiences of change. Braidotti (2011b) tells me affect, such as yearning, emerges as a *positive passion* when becoming “a rigorous composition of forces and relations that converge upon the enhancement of one’s conatus/potentia” (p. 95). Affectivity enables narratives of change when *assemblages* of both negative affects (*potestas*) and positive affects (*potentia*) sustain different possibilities of *becomings*. To my understanding of Deleuze’s philosophy, *subjectivity* is *not* a matter adequate and accurate representative accounting practices, but, rather, thinking with Valentin’s (2006) reworking of Deleuze’s political philosophy, an affective process of creating “a political reflection that will no longer be pursued in terms of application or representation...but a creation for nothing” (p. 199). Valentin asserts that self-formation, an uncontrollable

process I understand through assemblage theory (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), affirms subjectivity as an ontological experiment opening up political space outside what is immediately imaginable to me, through different compositions of affective forces and relations. With acts of self-formation freed from neoliberal constraints of value and worth, of productivity and usefulness, an affective logic does not necessarily support self-coherence, though. I understand subjectivity as a convergence of affective forces enabling me to think from the middle—creating narratives embodying affective change and difference yet leaving space unexamined, opportunities unsaid, and possibilities unexplained, left for others to break open, untangle, and follow further.

I put forward a conceptualisation of subjectivity that embraces an understanding of Braidotti's (2018) ethics of joy, to form an image of the thinking subject which "rests on an enlarged sense of a vital inter-connection with a multitude of (human and non-human) others" (p. 221). Braidotti's ethics is a *neo-materialist philosophy*, situating subjectivity as a process-oriented creative re-imagining of the thinking subject emerging through *differential modulations* of human and non-human vital (affective) inter-connections with others. Braidotti extends Deleuze and Guattari's figuration of a *rhizome* to inscribe a *multiplicity* of differences as forming the concept of a *nomadic subject*. This concept of the thinking subject, as an assemblage of negative and positive affectivity, rests on an understanding of *becomings* transposing the always already present *intensive affective transformations* brought to bear and embodied within a *cartographic* figuration of these differential modulations. Thinking with Braidotti (2011a), I understand writing with a nomadic subject provides alternative narrative accounts of experiences of change not reducible to a critique nor dialectical opposition to normative subject formation, but neither are nomadic subjects representations of "the unfolding of an essence in a teleologically ordained process supervised by a transcendent consciousness" (p. 151). Acknowledging nomadic subjectivity does not strictly distinguish certain patterns of becoming from others, narratives of nomadic becomings emerge from a "zigzagging itinerary of successive but not linear steps" (p. 35) forming thresholds and patterns of "immanently actualized transformations" (p. 36). As a specific *patterning* of actualising forces, Braidotti (2017a) helps me understand, as cartographic figures, nomadic subjects are *configurable forms of embodiment*, making a subject known across space and time by tracing the movement of matter with "the actualization of intensive or virtual relations" (p. 84) with an assemblage of *transverse rhizomatic nodes* providing cartographic coordinates. These nodes, formed of concepts of *difference*, articulate and navigate

*dynamic political spaces* with the overflowing possibilities of *affective* difference. Conley (2006) explains rhizomatic figurations of thought can be created as a tactic to make porous the already present borderlines of *coextensive objects*, the *formed* and *perceived* things inhered in normative narratives, creating a proliferation of *lines of flight* from the middle by “following multiple itineraries of investigation” (p. 98) with human, non-human, and more-than-human forces. Affective narratives, according to Conley, also “open spaces and undo fixed mental and physical borders and barriers” (p. 107), engendering the creation of political space allowing one to become actively engaged in the *politics of the present*.

I conceptualise politics of the present as a Deleuzian (1994/1968) tactic capable of resisting a rapprochement to normativity by enlivening moments of bodily sensation experienced through habit. Thinking with men in terms of our bodies as political spaces of affective interaction, enables us to (re)produce ourselves as discursive subjects able to reembody “the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed” (p. 73). A form of shared subjectivity, thinking politics of the present with a nomadic subject draws on our affective capacity to create possible conditions of a liveable present with processes connecting us to human, non-human, and more-than-human worlds. Conceptualising my nomadic subjects with Williams’ (2011) elaboration of subjectivity as “a maker of time” (p. 37), nomadic narratives craft iterations of a self with tumultuous rhythms, formed with a selective, but inexhaustible, assemblage of multiple affective connections with multiple others. Nomadic subjectivity becomes an *ethical connector* (Braidotti, 2017b) of affective connections, helping us (re)think the political complexities of the present by experimenting with subjectivities re-embodying affective flow. Thinking nomadically with affective flow transposes men’s embodied affect by exposing gendered power relationships, and the gendering of power relationships, which entrap and empower knowledge production through taken-for-granted normative subject positions. This process enables new, unpredictable assemblages of affective connections with others to emerge as *new political conditions of a liveable present*, which I use, following Holert (2018), to provide “an idea of freedom and autonomy that enables a dialectical, counter-imaginative relation to reality” (p. 60).

With figurations of nomadic narratives informed with Deleuzian philosophy and Braidotti’s nomadic ethics, I am reminded by Butler and Braidotti (2014) that, to think nomadically, working with men in the violence prevention sector is to struggle with thinking that

sustains “politically useful, socially productive, and morally adequate lives” (p. 310). Therefore, the politics of the present embodied with nomadic narratives do not necessarily coincide with the *here and now* of linear time. In other words, nomadic subjectivity, nomadic thinking, and nomadic narratives are not interventions producing normative notions of change and difference, as such. Braidotti (2019b) helps me understand my nomadic subjects instead operate with a nomadic capacity *both* affirming what we are *ceasing to be* and *yet to become*, by producing rhythmic conditions in which the creation of new subjective figurations become actualised by *taking issue* with the present. This provides a stability to the politics of the present, as conditions that produce an ethically accountable, multi-layered and multi-directional cartography of specific cultural, gendered, and socio-political locations.

Working with men, as a participant in the Men’s Group, requires different senses to remember events as a range of conditions resonating the here and now. The ethics of specific *ontogenetic* locations conditioning my “criticism” of psy-discourse deficit models privileged within media narratives and criminal justice sectors, after having contributed to the imprisonment of countless men through court testimony, written reports, and commencing legal proceedings for breaching court-imposed restrictions, matters, materially, in the here and now, immensely. Yet, I am learning what becomes important, working with men in the community, is loosening narrative knots keeping me imprisoned in specific political locations, our *kōrero* a matter of creatively reworking narrative conditions empowering me to craft different *affective* accounts critiquing psy-discourse models. My accounts of becoming non-violent repurpose affective conditions, not to provide specific critiques for specific models, a way of *knowing* that differentiates me from other men by providing yet another privileged (cognitive) location devoid of our radically immanent flesh, but to condition the gendering of affect with a narrative form disrupting taken for granted notions of myself I sometimes struggle with. Nomadic re(membering) and affective memories help me bring to the fore a sense making which I am able to embody, the *shame* of being a man transposed from a lament to an empowering critical analyses of how I, as a professional and community member with specific cultural experiences privileged by academic disciplines and economic systems, become an unfolding assemblage of interacting forces and flows. The ethics of specific *ontogenetic* locations welcome men’s involvement in my life differently, in ways I cannot predict, but we can follow, together. This entanglement affirms both the momentary encounters with men that resonate far more than the mere seconds of our interactions

might suggest, whilst also affirming the dangerousness emerging with relational encounters involving my privacy, and the privacy of my family members.

Nomadic narratives, returning to Grosz (2012), become a concept with which the politics of the present become “what we produce when we need to address the forces of the present and to transform them into new and different forces that act in the future” (p. 15). Reworking affective flow as a theoretical practice enabling men to embody, and re-embody, politics of the present, Grosz illuminates for me how nomadic narratives are “a necessary condition for the creation of new frameworks, new questions, new concepts by which social change can move beyond the horizon of the present” (p. 17), a present, which, for many men, is captured by contemporary social theories in which difference, and deviation from normativity, is pejorative, restrictive, and immobilising. Nomadic subjects, embodying the politics of the present with nomadic thinking, become a political agenda transmitted through affective narratives, an agenda in which, working with other men, we produce social transformations through *affective movement* and *mobility* of thought, which activates strategies and practices challenging taken-for-granted memories and modes of being.

Affective memory in *the nomadic mode* cuts transversal lines through the authority of experience, making affective connections with human, non-human, and more-than-human forces and flows with the possibility of *felt* experiences, embodied affect, and bodily sensations. Re-remembering this way, *rhizomatic thinking* is an empowering cartographic mode of *carefully laying out* affective nomadic memory to create conditions of *becomings*. Affectivity becomes an embodied capacity for creatively resource-ing processes destabilising memories of negative and repressive (*potestas*) forces, enabling both contrary and paradoxically multiple possibilities of thought sustaining divergent, non-normative understandings of change. In this mode of thinking, affectivity conditions becomings with new *political space* of subjectivities not afforded constituency within the hegemony of normative unitary subjectivity. Nomadic subjectivity, in this sense, engages Grosz’s (2010) Bergsonian notions of a life as:

**...the protraction of the past into the present, the suffusing of matter with memory, which is the capacity to contract matter into what is useful for future action and to make matter function differently in the future than in the past. (p. 164)**

When writing nomadically, narratives no longer write about indefinite articles such as *the* middle or a subjectivity, terms associated with gendered discourses such as *the* warrior and a gender. The singularity of these indefinite articles trap us into positions, roles, and identities with discursive processes indelibly inflicting violence and harm on (i.e., disempowering) the possibilities of our future becomings. Instead, writing nomadically, I *craft* middles with a collection of phraseologies, that is, I approach nomadic writing as a *discursive tactic* producing embodiment. Writing nomadic narratives of becomings as a process of self-formation is an opportunity to break open words and figures of thought, with institutional and academic connections storing my experience within tensions of masculinity work. I trace events and circumstances as middles to form nomadic subjectivities that emerge as possible points of departure from normative figures of thought, rather than giving narratives of a *chronological* journey invoking *sedimented memories* producing *specific* subjective formations. I understand sedimented memories as grounding subject positions in place, the reliance on normative subjects articulating these events with a linear and logical experience of the world still insufficient to making known embodied affective experiences of change.

An interest in autoethnographic research arose with self-narratives of decision making and change processes pertaining to my experiences of undertaking genetic testing for Huntington's Disease. An inheritable, degenerative, and terminal genetic disorder, Huntington's Disease exists alongside suicide and violence within my family. After several years of engaging in a labyrinthine testing process, in 2010, I received the results of a genetic test, telling me if I carried the gene responsible for the disease—or not. Nomadic, non-normative narrative accounts of this testing process arose with feelings of frustration, of being stymied by narrative methods limited to illustrating a gendered representational logic of the unitary subject navigating challenges of intra-familial suicide, secrecy, and silence. These initial encounters with nomadic narratives became experiments with *process ontologies* of subject formation, discursive transpositions of unexplained anger, fear, resentment, and estrangement I have come to understand, and experience, with Braidotti's elaboration of nomadic theory, as empowering written accounts of interconnected problem spaces. Writing nomadic narratives of *becomings*, as *processual* discursive processes, a capacity to *re-remember* experiences and *re-arrange* taken for granted *embodied affectivity* otherwise sedimenting memories, creates affective traces of hope, for me, helping me rethink matters of life and death as particularly difficult

propositions, given an intimate familiarity with the presence of degenerative disease, and self-inflicted death, in my family.

Working with Braidotti's (2011b) nomadic ethics, whilst referring to DeleuzoGuattarian philosophies, my Master's thesis is a previous encounter with theoretically informed research. I begin with a desire to write from the middle, and rethink complexities of human, non-human, and more-than-human relational encounters to "reset the concept of *difference* [my stress] in the direction of a nomadic, nonhierarchical, multidirectional social and discursive practice" (p. 17) that enables me to disrupt, unfold, and rethink different understandings of change processes. Writing with and writing of affectivity to make sense of change creates awareness of gaps that do not need to be filled with *writing about* experiences of a genetic testing process. Thinking and writing nomadically is to imagine an audience that might hear this kind of work, becoming a *circle of response* where others resonate my understandings of *becomings*. By attending to a DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy of *smooth space* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), nomadic writing creates *affirmative* sensorial and cognitive data, which Williams (2008) helps me understand as felt experiences, embodied affect, and bodily sensations. These possibilities give rise to the presence of *reverberation*, that is, sensorial and cognitive data introduces variation and difference to the "changing flows that invest them with value" (p. 8). Nomadic thinking and writing, then, produces virtual reverberations with the audience of nomadic narratives, emerging in our understandings of the shifts, changes and irruptions of the *becomings* of others. Nomadic narratives produce embodied experiences of things I/we cannot *know*—but feel.

(M) So Doug, I know that, without even having to think about it, I know that we have spent hours and hours and hours together, over the last six months, or nine months, however long we've been doing the Men's Group. Here, we're gonna be here another couple hours. That's a lot of time you've invested in yourself. And I guess, so the question for me is, what comes of that for you? What does, sort of, that change, that coming out of your lazy self, what difference does it produce in your life? Can you give me, sort of, an example?

(D) Ahhh, yeah, nah, just fruits, generally. Fruit

(M) Fruit.

(D) Fruit.

(M) Fruit. Produces...it's fruitful? Is that what you're saying?

(D) Gives me...it gives...yeah it's fruitful. It, in and of itself, can provide motivation, for me, to do anything else. Because I'm seeing...changes and benefits in my family and myself. Good reasons to keep doing it.

(M) Okay.

(D) And when you start to see benefits, and things like, I've got a, ummm, affirmation at the moment, good things are gonna, good things are coming my way. And when I see things like that, opening up, that in itself is fruit. But it's construction material. But yeah this is, it's just feeding in the good stuff.

**(Doug, Interview, 15 December 2021)**

Nomadic writing is a subjective process of self-formation involving writing back to myself whilst not forgetting that there is always a multiplicity of readers, with a circling of our responses iteratively inscribing opportunities for a multiplicity of voices in my work. Writing *from a self*, though, means I do not always write *about* a self; nomadic writing is a process of iteratively writing a self into being. Throughout this thesis, I assemble my *self*, and others, in a sculpturally emergent style, with affective moments of connection with men and women through our experiences together, enabling different narratives produced with memories, notes, transcripts and supervision discussions, layering different mechanisms of movement to form a *travelling* ethics of care exploring what might be happening, rather than the *containing* of violent men and change processes through normative narratives of our encounters.

Nomadic travelling is also an affective exploration of *gaps* that are otherwise inflicted on our selves by narratives of containment, with a particular research interest in how these gaps formulate parameters for how men are managed, how men work within these parameters, and what these gaps “give back to” or “hold back from” men in consideration of the limitations of a captive society (Arrigo, 2013) in supporting non-normative processes of change. Following affective movement with nomadic narratives, rather than narratives discursively spelling out *where* the movement goes, affective *flowing* becomes possibilities of movement, that is, affect becomes *potentia* of change rather than tracking difference as a site of *other-ness*. Nomadic narratives create possibilities of departures from normative thought, with embodied affective movement the *soil* of change processes connecting new and novel *becomings* of men. Nomadic subjectivity is a habit, an embodied discursive practice of creating affective conditions of self-formation before creating the assemblage of a predetermined self—but normative subject formation is itself a hard habit to quit.

Privileging the concept of difference, my nomadic autoethnographic narratives trace the concept of self as a multiplicity, embracing Braidotti’s (2011b) nomadic ethics to produce theoretically-informed accounts putting difference into action to critique, challenge, resist and subvert normative representational thinking reducing difference to “pejoration, disqualification and exclusion” (p. 409). This methodology began with writing experiments taking form as an empirical and iterative process of dispersing subjectivity in terms of affective flow, to remember encounters with a range of materially embodied forces and flows arising with a nomadic mode of re-remembering experiences of a genetic testing

process. An often-confounding process of thinking with a nomadic subject whilst also writing of nomadic subjectivity, my narratives of experiences unfold (and continue unfolding) as a multiplicity of emergent methodologies, producing possibilities for movement of thought escaping the normative confines of a dogmatic image of an agential subject. Nomadic writing enables, and is enabled by, embodied affective conditions, and I began nomadic writing as a posthuman practice of thinking without method, becoming, as Jackson (2017) elucidates, experiments with “fragmented strategies that mutate according to the task at hand” (p. 667). I begin in the middle, cautiously and optimistically, with a notion nomadic theory could become an emergent methodological approach offering men opportunities to rethink change and affectivity, enabling me to bear witness to dispersed and non-unitary conceptualisations of a self, emerging with narratives of change processes, as empirical processes of subject formation. Nomadic narratives become fruitful, opening up therapeutic possibilities in the violence prevention sector by rethinking experiences of change otherwise excluded by socio-cultural and gendered expectations of men in the community. Nomadic subjectivity, then, conceptualising difference differently, can become profoundly empowering. Having followed a density of entangled lines to this new middle, I begin again in yet another middle, always returning to a new middle along different entangled lines.

### **Cartographic Nodes Becoming Affective Lines**

As an entry point into understanding this project, this research is about men *fruitfully* becoming responsive to the New Zealand Family Violence Death Review Committee’s Sixth Report (FVDR) (2020), which acknowledges New Zealand as having one of the highest rates of family violence in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The report attends to gaps in family violence and sexual violence interventions, highlighting a need for services within the violence prevention sector that are less *plug and play*, that is, rather than social supports teaching men skills, cognitive interventions overtly challenging attitudes and beliefs present in daily life, or a surveillance-oriented approach to managing *risky bodies*, the report asks: “how do we *empower* men’s *change processes*?” In response, the report advocates for an agenda of keeping victims safe with community-centred engagement models *for keeping men in sight*. This research project is a contribution to *community-oriented* approaches to violence prevention, in support of new practices inclusive of *an ethics of care* that *keeps men’s change processes in sight*. In this sense, men’s narratives of experiencing change are gifts, our stories of *becomings*, narrative accounts of our relationships with others,

supporting other men's change processes. Our gifts, though, produce relationships with responsibilities and new forms of accountability to men in the community. My intention was to work with men accessing early intervention services within the violence prevention sector, to trace processes of transformation unable to be represented with normative identities. With a research proposal predicated on experiences writing nomadic autoethnographic accounts of change processes for my Master's thesis, I began my PhD scholarship with a hope of producing new modes of engaging with men in processes of change towards becoming non-violent, by incorporating accounts of my own change processes in doing this work. Men's narratives included in this research, as well as narratives that, for one reason or another, are left off the page and yet to be told, aim to offer a new set of ethical possibilities of subjectivities in non-representable, non-linear stories. In becoming nomadic subjects, our narratives of change eschew representative logics to help access the *deterritorializing* fluxes and flows of becoming stuck and unstuck with subjective movements, rather than anchored to the fixity of an individual thinking subject, wondering what a body can do.

(J) It's, I, so for me it's, I might talk about, say, what happened to me in the past, what things that I've done, I might even mention, okay, what I've been doing lately. So, okay, might, you know, say I'm doing this project, that project, what I'm doing at home. So it's just putting myself out there, who I am and how I am. And experiences that I've had too, without having to be worried about it. I don't worry about telling the story about what's happened. In my life I've had a lot of things happen in my life, some good a lot of bad, you know, so those are things that I won't forget, you know, but it's good to share someone's experience, my experience.

(M) So how do you decide, then, what to share? If there's a sense of not worrying, if there's a sense of not needing to share specific stories, you know, we're not standing around (talking about) the last time we're violent for instance, so how do you decide what to share.

(J) I, just, whatever comes in my head. It might be something come into my head that happened, say, ten years ago, and then I'll share it, just like that. Because that's what happened. It's something that happened. And I've worked at a place where everybody hated me, you know. Basically I scraped the floor one day because the boss didn't like me, and I had bad legs and he said I got a good job for you, and here's a scraper. There's fifteen years of paint on the floor, scrape all the paint off, the length of the factory. And it took me three months to do that. On my hands and knees. He was very happy, but I never forget about those things, because when you go through a job where you've had people that want to put you down any second of the day, does a lot of damage even when you leave. So, you never actually forget, for me anyway, in my experience I never forget. So for me it's sharing something can also be beneficial for me to relive that part, in the mind, basically helps me to roll over on that part of history.

(M) Okay. So it's not about getting rid of it, it's not about erasing it, but almost re-remembering it, then. Doing something different with those memories.

(J) If you try and forget something, it's not easy and it can be very stressful trying to forget. So if you share something or relive something in your mind, well, my experience is that it's like you get used to it. It's like if you're if it's raining outside, and you go outside and it starts spitting, and you run back in, okay, you know you got a bit wet. But if you go outside and stand in the rain, well, then, for me I adapt to the conditions. So it's something that's, for me, I got to adapt to it, and it makes it easier to move forward.

**(Jack, Interview, April 13 2023)**

*Men's Work*, as a subject of this thesis, is a name given to my understandings of subjectivity as ontological experiments, with affectivity, in the words of Braidotti (2011b), becoming “the necessary premise to the enlargement of one’s fields of perception and capacity to experience” (p. 167). Nomadic subjectivity is a practice of putting into action the virtual possibilities of processes of *becoming*, with particular cartographic affective figurations of a nomadic subject an empowering composition of forces and relations connecting us with others, rather than, for instance, changes in the production or performance of one’s gender. Nomadic subjectivity is a convergence of affective *materiality* with the enhancement of one’s conatus/potentia. Thinking affectively, I am able to reconstruct memories of change processes with experiences of fieldwork, interviews and group-based activities offering social support to men, engaging memories of research activities to repurpose the function of memory for what Braidotti (2011a) explains is the “undoing, recomposing, and shifting the grounds for the constitution of sexed and gendered subjectivities” (p. 279). Writing from the middle, I create imaginative, yet interactive and self-reflexive subjectivities Braidotti (2000) references as “the potentially explosive social subjects for whom contemporary cultural and social theory has no adequate schemes of representation” (p. 171). Nomadic narratives enable me to *experiment* with *teratological* subject positions, yet, writing with non-normative subject positions in response to FVDRC reports, Derrida (1989) reminds me that becoming *monstrous* presents a danger, in that;

**Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: ‘Here are our monsters,’ without immediately turning the monsters into pets. (p. 80)**

Burdened by the call to constitute *sensible* subjectivities, I become aware when narrative seeks to set out an account, a *ledger of sums*, demarcating figures and characters and relationships expressing specific thoughts, such as *What happened? To whom and when? How did it feel and what do I make of it? Did it change me and what possibilities arise now?* These questions, rather than lines of thought, are self-critical reflections, which arrive back at the value of a subject by paralleling inadequacy with an inability to account for one’s self. Would I be less embodied through narratives unable to account for myself? Countering these concerns, Tamboukou (2008) provides for feelings of narrative inadequacy by creating accounts of the objects and possibilities left out of self-representations, to *represent* the *missing* and the *absent*. Tamboukou contends this account can be found when materialised in a *depository* outside of the control of the

individual, which once located, becomes useful in allowing the narrative to be taken along new lines of thought. Narrative accounts are fully actualised with the inclusion of a depository, forming the possibility that a single narrative can provide for a plethora of readings, at times meaning different things to different people. I resist Tamboukou's claims, which rest on transcending limits of representation by making *more* of a narrative with each reading. Here, Latour (2014) helps me re-think my resistance as sensing feelings of narrative commodification and exploitation within capitalist cultures, that is, neoliberal practices, Latour suggests, premised on "prodigious enthusiasm for seizing unbounded opportunities" (p. 8). I find myself disturbed with Tamboukou's production of embodied surplus, concerned it leaves me feeling *eaten up*, created for the *consumption* of others. Pondering the *productive value* of a subject, as the *object* of experimenting with thinking, feels inadequate; I do not wish to participate in this endless devouring.

With a process of envisaging myself within feminist frameworks through affective experiences of *yearning*, I begin, again, by thinking of this research project as emerging from over 25 years of experience working in the violence prevention sectors within the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand, each involving different national narratives and historical experiences of colonialism. My career includes governmental and other statutory services, non-profit organisations and for-profit companies, philanthropic community-led service providers, and academic tertiary institutions. My use of the term *violence prevention* entails supporting men and boys who use violence in the home, and in the community at large, against both those known and unknown to themselves, and is inclusive of suicide prevention as a form of preventing self-inflicted violence. In my experience, whilst men and boys are variously referred to as clients, abusers, perpetrators, service users, criminals, and sex offenders, throughout my career violence is rarely understood as gender-based, that is, violence *men and boys* commit *against women*. Instead, violence is conceptualised as perpetrated by *individuals*, or *groups* of individuals, inflicting harm on other *individuals*.

I trace one of many beginnings within the sector to a violence intervention programme for a large, non-profit social service organisation in my home town of Kalamazoo, Michigan. Starting as an entry level support worker at the age of 19, I was employed by the organisation beginning in 1997, eventually supervising the daily operations of several teams operating individual and group-based programmes across different sites throughout the local community. The programmes, mainly informed with cognitive

behavioural approaches addressing young people's use of physical and sexual violence towards others, operated out of semi-secure home-like settings. The houses were purpose-built, providing service users under the age of 18 with purportedly familiar environments modelled on normative understandings of an American, middle-class, single family home. Whilst providing a range of well-appointed spaces such as a living room, a dining room, private bathroom facilities, a large garage, and extensive outdoor areas, security features included; an absence of locks on single occupancy bedrooms and bathroom doors enabling staff to restrict privacy in order to monitor service users' risk of self-harm; bespoke oversized household items and shatter-proof windows, intended to prevent young people from being able to throw furniture, causing property damage or harming others; controlled access into and out of the house through locked gates and entrance ways, preventing unapproved visitors and guests; and three metre wooden fences surrounding the property to prevent young people from absconding from the programme.

Most young people came from home environments experiencing high levels of social and economic stress, with many families' experiences of social isolation attributed to the family's social network of friends, and their families, also experiencing high levels of violence perpetrated by the young people. Violence prevention as a concept consisted almost exclusively of behaviour management approaches focussing on replacing antisocial attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours by identifying triggers and common symptoms that help a young person identify when their anger is escalating and violence is imminent. Actions and activities reducing the likelihood of violence, such as taking a self-imposed time-out whereby a young person removes themselves from a social situation, were recorded as benchmarks indicating when behaviour goals were met. As an after-school intervention, a young person attended two evenings a week, often for several years, with assessment criteria for entry into the programme requiring service users to be at risk of being detained in secure psychiatric and juvenile justice facilities due to their use of violence. The programme supported the development of life skills enabling young people to navigate private spaces such as the family home, and public spaces such as libraries, shopping malls, and grocery stores. Pro-social interpersonal communication skills, fostering positive relationships around everyday activities such as doing homework in group settings, constructed different individualised violence prevention objectives. Young people participated in a range of everyday activities like meal planning, food

shopping and meal preparation, with recreational activities such as playing video games at local arcades provided as rewards for achieving goals and objectives. With many young people being treated for multiple psychiatric diagnoses involving personality, conduct, and emotional disorders, my role as supervisor regularly involved dispensing an ever changing cornucopia of psychotropic, mood stabilising, anti-anxiety, and antipsychotic medications to service users as we carved pumpkins and went trick-or-treating together on Halloween, made cakes and held birthday parties for service users, and drank hot coco whilst crafting decorations for the Christmas tree.

Memories of my experiences involve a professional practice devoted to supporting prosocial ways of being, that we, as staff, felt would lead to positive educational outcomes, healthy prosocial peer and family relationships, and a positive regard for authority figures. In hindsight, our aspirations for the service users were in contrast to the realities many young people experienced growing up in communities with high rates of poverty, racial conflict, street gang involvement, and violent gun crime. For many of the young people, home environments presented a daily life segregated along highly rigid gendered social norms, racial categories, and religious affiliations, stratified along socio-economic gradients. We, the highly trained and often university-educated (predominantly) white staff members, considered the environments in which the young people were enmeshed of little, if any, concern beyond immediate safety in terms of abuse or neglect. Violence prevention consisted of removing young people from communities experiencing extremely high levels of incarceration, particularly for men and youth, and for short periods of time emplacing them within controlled environments where predominantly women staff determine thoughts and behaviours (in)appropriate for (mostly) young people of colour, before depositing them back into unsafe home environments and living conditions where violence was a frequent occurrence. Assessment criteria for entry into the programme required service users to agree to the use of physical restraint incorporated into the programme, which was legally mandated when their use of violence posed a risk to the safety to themselves, staff, and the community at large.

The mention of 'women' staff is a purposeful remembrance, as gendering and sex becomes important in both my professional career and university studies. I had become a senior supervisor, managing the day to day operations of several teams spread across several sites, whilst studying an undergraduate degree in psychology. Staffed primarily by university students working in part time employment whilst studying behavioural psychology and social work programmes at the local university, women made up the

majority of low level support workers and a greater majority of supervisory positions around me. I experienced a gendering of roles, positions, and tasks that conditioned my experiences of masculinity, and how others experienced my masculinity, with a sensed othering; I was neither a nurturing woman to whom young people sought comfort and solace, nor was I man whom the children could easily relate to as an authority figure. Becoming subjectified, albeit with high levels of institutional authority and decision making involving both staff and client bodily autonomy and physical safety, as a teratological being isolating me from other men within the care of women coworkers, I recall the playfulness of inventing identities of masculinity, measured along Butler's (1999) normative heterosexual matrix, constitutive of and constituted by a framework of ethical and moral norms. Different masculine identities became constituted by different frameworks of ethical and moral norms, that, as a male figure of authority, I often transgressed within my interactions with others. I remember the inventiveness producing myself as non-normative figures of thought as an asset, empowering me to disrupt the gendering of roles with enabling, *collaborative* forms of interactions and social relations with service users and their families, and fellow staff members and coworkers.

I purposely revisit uncomfortable memories to help me re-remember feelings, not to get rid of these experiences nor to transcend them, but to help rethink problems of thought. The politics of a self I experience effect capable escape routes from specific, problematic subject positions, becoming, as Arrigo (2013) elaborates, the ethical underpinnings of my future *critical praxis* for the violence prevention sector. For instance, repurposing what I experience as performative deception helps me embody a non-normative exception in a care industry where women's work is essentialised, but mine is commodified, whilst thinking of difference and movement provides a stability enabling me to re-imagine myself as journeying in different directions without a map. Also, rather than commodifying my resistance to the masculine ideal of men's work being a matter a mastery, with the concept of a male role model an ontogenetic position for whom training and instruction on violence prevention centred on a concept of 'safe practice' involving technical proficiency in the use of proscribed physical intervention techniques, on reflection, affectively revisiting taken for granted and problematic memories helps rethink my professional capabilities and capacities as well. With a sense of *doing* privileging specific gendered roles, with the gendering of roles premised on heteronormative expectations of myself as a *male* gendered individual, within the messy confines of violence prevention work in the late 1990s, I wonder about being able to listen to young people, and their

feelings of stuck-ness. If I had been able to listen with my body, what would I have heard? How would this empower different outcomes for both young people whom violence was an entrenched part of their lived experiences at home, and services addressing their use of violence? Escape routes do not come ready-made, though. To become the ethical underpinnings of a future praxis for reforming violence prevention policy, practice, and theory, thinking nomadically helps me re-remember struggle I experience with “a critical cosmopolitan imagination” (p. 684), as Arrigo puts it, that de-codes and deterritorializes socio-cultural norms and practices constituting and disciplining my notions of a self. This empowers *becomings* with feminist and posthuman possibilities by providing an *argot* that “specifies the ideological content of this rendering” (p. 685) with narratives of “inhabiting alternative offender therapy and restorative treatment subject-position correctives” (p. 687) that are otherwise unavailable to me.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(T) It's just thinking about...yeah, it untangling. It's just going into the, back into that moment. like they were asking me, talking to me, what happened, why happened, what happened. I was like, okay. Telling how, every time, what happened. Every different counsellor, different thing. So, it was allowing me to go into that moment and untangle myself, and maybe understand that situation. And let's keep it calmly and steadily, those things, like, they were, one by one, they were, like, explaining these things, how to understand.

**(Talan, Interview, 29 May 2021)**

My understanding of the violence prevention sector in Michigan began again when I was hired by a for-profit company providing adult foster care for men over the age of 18 in a home-like environment. Often taking on a dual role as legal guardian and treatment provider for clients, the organisation catered to men *suffering from* myriad chronic psychiatric disorders arising from cerebral aneurisms, a decline in executive functioning due to motor vehicle crashes and dementia, debilitating manifestations of schizophrenia and schizoid personality disorders, and self-inflicted traumatic brain injuries related to suicide attempts. Clients presented with a range of care needs, with freedom of movement into and out of the facility, and certain rights and privileges within the facility, always contingent on the men's *behaviours* towards others. The men possessed varying capacities for verbal communication and physical autonomy, with many relying on staff for all of their basic self-care needs, including toileting, showering, feeding, and dressing, for instance. The organisation specialised in catering to men with histories of sexualised behaviours, self-harm, property damage, and physical violence towards others, that is, men with histories of absconding and otherwise unsuitable for mainstream, or less specialised, care facilities. Men, in this sense, were seen as "suitable" for the service due to the high levels of administrative and psychiatric oversight required to manage their financial affairs and activities of daily life, therefore becoming a financially lucrative client group for the company.

Violence prevention interventions exclusively involved *behaviour analysis*. Key staff responsibilities included monitoring men's use of violence and other sexualised behaviours, with the use of physical restraint an approved violence prevention activity sanctioned by the state when a man's use of violence posed a risk of harm to himself and/or others. Remembering the threat of violence an ever-present danger to both staff and men in our care, I also remember the use of *medicalised pharmaceutical restraint* as a mode of *controlling* violence by reducing sexualised and violent behaviours, with staff qualified to dispense medications to men, when in crisis. Returning to these memories as a complicated mix of pastoral, paternalistic, and patriarchal moral imperatives, I revisit intertwined therapeutic and surveillance practices with memories of fear, not a fear of the dangers posed to me by men's use of violence, but a fear of using medical and physical violence towards other men in response to my fear. Arrigo (2013) helps orientate my fear of professional praxes "managing risk fearfully and marginalizing identities desperately" (p. 672) as a way of resisting an "insidious social pathology or dis-ease" (p. 673) conditioning my experiences of risk, danger, and violence. Thinking nomadically, fear

becomes transposed, the sensorial data of fear an embodied materiality I can feel with both the *smoothing* and *unsmoothing* of narratives, which, in DeleuzoGuattarian terms, both deterritorializes and reterritorializes my experiences of risk, danger, and violence. Researching men, though, I sense with Arrigo a call for carefulness when re-remembering violences of marginality, organised misogyny, mental health dis-orders, and the military-prison-industrial complex. My perceptions of violence present different narrative conditions of captivity, limiting my understandings of violence with different justifying logics and institutional mechanisms that not only (re)produce a hyper-vigilant fear of others, but a fear of myself as well, creating a *panoptic desperation* requiring me to control or contain the presumed dangers posed to my safety that fear produces. These become sticky points, enabling me to wonder, who benefits from these arrangement of threats of violence, whose safety is under threat—and whose safety and wellbeing is safeguarded by experiences of change and difference?



Pausing, I want to consider the inclusion of past academic studies and professional histories as experiences informing narratives of change as a researcher. A practice of self-inclusion I understand verboten within the academic institutions and normative qualitative research methodologies, I situate these histories to tell the irruptions of *middles*. Following Deleuze's concept of *rhizomatic thinking*, *different* middles cartographically trace an *image of thought*, becoming, as St. Pierre (2018) writes, the *long preparation* of the present post qualitative research. My intention is not to list experiences from which specific expertise emerge. As a *cartographic figuration*, the affective residue of nomadic narratives becomes known by traversing diverse and incongruent co-ordinates of geo-political and historical locations, I contend, helping create a multiplicity of differing subject positions, as well as a multiplicity of empowering accounts within any subject position. A Deleuzian *political construct*, Valentin (2006) suggests a nomadic subject is an *evaluative multiplicity of subject positions* "in order to extract from them all the possibilities that they carry" (p. 193). Beginning with memories as a long preparation to my current work, I notice narrative memories of differently sexed bodies *constructively* construct men to feel/experience specific kinds of pain. It is less the *quality* or *quantity* of this pain that I remember, nor what *characterises* the men and the pain, more it is the gaps, and

differences between them, that become my concern. Of interest is that the affective work is textual, and transfigurative, conceptualising embodied struggles, rather than static figures of thought, so that I might write myself into being.

Thinking with Deleuze's (1995) figuration of *difference* in thought, subjectivity is produced and enacted as a concept, a figure of thought that comes into being by "breaking things open, breaking words open" (p. 86) to explore the powers of Deleuzian philosophy and nomadic theory, to elaborate embodied experiences of transformation and change. Rather than a *phallogocentric* subject with promises of *faciality*, of discursively representing myself as recognisable, observable, and, therefore, knowable, by becoming a *surface* of psychological knowledge, the subjective nomadic figure *I* is thinking *life* as *Zoe* in the time of *Aion*. With Braidotti's (2011b) conception of *Aion* as the mindless, generative and affirmative vitality of all human, non-human, and more-than-human life, a force which "actualizes a set of both social and symbolic interactions that inscribe the human-nonhuman bond" (p. 112), nomadic subjectivity is capable of cracking and breaking under the strain of the extremes of a creative affective itinerary along a *plane of consistency*. A life as *Zoe* is interested in possible becomings of an immanent life, as a nomadic subject can endure becoming different from what it once was whilst sustained with the generative eternal return of "creative mimesis" (p. 410), not the static sameness of identity ascribing the normative subject. Rather than merely existing as a discursive claim de-marking where one subjectivity begins or ends, nomadic subjectivity enables me to break open experiences and disentangle figures of thought with narratives conceptualising *life* as *process*, and the figure *I* permitting me to enter into the flow of open-ended processes of change.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(C) ...reality still gonna be there to greet you in the morning, you know, give you a handshake and say hey, life's still here, man, you know.

**(Cameron, Interview, 21 April 2021)**

Thinking nomadically, I want to begin again by revisiting other affective traces empowering memories of events. Activating nomadic memories, nomadic narratives embody *diagrammatic* processes of composition, redistributing sensation in *micropolitical* acts privileging *minoritarian* self-formation (Garo, 2008). Re-producing nomadic narratives and nomadic figures of thought becomes a processual creative endeavour, self-consciously folding movement into an immanent figure of thought with the unfolding formlessness of affective energy. Resisting thinking my self as a signifying *faciality machine* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), I eschew subjectivities which think events of my life through a mechanism of hierarchical “computation of normalities” (p. 178), producing understandings of myself through *degrees of difference to others*. This understanding of a self, flattens versions of events “into a single substance of expression” (p. 179) that which people come to know me by. Instead, nomadic subjectivities produce *escape routes* from particular sexed, gendered, racialised, classed, and able-bodied positionalities of a human, cisgendered man for whom *I* am usually identified as a person. With particular figurations *guiding technologies* for narratively creating *new* subjectivities, nomadic subjectivities do not *replace subjectivities* and *political locations* but *transpose the patterning* of affect *sedimenting memories of before*. Thinking nomadically enables me to creatively figure *I* with patterns of *dissonance* when narrative disrupts and resists the delimiting forces of political locations. Endlessly intertwining experiences of affective flow, writing with a nomadic subject is to (re)figure, that is, to *empower* new futures yet to come.

Instead, with nomadic narratives I hope to produce subjectivities with Williams’ (2008) elaboration of a *diagram*, figures of thought “designed to convey displacement and change, rather than provide a static representation of a given state” (p. 79). Nomadic accounts of events become a *disjunctive synthesis* of affective compositions, what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call *minoritarian becomings of monolithic memory* indifferent to questions of past and present images of my self. Events, in these terms, become a series of continuously recomposed *alterations, changes, and variations of movement* forming different versions of a self. Both transformative and transforming, events remembered in a nomadic mode are novel, empirical selections in an ongoing and continually altering series. An event, neither something that happens to an individual nor a cause for something to occur, Williams (2008) tells us, is a “speculative selection occurring in the middle of things” (p. 22), introducing ongoing iterative variations to a multiplicity of creative subjectivities. Particular *speculative selections* of events become

processes of *individuation*, a method of creatively contrasting subject positions to the hegemonic normative representation of an organised and stable notion of a self. It is subjectivity produced by faciality, and the production of an *excluded other*, that which I resist, and I begin again, experimenting with nomadic subjectivity as a process of transformation and transversality to differ as much as possible from before.



After emigrating to England in 2003, different professional opportunities arose providing *pastoral care* to boys aged 5 to 16 years old at a private Catholic school outside of Liverpool. Specifically catering to students expelled from mainstream educational institutions because of their use of violence towards others, young men and boys from across the country commuted to the school on a daily basis or stayed on-site in residential dormitories staffed by residential social workers, for the duration of the school term. The *pastoral officer* role, whilst incorporating the use of physical intervention as a tool to managing violence, privileged verbal de-escalation as the primary tool to managing conflict between students. With a student population of well over a hundred pupils and two pastoral officers, though, I remember an institutional reliance on physical intervention as a form of crowd control, with my role as pastoral officer preventing violence in ways akin to a *bouncer* at a bar or club. Intervening to prevent violence with physical restraint, paradoxically, often resulted in escalating forms abuse and violence being perpetrated against students and staff in retaliation; violence, I learned, often begets other, sometimes more serious, acts of violence as well.

I later became a support worker for a non-profit community organisation contracted by the national government to provide a range of drug intervention services through a *drop-in centre* in the city of Nottingham. As part of a local initiative focussing on *harm minimisation* as an intervention strategy, *safe drug use practices* and *sexual health advice* was offered to men and women through a needle-exchange service. This community-oriented *health-related* approach aimed to reduce the social and health-related harm caused by intravenous drug use, and was centred in Nottingham, in part, due to the region experiencing high levels of chronic poly-substance drug misuse, family violence, intergenerational teen pregnancy, drug addiction and gun crime, all of which were linked

to a perceived reduction in socio-economic life-chances emerging with the decline of local industries throughout the latter half of the 20th century. Eventually re-located to local police stations, I engaged individuals who came to the attention of the police as a result of their drug use, and offered social, educational, and mental health support, and working in collaboration with a local methadone replacement programme, offered people multiple pathways, options, and opportunities to reduce, if not desist from, problematic intravenous drug use.

Relying on voluntary engagement with our services, the approach successfully reduced the economic and health-related costs associated with drug use, whilst delivering similar, if not better, outcomes than previous law and order policies predicated on the criminalisation of drug use. Policy changes resulted from these cost savings, with extensive evidence-based funding opportunities for community organisations expanding the reach of intervention-oriented approaches premised on therapeutic relationships with service users. This was complicated by the creation of a pilot project, transforming the harm minimisation model “overnight”. Although ostensibly remaining a relationship-based therapeutic intervention, within the pilot project the role of a support worker transitioned to an *arrest referral drugs worker*, and with the new role, the legally mandated enforcement of previously voluntary substance misuse interventions and treatment options. As a statutory role, an arrest referral drugs worker was empowered by legislation setting out specific “eligible” offences associated with drug use, meaning those arrested for a wide range of offences were legally obligated to see a drugs worker whilst in police custody, often long before they were charged, let alone convicted, of any offences. This legislation, which came into effect at midnight on a particular date whilst I was on shift, produced changes in the law, embedding a coercive threat of incarceration for failing to engage with an arrest referral drug worker, or for any non-compliance to subsequent drug-related interventions proscribed by a needs assessment conducted by professionals like me. As my memories linger on mandating opioid replacement therapies, such as methadone treatment programmes for heroin users, I remember feelings of uncertainty, and struggle with the intensity of *becoming uncertain* with competing concepts of community safety necessitating a shift in ethical obligations with this work.

(R) And then all these preparations and predicting and learning, and it's just nothing, it's just zero. Because you've been triggered and, like, you're tired, you know, you haven't had a good week that week, you know, it's a lot of...

(M) It's hard to keep faith in something that you don't see works.

(R) It's a lot of contributions, like all these little things add up and they make a big picture. A picture of, like, as much as you can prepare, you're really not prepared because it depends on that time. Yeah, like... on how you're feeling at that time. It's just, like for example, I don't know if this is a good example but I'm gonna give it a whirl. But it's like when you lose a family member, you, like, you don't know how to feel at the time, until, like, for me, when my mom passed away I didn't cry, I didn't. I didn't have that feeling, like, I knew she was passed, you know, like, I found it hard to mourn because it was just random, like it was only when I went to the service and I was I had to stand up, I'm the youngest, I had to stand up and give my, what did we call it...give my speech about my relationship with my mom. That's when I started feeling it, like, you know. But I always asked myself how come I felt it then but I couldn't felt it that time she passed?

You know, like, it's like you know, that's the kind of example I'm trying to bring up, cause like you know at that time, when family violence happened, how come you don't feel it but then you feel it after it's happened, or you felt it before but then afterwards you're like, oh man, that was the wrong decision, like, you kinda get what I mean. It's like

(M) I hear you

(R) It's not like straight forward, like, how people think, like, ahh (shouting) I could've just walked away. It's not like that, it's like complex, like, it's like, sophisticated, to me, how I see it. It's more, it's vast.

**(Robert, Interview, 15 May 2021)**

With professional practices transformed by a notion that any refusal to see me, or, for that matter, any lack of engagement with services recommended by me, might result in imprisonment, irrespective of any other criminal matters before the courts, my role took me into environments such as the Nottingham City police station, which, at the time, was known as the “busiest” police station in Western Europe in terms of the total number of individuals held in police custody over the course a calendar year. Operating in an ethical grey zone in an urban police station, I remember the anxiety of approaching a 17 year old young man, with two kids of his own, arrested for assaulting the mother of his children whilst stealing food and baby clothing from local shops. I still wonder, what does a young man from Michigan, not yet 30 years old himself, know about the struggles of solo parenting in one of the most socially deprived areas of the United Kingdom? How do I make decisions about treatment options for individuals whose lives often began, and remain, in crisis? In these circumstances, what does it mean to empower change? Who benefits from this arrangement of threatening imprisonment as a coercive form of violence? Whose safety is under threat—and whose safety and wellbeing is safeguarded by these experiences of change and difference?

### **Deterritorialized Becomings**

Feeling stirrings of *resistance*, I can follow professional practices intended to support the wellbeing of vulnerable populations and marginalised communities with whom I worked and lived. By re-remembering embodied affectivity, memories of *restlessness* provide connections between gaps and interruptions to professional histories, becoming a harbinger of change. Together with my partner, following shared experiences of restlessness and resistance to our living circumstances, we migrated to New Zealand in 2006, hoping for new opportunities in a country where she was born but I had never visited. A few months after arriving, I was employed by the New Zealand Department of Corrections/Ara Poutama Aotearoa (Corrections) as a probation officer. Over the next few years, I gained expertise in engaging men convicted of acts of extreme violence. The lives of these men were often and frequently subjected to intense public scrutiny, with national media profiles highlighting their deviancy from “regularly people” for offending against children and partners. Many men became notorious, their names becoming part of public discourse due to being associated with “the first” in New Zealand to have committed certain crimes, such as murdering young children to whom they were caregivers, sexual offending against multiple children, and killing their partners. In 2009, I transitioned to a new role, and began supervising teams of probation officers responsible for managing

some of the *highest risk offenders* in the country on their release from prison. As part of this transition, I became responsible for implementing a pilot project trialing new risk assessment practice tools to guide decision making processes, with my team the first in New Zealand to use risk assessments to *manage* offenders in order to *reduce re-offending*. This practice framework enabled individual probation officers, with my oversight, to make informed decisions about the management of offenders, with consideration given to our detailed knowledge of men's histories of violent offending, which included *dynamic factors* assessed as contributing to their offending, as well as *protective factors* that ostensibly reducing the likelihood of further offending, and the men's current personal circumstances and engagement history with probation officers. Risk assessments became a tool, a collaborative process enabling us respond to highly complex situations in a timely fashion with the development of surveillance-oriented practices to manage risky bodies under the auspices of *community safety*.

(A) Yup I've told her that I have triggers, yeah, and I'm also investigating what's her triggers are, you know. Not to make her angry, or, you know, not to trigger her. Yeah. Before I didn't know that.

(M) Sounds a rather collaborative thing that you're doing then.

(A) Yup, you can say that, but I think she need to have more understanding of the change, of doing individual counselling or relationship counselling. I think that's what we have planned for.

(M) When you say she would benefit from a better understanding of the change, can you describe that a little bit more, what you mean by the change?

(A) It's like why people do things, you know. It's, yeah, after the counselling I think it should make more sense to her why people behave in a way they're behaving. From helping stop, you know. Yeah you can't just, you know, put a full stop on that person, you need to understand the reason behind their reason behind their behaviour, you know, why they're doing wrong. Same with pets, same with child, you sort of, ahhh, if he's crying he's either hungry or he's poo'd, you know. Or he's got an upset tummy, you know. We need to look at the reasons.

(M) Okay, so how would that help keep people safe in your family?

(A) That will, yeah, help, that will help us be safe, both of us. She'll understand if I'm behaving in a certain way, why I'm behaving, you know, and if she's behaving the way she's behaving I would know, you know, why she's behave like that, if she do that constantly or, you know, if she needs support, you know. Before, you don't know, you know. So that will help us provide the family I'd say and not to hurt each other, you know.

**(Ansh, Interview, 18 May 2021)**

With the success of the pilot project, I was recruited to join the Corrections National Office as a *Senior High Risk Advisor*. Based in Wellington, I advised senior management on the development and implementation of professional practices informing a surveillance-based offender management system, whilst mentoring staff and monitoring regional initiatives implementing risk-based engagement models throughout New Zealand. As a result of an organisational restructure, I subsequently returned to Auckland in 2012 as a senior manager within the city-wide district leadership team, becoming responsible for administering several large probation offices comprising of dozens of clerical support staff, probation officers, senior practitioners, and other managers. This meant returning to practice development, this time developing offender management systems through office-wide approaches to supervising some of the most complex and dangerous individuals from across the country. Thinking with memories of being at the forefront of implementing risk assessment practice frameworks, I recall the excitement of becoming politically active as part of the nascent *professionalisation* of criminal justice practices in New Zealand, engaging local businesses, accommodation providers, community-based offender reintegration services and other governmental organisations to develop practices, policies, and decision-making frameworks leading to safer communities. Professionally rewarding, I also remember my position of power as enveloping me with a political identity caught in a closed and circular process of being valued, and financially rewarded, whilst *becoming* politically aware that this political activity would be superseded and marginalised. This helps me reflect on Garo's (2008) description of Deleuzian political activism as having a "paradoxical character, in the form of a persistent combination of engagement and disengagement, both equally militant, at the point where incompatibility axes cross" (p. 54). Alongside memories of excitement and power, I also remember dissatisfaction with a corporatising hegemony brought forth by the ascendance of a specific "type" of manager. Whilst I was well paid, with commensurately larger wages for leadership roles developing and implementing offender management practices and procedures identifying *risk* through the surveillance of men I worked with, and the lives they lived, I experienced Corrections culture as rewarding a figure of authority. Scott (2009) suggests this figure is tasked with a responsibility to "mold the bodies and minds of citizens in the direction of normal, constructive good sense" (p. 358). Risk, in this sense, arose in the measured deviance and divergence from social norms constituting the force of constructive good sense dominant at the time.

As Corrections culture continued becoming intolerant of difference, the elevation of a “brand” representing the preferred normative practice of leadership also embraced what Wahlberg and Rose (2015) conceptualise as *governmental practices* enlisting “scales of performance or functional ability” (p. 68) in the hunt for staff free of defects and errors. Although already in a position of power, I recall Garo (2008) when (re)remembering experiences of *othering* created by corporatised normative thinking. Garo tells me that to escape this *closed* circuit, and yet remain political, one must not begin with “the practices which seem to validate it”, and instead one must consider the “investments which define it” (p. 55). Rejecting entreaties from colleagues and resisting other more senior managers encouraging me to become a catalyst for reform, I decline to engage the institutional politicisation enabled by my privileged status. Responding to these tensions with *micro-politico thinking* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), I sought, instead, to disrupt the purging of difference by valuing, by *affirming* qualitative differences in thinking—through targeted internal recruitment of existing staff into managerial roles and external recruitment of new staff for entry level roles. Far from a concerted political *rebellious* activity, privileging qualitative differences in thinking became more a *spontaneous rebellion*, affirming a politically counter-cultural *agential* capacity of *forgetting*, *retreating*, and *deviating* from the hegemony of governmental practices. Writing of molecular revolutions, Garo (2008) suggests these new modes of thinking bring forth new political gestures that occupy space forming from active disengagements with existing political operations that have passed, whilst also enabling me to trace future possibilities without clear alternatives. It is within this intersection of entangled lines that an intimate knowledge of risk becomes an integral part of professional and personal subjectivities.

A tool to secure gainful employment for two decades, I also remember experiencing embodied understandings of *difference* as *risk* threading throughout life during this time. As well as experiencing major health issues over several years through the times of genetic testing for Huntington’s Disease, further genetic testing in 2012 revealed unrelated genetic abnormalities present in my chromosomes. This second genetic test occurred after my wife became pregnant, and documents the origins of fatal, foetal genetic abnormalities contributing to the loss of our pregnancy. Whilst my chromosomes contain a “full complement” of genetic material required to sustain *my* life, the genetic abnormality involves an *unbalanced reciprocal translocation* of sections of two chromosomes. The sections are *swapped*, with one section containing excess genetic material and the other *lacking* genetic material, but, together, contain sufficient genetic

material to sustain *life* processes. A genetic imbalance occurs when only one of these chromosomes is inherited by my offspring, which reduces the likelihood of fertilization and almost always results in an unviable pregnancy, imperilling the mother's wellbeing. After enduring years of trauma in relation to the possibility of developing Huntington's Disease and deciding to forego having children until I was able to undertake genetic testing, we were unable to sustain our relationship after further genetic trauma and the loss of our child, separating in 2013 after 12 years of marriage. Beginning again, I resigned from Corrections in December 2014, taking an opportunity to start anew, this time privileging possibilities and opportunities with divergent understandings of *difference*.

## Chapter 2

## Emergent Relationships

Retracing experiences of change and difference as cartographic lines, working with men who are violent in the home has become a continuous process of wondering what a body can do. I want to begin again, this time by remembering Thoburn's (2003) warning, that with the politics of becomings, attempting to sustain notions of self-concepts with becomings is a fraught process. By producing disjunctures with and divergence from, rather than adherence to, majoritarian normative identities, my nomadic subjects may "carve out an autonomous identity against them, shoring up their own particularity against the world" (p. 86). This caution is a reference to processes of self-formation composing identities of excluded-other, of *marginalisation* emerging with difference composed of excluded middles. My fear of exclusion, here, is the reproduction of figures made unresponsive, unmanned to contemporary challenges, tensions, and problems. The splits and cuts carve out masculine absences, which become points of separation from other men, giving rise to being on the outside through subjectivities premised on what is left out as much as what is included. Thoburn describes the possibilities of "an 'incessant bustle' charged with vitality, with polemic, and with a continuous process of interrogation, intrigue, and invention" (p. 45), that is, eliciting affirmative felt experiences, embodied affect, and bodily sensations to overcome the threats of these reworked minority identity formations. The reverberation of sensorial and cognitive data changes affective flows, investing nomadic thinking and writing with embodied experiences of things I/we cannot know—but feel. It is these changes, the transposition of embodied feelings with the creation of what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call smooth space, that I am interested in. Morgan (2013), responding to the limits of academic collaboration understood with normative representational thought, arouses hope that our experiences as men can continue to be embodied differently. Rethinking nomadic subjectivity as a relational process, Morgan creates cartographic figurations as a tactic of exploring the limits of selfhood, providing guidance with the possibilities of following "moments of resistance to a whole: remembered moments that connect" (p. 172). In this way, to create and sustain new possibilities of selfhood, nomadic subjectivity dwells in moments of resistance and connection, each a locus, a rhizomatic node figuring a nomadic subject in active, affirming processes of becoming-otherwise with men in the family violence sector.

After completing a Bachelor's Degree in psychology, I returned to Corrections in 2017 to financially support myself whilst completing a Master's degree. I once more became a

probation officer, responsible for writing *presentence reports*<sup>23</sup> for men remanded in custody whilst awaiting sentencing. Primarily involving men convicted of serious sexual and physical violence, my role included interviewing men to identify *acute*, *stable* and *protective* risk factors as part of a Dynamic Risk Assessment for Offender Re-entry (DRAOR<sup>4</sup>), an assessment tool used in formulating the likelihood and potential seriousness of further (re)offending<sup>5</sup>. In conjunction with *actuarial* measures of men's risk of (re)conviction and risk of imprisonment (ROC\*ROI<sup>6</sup>), which influences men's eligibility for rehabilitative programmes and psychological interventions, my reports produced an analysis of rehabilitative pathways<sup>7</sup> and sentencing options<sup>8</sup> available to the Courts. Often involving the input of family and *whānau*, friends, colleagues, employers, neighbours, and victims, my writing welcomed a wide gamut of (re)sources to help make sense of men's violence. Inclusive of different, divergent, and disparate understandings of circumstances contextualising men's offending, the reports reverberate as a *collective* narrative, becoming known as an *assemblage* of diverse *voices* embedding and embodying accountability for offending, and rehabilitation possibilities, with the politics of men's locations. These locations create and disperse, rather than fill or erase, gaps and irruptions that emerge with narratives retelling men's offending, empowering change processes supporting men to *desist*<sup>9</sup> from further offending.

I return to experiences of report writing, to revisit voices of others as *signifying* a totality (a *voice*) singularly attributable to a subject (a *voice*) making *things* known. With memories of report writing, I repurpose voices to rethink objects of thought (such as risk assessments,

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our\\_work/courts\\_and\\_pre-sentencing/pre-sentence-reports](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our_work/courts_and_pre-sentencing/pre-sentence-reports)

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume\\_3\\_issue\\_2\\_december\\_2015\\_-\\_evidence\\_based\\_practice/what\\_does\\_it\\_mean\\_when\\_corrections\\_says\\_we\\_will\\_place\\_the\\_victim\\_at\\_the\\_centre\\_of\\_our\\_concerns\\_in\\_the\\_family\\_violence\\_context2](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume_3_issue_2_december_2015_-_evidence_based_practice/what_does_it_mean_when_corrections_says_we_will_place_the_victim_at_the_centre_of_our_concerns_in_the_family_violence_context2)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume\\_6\\_issue\\_2\\_november\\_2018/risky\\_business\\_evaluating\\_the\\_dynamic\\_risk\\_assessment\\_for\\_offender\\_re-entry\\_for\\_use\\_with\\_new\\_zealand\\_youth](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume_6_issue_2_november_2018/risky_business_evaluating_the_dynamic_risk_assessment_for_offender_re-entry_for_use_with_new_zealand_youth)

<sup>5</sup> DRAOR involves two "predictions"...the most likely offending and most serious potential offending

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/risk-of-reconviction>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our\\_work/in\\_the\\_community/employment\\_and\\_support\\_programmes/rehabilitation\\_and\\_treatment\\_programmes](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our_work/in_the_community/employment_and_support_programmes/rehabilitation_and_treatment_programmes)

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our\\_work/courts\\_and\\_pre-sentencing/types\\_of\\_sentences](https://www.corrections.govt.nz/our_work/courts_and_pre-sentencing/types_of_sentences)

<sup>9</sup> The word *desist* is often used interchangeably with the phrase *reducing reoffending*, as preferred organisational terminology as seen through government indices.

re/offending, interviews, harm, men, whānau, community, me) as a creative exercise of enunciating gaps and irruptions. Remembering moments of resistance to normative (i.e., technically proficient) report writing as moments that *connect*, thinking with Deleuze and Guattari (1987), re-enlivening half-forgotten affective memories as an *assemblage* of thought is a process of self-formation enabling “particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that it leaves with nothing more than a name as the trace of an intensity” (p. 4). In other words, I can think of creating institutionally and legally credible reports, with voices as an *assemblage* of connections and differences neither signified nor signifying, but, instead, created for purposes of *activating molecular multiplicities* potentially contributing to, and obstructing, men’s change processes. Put otherwise, remembering in the nomadic mode, I re/create narratives with an assemblage of *affective* experiences individuating men with different understandings of their offending, their lives, and change processes. Rather than opposing or replacing the production of a risk assessment, and thereby creating a subjectivity of *excluded-other* for myself with potentially dire professional, legal, and ethical repercussions for both me and others, embracing report writing as a process of writing *with* voices, rather than writing *of* those voices, nomadic narratives both resist and disrupt the *organisation* of affectivity in a hierarchal, descriptive, and sedimenting manner. DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy, in this way, enables creatively re-writing problematic experiences of surveilling men and their bodies within criminal justice processes. Crafting narratives with affective experiences, affective multiplicities and disruptions *express* the drama of men’s lives with “unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles” (p. 40). A hope, *my* hope, is in creating reports with disrupted institutional practices forms an empowering resistance to incapacitating effects of a life in a captive society (Arigo, 2013). Remembering the troubling joy of report writing, I engage processes of *becoming* to open a question of what is happening for me in processes of *becoming-otherwise*.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(C) It is kind of hard, and it can be hard for some men to you know go back in their moments that they never liked. You know. Because most men try to forget, you know, those types of things, and that's where the influence plays a part. And I mean everything, you know, those've been left in the past for a reason.

**(Cameron, Interview, 21 April 2021)**

Following what Braidotti (2011b) espouses as “the neo-vitalist immanence of life” (p. 85), presentence reports become an iterative effort to affectively map and explore a swarm of differences inhered in *voice*, inscribing a map with a multiplicity of voices to disrupt institutional disciplinary surveillance practices “giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy” (p. 40). However experimental/experiential this creative approach to report writing, though, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) also remind me with the *politics of experimentation*, we are always subject to *reterritorializing* institutional and disciplinary forces ordering “what passes or does not pass across it” (p. 152). Multiplicities of voices are subject to *censorship and repression*, with *points of blockage* regulating the signifying potentiality of voices with forces of social norms, social power relationships, institutional expectations, and legal obligations, limiting the possibilities of any particular assemblage of voices. Thus, reports can become *sensible* as “a phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation” (p. 159), with specific voices emplaced to produce unpredictable *relations of composition*. With any specific composition, a myriad of institutional, political, and discursive forces become apparent when imposing particular “forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations” (p 159) of relationships between voices. It is these relationships that inform the suitability of opportunities afforded, and precluded, to men, with specific affective compositions giving institutional, legal, and ethical legitimacy to sentencing recommendations.

Beginning again in a new middle, I can revisit a notion that as I finished with Corrections in January 2020, official records catalogued I had submitted in excess of 500 reports in just over two years as a report writer, by a large margin the most reports completed by a single probation officer for the District and High Courts around New Zealand during this time. Whilst a sheer quantity of reports is a measure of efficiency, paradoxically showing how productive my resistance may have been, the volume of my report writing also helps me remember different beginnings of ethnographic fieldwork, undertaken as part of this research project. Leveraging my professional expertise and theoretical interests in developing new engagement practices with men, this entailed an uncertain “plan” to embed my self within a community organisation providing early intervention support services to men subject to Police Safety Orders (PSOs). PSOs are a discretionary tool for New Zealand law enforcement providing short term protection for those most at risk of violence, whilst ostensibly offering pathways of change for men prior to the involvement of the criminal justice system. An alternative to arrest, PSOs remove the perpetrator from

the scene, typically a home or other dwelling the respondent shares with the possible victim(s) and prohibits their return for up to 10 days. Specifically referred to as a *bound person*, individuals subject to a PSO “cannot assault, harass, threaten, stalk or intimidate the protected person, or go near any land or building that they occupy” (New Zealand Police, 2023). A collaboration between New Zealand Police and Sahaayta Counselling Services<sup>10</sup> (hereafter referred to as Sahaayta), the Serenity Foundation<sup>11</sup> (formally Total Healthcare), *Gandhi Nivas*<sup>12</sup> is a *community-centred* organisation offering men bound by a PSO an opportunity to voluntarily access emergency accommodation and other support services that will meet their basic needs. Gandhi Nivas provides emergency accommodation and intervention services by contracting directly with Sahaayta to provide trained staff, many of whom are from migrant communities themselves, to operate the houses as *homes* where bound men can reside with care. Nearly all staff are trained social workers, counsellors, or substance misuse counsellors, which enables a service delivery model with professional practices created, developed and implemented by community members familiar with challenges many families experience within the culturally-diverse communities of Auckland. This collaboration forms part of a longer-term cross-sector working relationship between community, philanthropic and government stake-holder organisations, and Massey University, that together, with many voices, provides a culturally-informed violence prevention service in community settings, where men become enmeshed within culturally-responsive therapeutic supports and ethical practices, emplacing men’s use of violence, and change processes, within gendered contexts of care and justice.

This research emerges from imagining nomadic subjectivity as an ethical practice of supporting community capacity for actions and practices mitigating, preventing, and avoiding violence with understandings of the gendering of responsibilities within change processes men experience whilst in the care of Gandhi Nivas. Participants in this research project form a tripartite with myself and Gandhi Nivas, in part, to disrupt the hegemony of normative understandings of change predicated on certain proscribed power relationships between us, our family and whānau, statutory government services, and our communities in which we live. As a *community-oriented* and *community-led* organisation,

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.sahaayta.org.nz/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://gandhinivas.baa.nz/about-us/serenity-foundation/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://gandhinivas.baa.nz/>

Gandhi Nivas offers men an environment responsive to and situated amongst the myriad social, cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds of the local communities from which, and in which, the service operates. This supports men's change processes by enabling staff to think through, and therefore support men with, an ethics of care empowering non-normative change processes.

Rather than creating a culturally-specific organisational understanding of change, which is put in competition with other violence prevention services, Gandhi Nivas meets culturally specific needs of disparate communities by providing accommodation to men experiencing a range of interconnecting social challenges. Acknowledging the importance of (often Western) social expectations of intervention services, which might typically encourage women and children to leave the home, Gandhi Nivas accepts migrant communities often maintain gendered cultural norms and expectations about the roles, rights, and privileges of men and women (as well as children) in the home. In particular, this approach recognises that, for many migrant communities in New Zealand, women experience language barriers and become reliant on their partners in terms of eligibility for residency visas, legal employment, financial instruments such as bank accounts and loans, and access to social welfare benefits in connection with men's visa status. For many families, social isolation manifests through gendered socio-cultural norms, which can sometimes occur when women, with limited legal knowledge of family violence and associated intervention services within New Zealand, are prohibited from accessing social services, or even leaving the home by themselves. For those able to access resettlement services, many men and women also experience *whakamā*, a Māori concept culturally-specific to New Zealand. Similar to *stigma*, *whakamā* is commonly understood to mean shame and embarrassment often associated with revealing to others what was otherwise a private matter (Groot, Le Grice, & Nikora, 2018). Whilst *whakamā* need not be distressing, when implicating *celebratory disclosures* and announcements, drawing attention to otherwise empowering unspoken, unsaid, and unreported experiences, for many families, terminating a relationship escalates already complex, and precarious, immigration statuses and economic circumstances, which can then further complicate childcare and custody issues. These complex issues exacerbate the already myriad barriers migrant men, women and children experience when accessing violence prevention and other support services, which Gandhi Nivas addresses through an ethics of care responsive to what is happening for, and the experiences of, many families.

(M) It's an interesting...it's an interesting concept, that there's a witness to your struggles and processes of change. Can you tell me anything more about that?

(W) Well, they give you guidance and counsel at the same time on how to. It's a pretty tricky thing to do, you know what I mean. Specially when you don't trust anybody, because there's a lot of guys in here that don't trust anybody, and it's very hard to get it from people that have lived in South Auckland. It's difficult...because everyone is pretty much to keep to themselves, okay. Don't go and ask for help, or they think, like, nah, I won't ask these people what I need to do for myself because they feel umm...what we call *whakamā*. Shy. Too shy or too quiet. Or always closed off. Because the trust is not there. It takes a while for a person to even trust a person, to only say, like, I need this done for me. Or, you know what I mean, can you help me. That is a big vulnerability, because help is a big thing for a person with no trust. Once the person opens up to a one on one with a person that has been counselling them, talking to them and getting to know who they really are, because most of the time they just look at a piece of paper, or else they will just look into a computer what the police have told them about you, but they don't get it from that person, because that person is not open enough when they first meet here.

But when they stay here for, like, a little journey, right, like it could be a week or so, yeah, it could be two weeks, man, you know what I mean, before they actually have communication. But when they first come in here, they're, umm...they're lost. They're lost, man, to opening up. Even with feelings, emotions, not much people share that because they've always been told, umm...just get over it, man. Just get over it, you know. But there is times when you never get over that, too...(laughing) and start sharing your, what emotions you going through, what feelings you going through. Because if you don't have open communication inside the place here, with the guys that work here, how will they go through?

(Wiremu, Interview, 21 April 2021)

Whilst principally a primary violence prevention service, men who access Gandhi Nivas for support arrive for different and disparate reasons. Whilst many men have come to the attention of the police due to perpetrating violence, a notable proportion of men acknowledge a need for accommodation and support due to problematic life circumstances. This includes migrant men new to New Zealand, men released from prison, and men repatriated to New Zealand from overseas due to criminal convictions for violent offending. Men also report losing temporary accommodation in private rentals, hostels, and with other family members, circumstances arising due to being evicted or trespassed from the family home due to violence and seek support from Gandhi Nivas after engaging in violence directed towards flatmates, supportive family members, landlords, and neighbours. For many men, whatever their circumstances, social isolation and the absence of social support during critical life events, are often given as reasons for accessing emergency accommodation and violence prevention services with Gandhi Nivas. Therefore, Gandhi Nivas' organisational remit is inclusive of men's diverse experiences of violence, acknowledging men often express self-reported concerns about being a victim of violence—as well as concerns about their own behaviours and the possible use of violence towards others—as reasons for seeking support. As trained counsellors and social workers, Sahaayta offers a holistic approach to therapeutic support, which is inclusive of substance misuse issues, culturally responsive psycho-educational anger management programmes, and other self-care activities such as yoga instruction and other mindfulness techniques empowering men's change processes. Gandhi Nivas also extends extensive therapeutic social support to women and children, in the forms of individual and group/family counselling and “coffee groups”, tailoring specific services to marginalised ethnic communities at locations suited to addressing victim safety concerns arising with men's use of gendered violence.

Working with Gandhi Nivas as a collaborator in this research, supporting men's change processes is to figure an ethics of care where *difference*, no longer a *pejoration* or a site of *othering*, enables and affirms non-normative processes of change towards non-violence. Gandhi Nivas maintains an open engagement with men's change processes, using a *whānau-centred model of engagement* where men and their families determine pathways of change in relation to their experiences of cultural, gendered, socio-economic, and religious *politics of locations* (Braidotti, 2006b). In support of this ethos, Gandhi Nivas refers to the emergency accommodation not as homes, but as *whare*, a concept inclusive of Māori worldviews and ways of living that maintains and sustains the

dignity and mana of men, and their whānau, voluntarily accessing violence prevention services in community settings. The term *whare* is preferred, as opposed to normative (Western) discursive representations of a house as a simple building or dwelling, as the concept *whare* affirms and privileges the concomitant activities emerging with the *whare* as sites of learning, healing, respite, and care for one's self.

This is to say that men do not necessarily “take time out” from other responsibilities when residing with Gandhi Nivas, nor is the offer of accommodation and the presence of social support about institutional knowledge of change processes that men are then encouraged to follow, implement, and share with others. Men are not empowered by learning *how* to be men, nor how to be *better men*. As *whare*, the homes become inclusive of activities of daily living tying men together, whilst also acknowledging every man's unique history of *home* produces resistance to a whole. The *whare* become spaces where men experience change as a collaborative creation of possibilities with others, through joys of sharing meals together and supporting others struggling with traumatic life events, as well as the tensions of communitarian living spaces and shared sleeping arrangements. This is a particularly important consideration for many men who have never lived apart from their families and whānau, let alone men who have never lived alone, and otherwise might struggle with activities of daily living such as food shopping, preparing meals, and doing laundry for themselves. For others, whose daily life consists of child care responsibilities, religious duties, and cultural activities, rather than a period of harmony free from problems, or a form of voluntary isolation where men go to get away from their families, whānau, and loved ones, the *whare* become spaces where men experience boredom and uncertainty as to how to occupy their free time. Empowering change processes with the creative potential of both moments of resistance and moments that connect, Gandhi Nivas enables men to support each other through the doldrums of long afternoons, and, often, even longer nights, alone. Thinking with the concept *whare* enables men to embody their diverse histories and associated politics of locations that sometimes bring conflict, tension, vulnerability, and danger within shared living arrangements with other men, with staff supported to hold men to account through the embodiment of professional practices steeped in a culturally specific awareness of many issues men experience. Men experience *difference* differently whilst residing with Gandhi Nivas. Gandhi Nivas, I have come to understand, helps men learn *difference* can become the *soil* of change when affirmed in supportive and caring non-judgemental spaces of peace and non-violence—by staff also willing to hold them to account.

Massey University has been involved with Gandhi Nivas as a research partner since 2014, publishing a major evaluation<sup>13</sup> of Gandhi Nivas in 2020. Informed with qualitative research methods, the evaluation includes a narrative analysis of men’s experiences at Gandhi Nivas, and victims’ stories of violence and experiences of change. Comprising of related quantitative analyses, a technical report was produced with police data detailing arrest and conviction rates for men accessing Gandhi Nivas for accommodation. The evaluation, which received national media attention<sup>14151617</sup>, demonstrates reductions in violent offending for men with diverse socio-cultural-economic histories, improving the health and wellbeing for men and their whānau accessing these services—and the communities in which they live.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://gandhinivas.baa.nz/assets/Gandhi-Nivas-Massey-report-2020-v2.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://indiannewslink.co.nz/gandhi-nivas-success-enhances-hope-of-reducing-family-harm/>

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/male-violence-how-the-groundbreaking-gandhi-nivas-programme-is-reducing-family-harm/HNZ2GT7L4RE5NAJJP6B5NTWWMFM/?c\\_id=1&objectid=12344376](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/male-violence-how-the-groundbreaking-gandhi-nivas-programme-is-reducing-family-harm/HNZ2GT7L4RE5NAJJP6B5NTWWMFM/?c_id=1&objectid=12344376)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.rnz.co.nz/national/programmes/afternoons/audio/2018754244/gandhi-nivas-the-violence-programme-that-reduces-family-harm>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.police.govt.nz/news/ten-one-magazine/homes-peace-live-name>

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(R) One of the psychologists did a report and I read it, and it was actually good, because it made me want to be a part of it, knowing that all these people came together to do something to help men. That we're, like...seen as, like...you know...we're the problems, but it's, like, more than that. It's a...it's, like, a...it's like a team thing. Like, it's not just the men, it's also the women. And, ummm, there was that part in there, and the report said that the lady, that the founder of Gandhi Nivas was trying to change the perspective of the community in general...

**(Robert, Interview, 15 May 2021)**

## Becoming (Research)

This PhD research project formally began in March 2020, in the days between the first confirmed case of community transmission of Covid-19 in New Zealand<sup>18</sup> and before a global pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation<sup>19</sup>. During this tumultuous period of time, a meeting to formally introduce myself to the Sahaayta management, and staff members I would be working with during the course of my research project, was organised by my lead supervisor, Mandy Morgan, for 3 March 2020. A professor of feminist psychologies at Massey University, Mandy has been involved with Gandhi Nivas since the service's inception, and leads the research group collaborating with Gandhi Nivas. Initially meeting at Gandhi Nivas' main offices in South Auckland, a sense of *vulnerability* and *loss* emerges connected to my self as a *subject* of these memories, as I neither recall a logical sequence of events leading to (or resulting in) this meeting, nor did I produce notes recording my experiences of the meeting itself. I struggle discerning this meeting as a *molar aggregate*, a form of representation by *overcoding* personal identity through specific, delineated memories of transformations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Remembering with *affect*, though, Braidotti (2011b) suggests such experiences of vulnerability and loss are useful in understanding the “actual material conditions of being interconnected and thus being in the world” (p. 317). With affect expressing capacities to relate to others, writing with a nomadic subject, I am able to rework partial and incomplete affective memories this event, tracing processes of change affirming a multiplicity of selves with the undifferentiated generative force of *life*, as *Zoe*.

Beset by the speed in which nomadic narratives, as *blocks of becoming*, form in the affective flow of a life, I understand processes of change with Braidotti's (2016) concept of *defamiliarisation*. An *evolutionary process*, nomadic memories cohere as a textual practice of *unfolding* normative narrative accounts premised on logic and reason to represent change. In other words, thinking with Braidotti's nomadic ethics, affective narratives of our first meeting are not constructed with memories of change, but continue unfolding processes of change that emerge as I continue working with Gandhi Nivas, the research group, and the men participating in this research project. Understanding change processes as open-ended, revisiting affective memories of this meeting is an iterative

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/health/119899280/ministry-of-health-gives-latest-update-on-novel-coronavirus>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> on 11 March 2020

process of narrative experimentation, with differing accounts of change and difference emerging throughout our collaboration helping me understand who I was, through who I continue becoming.

Writing narratives of events occurring in the midst of the first few days of what became a global pandemic, I am both contending with discursive processes of writing, from afar, only partially remembered temporal memories, whilst also (re)membering affective embodiment written with discursive, textual narratives of events. Crafting narratives of a meeting that occurred years ago, I neither confine or limit a block of becoming to a sequence of events occurring within a distinct, explicit period of time, nor is narrative limited to *the* change or *a* difference experienced through a sequence of events. I craft narratives of events not to represent myself, or my experiences of change, but, instead, with a zigzagging itinerary, I trace different affective flows, taking up potentially overlapping and contradictory affective memories. Affectivity, no longer known as a condition or state, is welcomed as an activator of specific subjective figurations, and change processes. With a figuration of a nomadic subject *exceeding* the confines of who I once was—and have *yet* to become—affective figurations of our encounter are capable of breaking, of *cracking* under the strain of the extremes of affect, which brings forth new possibilities of thought with un-actualised figurations able to tolerate different affective memories. My nomadic subjects endure, sustained *not* with a static sameness necessary to form *identity*, but the generative return of *creative mimesis* (Braidotti, 2011b). With any specific figuration of a nomadic subject, a multiplicity of subjectivities becomes possible through *cartographic figurations* embodying *undifferentiated* affective forces and molecular flows. As such, nomadic narrative accounts transpose feelings of vulnerability when I remember embodied affect, with *differences* in affectivity evoking multiplicities of subjectivities, some forgotten with others not yet written, coalescing by opening up possibilities of a self, sustained in open-ended and uncertain change processes, unrepresentable in conventional narratives.

Mandy leads the way to our seats. Together at a cafe, a cup of coffee and a pastry is all that stands between us—and a potentially life-changing interview. Our first meeting with Sahaayta looms large this morning, my body telling me caffeine is not needed, the excitement of the moment forcefully conspiring to introduce my thunderous heartbeat into my voice, palpable to anyone sitting next to me.

We leave the cafe, separately, the remaining few minutes alone in the car sufficient to ponder the possibilities of reframing psychological research beyond the notion of life of an individual. I've got Colebrook (2002, *I think?*) with me, helping me think how *life* can become a flow or multiplicity of experiences. Only a few days into a multi-year research project, how have I already begun carrying philosophy books to meetings?

We arrive together. Ostensibly an interview, I am immediately greeted with a *cacophony* of hugs, handshakes, and radiant smiles. My heartbeat joins the noise of these bodies, creating a deafening moment of (be)coming together amongst us.

Any expectation of what is to come feels less familiar, less available, less recognisable with what is transpiring around, and within, me....Mandy's arms are still embracing a few of the women even as I am told we are travelling elsewhere, together, for lunch.

*This is different. This isn't the introduction I envisaged...these feelings of welcome, of movement, of coming together.*

Standing, waiting, listening with deaf ears to the women around me, these are not a feeling of being part of some thing, but of *becoming* something, unforeseen, that has yet to arrive...the thunder of my heartbeat joins the warm embrace of someone's breath on my cheek; tentative arms reach over my shoulders, the smooth fabric, cool to the touch, imbues vivid warmth. With the respectful care for (an)other's body, women around me introduce me to different possibilities before me.

Soon, I am with Dayita, and thinking of the smell of perfumes permeating the car. Somewhere along the way, I've been ushered into the car with several others. Ignoring the directions from the car, telling us the fastest way to get to lunch, instead, we follow two other vehicles ahead of us. The women tell me they are speaking Hindi amongst themselves, not about me. They are teasing Dayita, because, I think, her husband bought her the car.

*We're making light of gendered norms...I am told...because her man takes care of her. I tell them...my girlfriend, hopefully, settles for something else, as I won't be able to buy her much of anything whilst working on a PhD.*

As we arrive inside the restaurant, my seat is shown to me, and surrounded by others, we begin again, the dozen or so women emanating a tender care, flowing around me, soothing my less thunderous heartbeat.

Before long, our food is ordered, collectively, with our divergent tastes for, and tolerance of, hot food arriving amongst the plates of curry dispersed around the table. Seemingly, the dozen or so women take turns providing a description of a dish.

*These are from South India; these are very hot curries for very hot weather. These are made where people eat more meat; it's dry, mountainous and cold.*

The women present, the women tell me, are from different regions from India, with different customs, religions, and foods...and different men.

For the next three hours, I do not remember much of the questions asked of me, or the stories I tell. Instead, I think with a welcoming patience I remember, shared by the women, inviting me to risk weaving stories together with narratives explaining different, and often divergent, ways of knowing myself, my work, and my family. Beginning again, I tell them the stories I share are an effort to rethink how we understand our lives, with the tears and laughter we experience as men.

The smells from unfamiliar bowls of curry, specially requested by the women for our lunch I'm told, give me pause...

*I'm hoping to work with men, the men you support in the whare, to situate our understandings of change processes through narratives of the politics of the locations we experience. I want to experiment with creating notions of change embodying our histories, our cultures, our families and religions and customs and traditions...the things men find important to their stories of change.*

When we imagine our selves as navigational aides across space and time, sustaining the complexities we experience in life, I hope that, with other men, we can create narrative opportunities to make sense

of change and difference by tracing experiences of disruptions, of love, loss, and renewal, imagination, hope, and despair—in other words, I am interested in the *becomings* of men.

As we finish lunch, I'm asked what I hope for my work.

*Although my project began as a proposal to create witness-able accounts of men's change processes, what I want to remember is the attentive care given to me here, to my many selves i've shared throughout our lunch together, by the women present here with me.*

*I want to remember the humour and compassion, the forces and flows sustaining me through troubled and troubling times. I want to remember feeling the unspeakable voices expressing conditions of a life from which I emerge.*

**(Matthew, 2 March 2020)**

When I revisit memories of this meeting, I remember an intimacy of sharing stories elaborating our diverse histories with narratives of experiences tracing *events* bringing us together, rather than histories constitutive of, and constituted by, cultural differences we explore from distinct, individual, and unitary subject locations that set us apart. The restaurant, revered by the women for preparing the tastes and smells of regional cuisine associated with areas of India many of the Sahaayta staff originate from, was chosen given the importance of food in their cultures and religions, helping facilitate a culturally responsive introduction in which affectivity is normalised, celebrated, and welcomed. In a nomadic mode of remembering, the women's subjective presence forms with memories of an openness towards complexity—creating affective space where narratives of my self need not fit into tight little boxes suggesting *here I am*. Instead, together, we created an affective capacity to imagine, working with Gandhi Nivas and Sahaayta, what I might become<sup>20</sup>.

What I remember is *becoming* part of an assemblage sharing hope with futures yet to come. I do not remember questions asked of me, the stories I told in response to questions I hear, nor do I recall specific reactions to my responses. Instead, I remember an animating joy with feeling *welcomed*, with every question an *invitation* to *weave* stories, together, offering different and often divergent ways of knowing myself. I imagine these narrative figures of myself as navigational aides, for the women as much as myself, across the space and time of my life, producing subjectivities that become self-experiments with creative affective forces propelling alternative modes of relations; modes of relations that offer ways I imagine myself being accountable to others. These narrative figures are not determined by my past, but rather are an invocation of an ethical commitment to Gandhi Nivas and Sahaayta, the staff, the men, and communities we come from.

Although I did not record my early meetings with Sahaayta, unfamiliar as of then with posthumanist practices helping me make sense of Deleuzian processes of change, I continue writing these encounters, each time thinking anew processes of becoming assemblages with others. Rather than sharing narratives of traits, skills, attributes, and experiences as things I *have*, representing myself as a figure of thought with fixed accounts giving evidence of *who* I am or *what* I have become, writing nomadic accounts

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<sup>20</sup> Names of Gandhi Nivas and Sahaayta staff members were recorded present

of our encounter become experiments of writing with memory of *difference*. Completed with what Braidotti (2006b) refers to as writing *by heart*, writing narratives of affective and intensive difference is messy, unpredictable work with which I *occupy* subject positions, resisting a notion of *copying* or *representing* figurations of myself, or others, through narratives of change. In more general terms, Dolphijn (2014) helps me understand nomadic practices, as ways of thinking, are “not about revealing the beauty of nature in the Kantian sense” (p. 190). Becoming lost with nomadic memory, where in the *artful* disestablishment of a unitary self I give over to subjectivities Boundas (2007) describes as “the unstable result of experimentation and artifice” (p. 499), narratives of a dispersed self become unbounded, limited only to the confines of imagination. With narratives of affective and intensive difference, writing accounts of rhizomatic thinking forming a nomadic subject, I am able to (re)produce voices to give meaning to missing *storylines* of my life, by discussing politics of locations and processes of change that emerge with different understandings of my history and background.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(M) So if I'm taking that a bit further then...ultimately, my research is around how do we support men better? How do we support them differently in processes of change? And so I'm working with Gandhi Nivas. So if I'm thinking of this example of you being able to share things with your partner, and her being able to share, and, to a certain extent, experiment or trial, you know, different ways of talking and sharing with you. Where do you think that takes your relationship? How does that change the opportunities for you in the future, do you think. This, these new ways of doing things between you, what does that do?

(K) It's a positive. Just like, you know, in the past, I've just, you know, lock things away. And it's, I feel like, I'm sure over the last two to three years, I would try to implement, without any help from, you know, outside sources, just me and my partner trying to work our own relationship, you know, trying to just talk through what makes sense to us. And I think it's definitely helped on, you know, being able to communicate properly with her. Because they're a unique, the woman species, can't live with them can't live without them, at times, but definitely, I think I'm more, I can feel a lot better about, you know, opening up to my partner, in certain situations...instead of just, yeah, just even over the last three weeks, where I have been coming to the Gandhi Nivas house, it feel a lot more open, and just having it there with them, to deal with.

**(Kingi, Interview, 16 July 2021)**

Returning to memories of the *early* days of the Covid pandemic, the New Zealand Government introduced border closures, restricting travel to New Zealand to residents and citizens<sup>21</sup>, as well as social distancing restrictions enforced through a *lockdown*<sup>22</sup>. I remember these events with a fear of economic free-fall and job losses across the country, presenting unforeseen possibilities that my PhD scholarship might be withdrawn before research had even begun. Fear also arose with the prospect I would become unemployed, compounding already strained financial circumstances and increasing levels of debt accrued whilst completing my Master's Degree. An American migrant also holding New Zealand citizenship, I remember becoming *entangled* with multiple others in early pandemic epicentres of Milan (Italy), New York City, and the United Kingdom, where *life*, due to the rapid emergence of death in the beginning days of the pandemic, ushered in unfamiliar forms of precarity for my loved ones. The safety of myriad travel restrictions and closed borders surrounding New Zealand both reassuringly comforted yet incapacitated me. In light of the fear and isolation forming with unknown dangers of death and disease, I remember encountering Braidotti (2011b) as offering escape routes with opportunities rethinking interconnecting forces as an outward bound direction of a self, which:

**...inaugurates alternative ecologies of belonging both in kinship systems and in forms of social and political participation...for an ethical regrouping of social participation and community building. (p. 329)**

A sense of hope, however embryonic, emerged in approaching Braidotti's nomadic subjectivity as a methodology producing scholarly work with others by creating new terrains of belonging. I remember *desiring* writing the unimaginable during unprecedented times, not by *writing of* my fears, which I realise is connected to a position of relative privilege in that staying home did not present any particular risks to my economic and social wellbeing, but, rather, I wanted to revisit the theoretical opportunities of *writing with* my fears. Thinking of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), I began wondering how subjectivity, as a multiplicity, "joins or does not join the pack, how far away it stays, how it does or does not hold to the multiplicity" (p. 29); in other words, I wondered what a body can do. Re-remembering experiences of feeling welcomed by Sahaayta staff as empowering forces, I

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<sup>21</sup> [https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/coronavirus-nz-shutting-borders-to-everyone-except-citizens-residents-pm-jacinda-ardern/O5WL6RIZMUQYPXREFRTPA3GJXA/?c\\_id=1&objectid=12318284](https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/coronavirus-nz-shutting-borders-to-everyone-except-citizens-residents-pm-jacinda-ardern/O5WL6RIZMUQYPXREFRTPA3GJXA/?c_id=1&objectid=12318284)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/23/kiwis-go-home-new-zealand-to-go-into-month-long-lockdown-to-fight-coronavirus>

prefer a nomadic process of remembering that Braidotti (2006b) elaborates as more akin to “the careful layout of empowering conditions” (p. 168) which open up and actualise memories as virtual possibilities frozen in the past. In this sense, understandings of embodied transformation emerge whilst retracing memories of events where I *become-otherwise*, that is, re-remembering experiences to remember *difference* differently.

After the lifting of social distancing restrictions on 26 May 2020, I began visiting the Gandhi Nivas whare for the first time. For a few weeks, I visited all three whare, at different times and on different days, introducing myself to staff and familiarising myself with the local communities in which the whare are located. In consultation with my supervision panel, and Gandhi Nivas staff, a voluntary, low-risk ethics notification was made on 23 June 2020<sup>23</sup>, enabling me to immediately begin fieldwork.

When I think of fieldwork, my memories become orientated by remembering that men are not “stopped in place” in change processes, with participant recruitment specific processes of change. Throughout my initial visits to the whare, both Gandhi Nivas staff and men staying at the whare were invited to engage in an open process of *kōrero*, to share understandings of a mechanism, their experiences of “being there” as an ethical way for me to support men become research participants. My visits combined a range of structured and unstructured activities, including attending weekly team meetings and daily staff debriefings, observing intakes and participating in anger management groups with men newly arriving at the whare, and many many hours watching television and drinking cups of coffee as men passed the time before being able to return home. This enabled me to discuss our “work” both in terms familiar to men and staff, as well as enabling me to infuse a figure of thought with theory. These encounters offer myriad fieldwork experiences empowering collective research goals and objectives, both affirming, yet exceeding, the limits of individual men’s participation in the research process. My fieldwork, then, became a process of engaging men, in other words, to help develop iterative understandings of their participation, possibilities which emerge with a circle of response forming relationships of trust and safety.

Encounters with potential participants, organised by staff around the ongoing support for men in the whare, oftentimes emerged through less formal, and unplanned, *kōrero* with

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix 1 (Ethics Notification-MUHEC 4000022892)

men throughout my regular visits to the whare. I provided schedules, spanning no more than four weeks at a time, mapping out the date, time, and location of my visits, at least two weeks in advance. This enabled staff to introduce me when supporting men with the planned, and unplanned, activities of daily occurring at the whare. Often enlisted as a support person, such as when men sought medical attention, I also joined men, recently made homeless, when visiting potential accommodation options such as hostels and boarding houses. By and large, fieldwork consisted of struggle, of struggling with a praxis of always rethinking how one joins a pack, embodying a busy-ness of a whare housing up to six men at a time. English language proficiency was a consideration but not a pre-requisite, with men also able to draw upon trusted individuals, namely Gandhi Nivas staff and other support people, to act as translators when discussing my presence in the whare, or when I joined men on any support-related activities in the community.

Late on a Friday evening, I share a few beers with my neighbours, Gerry and Chad. Aware it is the weekend before I officially “begin” my PhD studies, they want to know what it is exactly about violent men I intend to study.

Why is it you believe you can help men who are violent, and how do you expect to help them change their ways?

Both men share stories of the New Zealand criminal justice system, and, in particular, the professionals they have encountered.

The focus of government support for men should be affordable accommodation, and employment training or new educational opportunities; men need security to maintain financial independence and care for others. Men will only learn their lesson and “get on with things” at their own pace, according to their own individualised journeys, which “the system” only impedes.

Psychology, as a discipline, they tell me, is only interested in good men and bad men, with uncomplicated understandings of violence as something always harmful and immoral.

Professionals are “out of touch” and “disconnected” from the needs of men like us. How can professionals with no experience of committing violence or harming others support men with change, when government employment policies require probation officers and prison guards to have no previous criminal convictions. What do people who have never had to contend with the police or criminal justice system know about our experiences as men?

Psychology, they go on to say, will only ever provide knowledge of violent men that sets them apart from other men who are supposedly not violent. Chad stresses his point. He “learned” to fight from his brothers at a very young age, permitting him a means to influence others, and therefore protect his friends and loved ones.

Violence is one way brothers stand by each other at school, allowing us to resist and challenge bullies, to find our way in risky and dangerous places.

Gerry describes the appropriate use of violence as judicious, not flagrant or gratuitous, with violence often a necessary means to solve complex problems, and in support, Chad shares a story. The weekend before, Chad went to a local bar to meet friends for drinks. The bar is often rowdy, with violence apparently occurring most weekends. When Chad arrives, a man at the bar is already making unsolicited advances towards a young woman serving drinks. Chad, irritated this is going unnoticed and ignored by others, tells me his concern; the harassment leaves the woman in a vulnerable position. When the man does not take heed of the “quiet words” puts to him, Chad tells me the man soon finds himself on the floor of the bar.

Violence is a way of putting actions to words. Violence is a way of being accountable to others, a way of keeping others safe. Violence helps us live life, as a man.

Familiar yet very uncomfortable with beliefs espousing the virtues of violence, and resisting an argument about psychology, I confess to Chad and Gerry that I have never been in a fight, nor have I been arrested by the police. I explain, though, the entirety of my professional career involves supporting men and boys learn independent living skills, develop interpersonal relationship skills, and establish connections with their communities and cultures that enable them to address their use of violence. Pausing, I describe my earliest experiences in the violence prevention sector, running the day to day operations of after-school and respite programs for boys, and, later, as a supervisor for an adult foster care facility.

Being responsible for the safety of both staff and clients, I participated in hundreds of incidents involving the physical restraint of men and boys, and, occasionally, young girls, many of whom were intent on harming themselves, or using weapons to harm me and others. Here in New Zealand, my career with the Department of Corrections involved incarcerating men; I can no longer ignore the disproportionate impact and trauma my work has on our communities, as men.

What counts as violence towards others is very different between places and across time, with different considerations taking priority in Michigan, the U.K., and New Zealand. Many men in prison have mental health concerns, and experiences of abuse, trauma, self-harm and suicidality. Men are haunted by histories of drug and alcohol use, and the consequences of traumatic brain injuries. Life is challenging for many of us, in a myriad of complex ways.

We can easily rationalise and justify violence through religious, cultural, and gender norms. Psychology, I hope, can help develop understandings of violence responsive to our differences, informing not only what we mean by violence towards others but also how we respond to and support men who want to address the harm they cause others.

Pausing, again...I begin noticing Gerry and Chad dis-engaging, their attention turning to other matters of more importance, like the status of their margaritas and a need to top up their drinks. But they wait. Unprepared to relent, and nervous, I share with Chad and Gerry other experiences of violence, beginning with memories of my grandfather and father. A few weeks after my 17th birthday, I explain, my father committed suicide, as his father had many years before him. Pausing, I remember the breathlessness of explaining..

Both men died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head, after developing debilitating manifestations of Huntington's Disease, a fatal genetic disorder expressed through degenerative behavioural, neurological, and psychiatric manifestations. I spent decades, wondering if I inherited this disease, never sure if I would become an old man...die young, or follow in their footsteps.

An attentive silence ensues, becoming something of a welcome, or at least I feel welcomed to share with Chad and Gerry that I unable to recall a time when genetics, terminal illness, and suicide were unfamiliar terms.

I do not recall a time before the subject of giving life, of becoming a father myself and passing on the Huntington gene to my children, became interconnected with experiences of risk, grief and loss. I do not recall a time when violence was unknowable, and am often troubled with experiences of violence often treated very differently from other forms of violence, but I also wonder how my experiences of violence create conditions for who I become, and continue becoming. Contemplating my intimate knowledge of violence, I too wonder how experiences of violence help me live life, and think as a man. For almost three decades and across multiple countries, I still remain curious of people, and continue wondering what we can become.

**(Matthew, 28 February 2020)**

## Re-entanglement

I include a narrative of my interactions with Chad and Gerry to bring forward memories of sharing troubling feelings, helping me feel for phenomena of *gaps, disruptions, and ruptures*, creating changes in speed and flow as capacity for movement within narratives of violence. This narrative helps me *feel* connections capable of perturbing settled beliefs and memories by returning to memories of events, experiences, and activities. Rather than focussing on the convincing logic of an argument which holds understandings of violence in place, a nomadic narrative is enabled with possibilities of disentangling specific lines of thought disrupting specific *majoritarian* figurations of myself as a stable figure of thought. Contrary to a subject for whom knowledge is accumulated and centralised, incrementally progressing in a linear manner that branches off and builds through *arborescent* thinking (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), nomadic writing produces *virtual* counter-identities by constructing new and novel assemblages of affective intensities emerging with memories of change and difference as relational processes. I use nomadic narratives as autoethnographic experiments of writing my own past to craft new futures, with, to quote Braidotti (2011b), particular emergent figurations “not at all the measure of all things, but more like a sedimented accumulation of leftovers” (p. 131) able produce new, empowering relationships with others. Narratives as self-accounts do not represent alterity, though. Nomadic narratives accounts concern imperceptible, ineffable moments, happenings, occasions and events, recalling transformative encounters as conditions of change, with nomadic memories becoming discursive evidence of change from one otherwise unstable and unknowable, yet *sensible, self-understanding* to another.

With narrative self-accounts, I challenge taken for granted *sedimentations* of memories individualising a representation of myself, helping sustain resistance to privileged (masculine) identities produced with, and codified by, and therefore limited to, socially and legally normativised understandings of violence. The goal, if there is any, is to reclaim the ambiguousness of self-hood and identity, by refocussing attention on the material formation of our subjective selves within these encounters as a *problem of thought*. As *imaginative*, yet very real, textual encounters with others, nomadic narratives, by *effecting* us to *think* thought *differently*, can only be apprehended *sensibly*. Rather than prefiguring myself as an object of thought, though, I revisit how affectivity is engaged in processes of becoming, and how I become *wrapped up* in textual forms. Nomadic narratives produce multiplicities of embodiment, and with Patton’s (2000) suggestive premise of thinking nomadic subjectivities “as something produced from the differences

of which they are composed” (p. 28), thinking in theoretical terms, to my understanding, narrative accounts conceptualise *difference*, differently, by developing understandings of a self in terms of alternative *embodied connections* with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities, forces and flows.

The nomadic subject, which Braidotti (2000) positions as *counterpart* and *counterpoint* to the normative subject, rather than its replacement, sustains connections unfolding within collaborative social encounters with Chad and Gerry. Yet, this encounter extends past the limits of this one account. Nomadic thinking discursively figures affective forces and flows, resisting stable and fixed understandings of subjects and objects, to purposefully create iterative *interruptions* to senses of self. Emerging with unforeseen connections, and an absence of expected connections, nomadic narratives are enlivened with the *unpredictability* of *creative imagination* that comes with understanding change as open, with *blocks of becomings* informed with processual, yet unnameable, events. Following Boundas (2006), nomadic memory work is a practice which *unfolds* subjectivity as a tactic, embodying *difference* produced from, and emerging with, experiences of violence in myriad forms. Working with Braidotti’s (2011b) nomadic theory, nomadic narratives affirm a generative vitality of all human, non-human, and more-than-human life as a force always *already* producing events as conditions of change. Nomadic subjectivity, neither a representative metaphor of a *self* nor a dialectical criticism of normative thought, is but a methodology of elaborating the neo-vitalist immanence of life. Nomadic subjectivities created with nomadic accounts are *literal* materialist approaches elaborating a *concept of self*, creating opportunities to (re)think both *violence* and *non-violence*, differently, in the violence prevention sector.

Deleuze (2001) helps me understand nomadic subjectivities as an active, iterative and processual political philosophy. In his conversation with Toni Negri, he implores us to consider:

**...what counts in such processes is the extent to which, as they take shape, they elude both established forms of knowledge and the dominant forms of power. Even if they in turn engender new forms of power or become assimilated into new forms of knowledge...What we most lack is a belief in the world, we’ve quite lost the world, it’s been taken from us. If you believe in the world you precipitate events, however inconspicuous, that elude control, you engender new space-times, however small their surface or volume. (p. 176)**

Thinking of new forms of knowledge in the violence prevention sector, brought into existence with a belief in the world, I think of *non-violence* as a subjective *becoming*, a literal materialist *concept of self* elaborating *difference*, differently. Rather than confining a self to an object of thought *cognitively* understood, *nomadic* subjective becomings are sustained by embodying the generative vitality of all human, non-human, and more-than-human life. This conceptualisation of nomadic subjectivity resists a notion of identity as a commodified product; becomings of men are not advanced with a purpose of identifying one's self as non-violent. Braidotti (2016) helps me situate nomadic violence prevention work as challenging practices perpetuating the "separation of bios, life, as the prerogative of humans, from Zoe, the life of animals and nonhuman entities" (p. 281), which defines men and masculinities by what is excluded, as much as what is included. With normative notions of rational, masculine self-representations situated along a hierarchical scale of decreasing, or increasing, socio-economic worth (and cost), masculinities and masculine practices represent an insufficient and inadequate self-expression of change. The hegemony of these self-concepts only enables understandings of change as liberation or escape from dissatisfactory traits, qualities, and attributes defining a self, and, conversely, the reproduction of thoughts and beliefs merging and converging with, rather than transgressing, accepted socio-cultural, economic, and gendered norms and practices. With normative notions of change limited to *movement*, and the *absence* of movement, along *differential* hierarchical scales, Arrigo (2011) helps me understand masculinity and masculine practices as hegemonic "mechanisms of escape [which] recursively sustain the forces that reduce being" (p. 406). Nomadic subjectivity is a methodology, thinking with Arrigo's (2013) subsequent thesis of *social captivity*, of "activating a journey whose intention is departure" (p. 688) from the reproduction of subjective practices confining the neo-vitalist generative possibilities of Zoe. Nomadic subjectivity offers escape routes from *unanswerable questions* about violence, such as how we empower men's change processes, by *disrupting* the *closed circuit* of neoliberal profit-making machinery resting on the surveilled bodies of men, engendering new *materialist* subjective space-times that senses men's *becomings* as embodied possibilities of *futures yet to come* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987).

Thinking nomadically with Gerry and Chad, I trace figurations of a self resistant to notions of profit and gain by eschewing the mastery of reproducible reasoning and logics. My thinking, as a white male of middle class privilege, is informed with Weed (2013), which summarises a task of white male theorists as "resisting the imaginary lures of the

historically constructed fiction of full male presence” (p. 75). Weed’s solicitation is a critique of Smith (2013), who theorises the work of *men* as happening *in* feminism, revealing the *materiality* of uncomfortable spatial arrangements as the substance of his argument. Following Weed’s writing, which traces margins, borders, and limits of self-understandings in order to *resist* the *mastering* of feminist theory, I contest Men’s Work need not belong *within* the Women’s Movement. Rather than the *mastery of knowledge* by a singular self, or multiple selves, itself a *masculine* practice, Men’s Work is a refractive acknowledgement of our challenges as academic researchers, scholars, and professional *men* working in violence prevention sectors. Elsewhere within the same edited volume as Weed and Smith, Braidotti (2013a) supports re-imagining Men’s Work as theorising difference *differently*, to *operativise* difference so that *difference* can be “acted ON and acted OUT, collectively, in the *here and now* of our common world” (italics in original) (p. 241). Constructed with the politics of a *man* working with *others*, my nomadic subjects become sustained with the political locations of both remembered moments of resistance to, and remembered moments of connection with, the Women’s Movement, through the politics of *spatial penetration* (Weed and Smith, and Morris, Nelson, and Schor also attend to these tensions within Smith & Jardine, 2013). My hope, for men working with other men in the violence prevention sector, is less about men’s sense of belonging to the Women’s Movement, although this thought troubles me, and, frankly, many men I work with. More I wonder of possibilities that the Women’s Movement, may, in fact, sense that this work contributes, if only partially and fleetingly, to the movement itself by remaining responsibly in sight.

Possibilities are afoot when we rethink men’s involvement in the Women’s Movement, and feminism more generally, as less a matter of occupying space within these collectivities, disciplines, and social organisations, and more about men re-imagining themselves as part of an assemblage of forces and flows enacting social change. This is a disruption to traditional neoliberal values of autonomy, agency, and choice arising with heteronormative understandings men mastering the spaces and places we occupy in our diverse worlds. Here I must caution my self, though. If men both need to account for themselves without a full presence whilst also acting on and acting out difference, the politics of our locations necessitate an incessant bustle enabling change processes sustaining new social power relations that may otherwise feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable, if not threatening, to previously taken for granted arrangements of socio-politico-economic relations.

The nomadic subject of the narrative with Chad and Gerry is traced with specific memories of affective flow, invoking *difference* to evoke empathy, enabling me “to get a hearing” with men who have vastly different understandings and experiences of violence, and violence interventions. As I do not want to get caught up in a defence of specific understandings, nor wishing to conflate our differing understandings of violence, writing with a nomadic subject, I share understandings of violence *connecting* with their understandings of violence. Using an ethics of care for the men’s politics of locations, our different experiences become sensible and meaningful, our affective political locations *felt*, rather than relying on a sense of “getting each other”. In part responding to Hodgetts and Rua’s (2010) critique of media portrayals of (working class) men in New Zealand, an ethics of care enables me to engage the social construction of men’s subjectivity with a *community of practice*, as the authors put it, that disrupts “the prominent assumption in the academic literature and media deliberations that working men do things together rather than talk” (p. 165). An praxis conditioned with an ethics of care helps resonate affective encounters as embodied emotional experiences men share with others, where we attend to *what it means to be a man* whilst negotiating our resistance to a collective whole. I discursively trace affective flow, a textual process in which memories of suicide become vulnerabilities in an attempt at embodying gaps between understandings of violence, creating an experience of relationships with men who talk about violence, differently, as a place to dwell. The patience I experience is an *attractive*, supporting specific figurations of nomadic memories frustrating, resisting, and retreating from, rather than supporting and sustaining hegemonic understandings of violence. Movement, from a competent helping expert to figuring myself as a transitional travelling *flow* of affectivity, is the work of surrendering (departing) a role of authority and mastery, and producing *becomings* of knotty places unfolding with specific political locations, I stop *making sense* —but *become sensible*.

This is a fleetingly strange place to find oneself in. Yet, writing nomadically helps me think how to analyse memories when travelling with others who may not be travelling, by producing complex layerings of myself, where, as an ethnographer, affective embodiment becomes the research data. With this narrative, I enlist our *active disengagements* with, and our *resistance* to, existing regimes of gendered socio-political operations of violence, transposing the limits of hegemonic *territorializing* forces with multiplicities of self-understandings. This non-normative approach of crafting open and responsive figurations of a self helps me revisit a desire for *embodied* discursive political narratives of change

processes. As Chad and Gerry resist my professional experience, training, and education as sources of knowledge that affirm understandings of men's use of violence, repurposing the *pause* I experience in textual narratives of affective memories, "disengages" self-formation from *thinking* limited to crafting a persuasive account of *what* I know to be *true*. In other words, rather than an interpersonal tension requiring me to transcend their resistance with evidence of my knowledge pertaining violence, affectivity affirms our differing understandings of violence in the midst of the encounter. Frustrated, yet thinking creatively, I notice that *noticing* the two men enables other memories, producing an awareness of other affective forces creating agency within our encounter. Resisting a momentary desire, of rushing to convince them by re-litigating an argument intended to win them over, I remember, instead, their patience, and a sense of waiting for me in light of my frustration. Affectivity re-emerges with new subjective formations, as I remember Gerry and Chad both desiring to leave the conversation, and their resistance to doing so. Noticing my own frustration, I can follow different memories of that night, helping make sense not so much *why* I shared such personal information but rather *how* differing embodied subjectivities are produced with *different* narrative accounts. My research, as with this narrative, involves remembering how to create change and difference with an ethics of care informed with, and responsive to, situated memories of the past as political locations, creating new possibilities of hope for our futures.

Rather than emplacing my self within a narrative encounter, nomadic narratives are an attempt at figuring affective memories of our evening together with a *focal block of becoming*. Working with embodied materiality and affective flow, nomadic subjectivity opens up new *feminist* politics of locations with Gary and Chad, with fleeting, temporary, and partial connections with other forces and flows that otherwise become distracting, dangerous, and destabilising to a unitary sense of self—enabling responses to the men's unanswerable questions about violence. Returning to Deleuze's concept of *the middle*, my narrative is created with a figure of thought that *dwells* along an axis of retreat and resistance to subjective figurations of our encounter *and* is capable *cracking* under the strain of the extremes of affect. Writing a nomadic subject, I privilege micropolitical acts as *loci* of *molecular* processes, tracing *molecular becomings* as *stepping stones* of change and difference.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(K) Yeah that's right. Yeah, so, like, she, my partner, is very stubborn. Like, even if I had, even if there's an easier way to do a task, and she's been doing it for, she's still not willing to change. She'd rather do it her own way. But because we had talked to each other about, you know, let's bring it up, you know, and talk about this, just trying, you know, get through this like adults, it gave me the ability to bring stuff up, that I want, that, you know, she in the past, she wasn't willing to change. But now I was bringing it up in the setting, she had to make a conscious effort on, you know, acknowledging what I was saying. Ummm, yeah.

(M) What was that like for you...to be to be seen differently than...

(K) It was, it was different. It was, a lot of it was her ideas, so I was just going by, you know, she wanted to set the, sort of, the situation up. So I was just giving her feedback. Sort of, not feedback, but, yeah, she had, sort of, brought the idea up, and because I was used to talking about my emotions, and she wanted to talk about everything, that sort of gave her a platform to be able to ask me questions, and for me to open up to her about the certain things. And I was just, I was not using it to my advantage or anything like that, I was just, you know, if it was there, and she could use it, I was going to use it back, you know, use it too. Just sort of made us open up. Yeah yeah.

**(Kingi, Interview, 16 July 2021)**

A non-normative tactic of imagining my self as a figure of thought no longer reliant on reacting to events as they appear, my nomadic subject is a form of creatively constructing subjectivity to counter-actualise events, processes, and experiences, creating *minority storylines* as entry points to understand embodied possibilities of change (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Writing narrative of an encounter with a nomadic subjectivity, a storyline does not illustrate who I once was in order to formulate who I have become in comparison. I am not convincing Gerry and Chad with *what* I, as a man, know. Thinking nomadically, I trace minority storylines with points of departure from masculine heteronormativity with DeleuzoGuattarian *lines of flight*, an emergent process of ushering in transformation with the smallest psychological moments of individual life. These moments are witness-able accounts of encountering multiplicities of molecular flows that I do not assume I am able to purposefully devise, control, name or explain. Nomadic narratives are an empirical process of remembering *differently*, experimenting with different formulations of affective flows with which different subjective selves emerge. Eschewing notions of a pre-figured subjective self that (re)traces thought to, and through, (more or less) fixed and settled points, I construct nomadic narratives as an iterative and rhizomatic molecular process, which repurposes memories of the past to create new, and novel, figurations of my self, producing unexplored future possibilities of a life. Creating *assemblages of affective encounters* with Chad and Gerry, Deleuze and Guattari remind me, nomadic narratives become useful in violence prevention work when we support men with understandings of change processes as “phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture” (p. 4). What emerges, what is *sensed*, though, requires the creation of a new concept.

### **Witness-able Cartographic Accounts**

Bringing affective flows into the conceptualisation of the nomadic subject means I cannot leave behind what feminist thought brings in, as I trace different dis/entanglements emerging with memories suffused with an institutional ethics of care learnt with Corrections work. Nomadic memory is not just about events, people, and spaces; different arrivals of different unsaid possibilities emerge with the chaos and ambiguity of arriving at specific figurations of nomadic subjectivity. Nomadic theory, as a technology, traces micro-revolutionary tactics to craft an open engagement with men, our communities, and processes of *becoming* nonviolent. A life is lived uniquely, in that a life is about *individuation*, as affective forces and flows do not tell us what there is. A nomadic life is to become Nietzsche’s *good player* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), and

dancing on the feet of chance, when we think *affectivity* as conditions of thought, we become interested in conditions with which potential possibilities play out differently—informing what a body can do, and what we might become.

In the early days of the pandemic, literature reviews became a process of enabling points of departure from the normative thinking of an agential/autonomous individual, creating possibilities of *thinking* with new middles. With Deleuzian political thought, processes of individuation cohere with narratives of events producing different, unpredictable arrangements of fluxes, flows, and forces. Tracing *possibilities* of thought, nomadic thinking creates figures of thought not necessarily constituting *what is*, but, instead, conceptualises subjectivity as *experimentation* without method. This conceptualisation of nomadic subjectivity, never designating a *thing*, only ever designates conditions of possibilities, that, whilst not known ahead of time, reveals and affirms *difference* as both potentials and limits. A cartographic account of *becoming-otherwise*, a nomadic subject is an *outward-bound, affective mapping* of narrative figurations of individuating events *fraying* normative subject formation, enabling us to bear witness to and affirm multiple webs of interaction with human, non-human, and more-than-human forces.

As a posthumanist methodology, nomadic subjectivity helps me understand where *I* am caught up in places, where the *I* of narrative self formation gets *stuck*. I understand this as a social entrapping, the (re)territorializing of materialist forces limiting the possibilities of thought, whilst thinking life as *Zoe*. This enables me to resist, retreat, and disrupt institutional disciplinary processes that do this territorializing of our lives. When normative thought *prefigures* territorializing materialist processes, producing a *coming together* where *sameness* enables practices of representation, and, hence, managing what Arrigo (2013) calls “the risk of being in-and-of society differently” (p. 676), territorializing *convergences* occur at the intersections of heteronormative connections. With nomadic subjectivity, we can produce *movement* disrupting the hegemony of these convergences with processes that are felt, rather than surveilled. Nomadic subjectivity, nomadic subjects, that is, in other words, thinking nomadically, is to think *movement* as *virtual rearrangements* of assemblages of materiality, which, rather than returning me to a place of connection, nomadic thinking is a process of returning to a *crafting*, a *tracing*, a *placing*, a *layering*, a *weaving*—a *mosaic-ing* that always already returns to new middles. Rethinking figures of thought that are *put to work* to create movement of thought, new

middles re/produce new territories where textuality plays with the embodiment of these processes.

18 October 2020

GN3: 11-5 p.m. at Papakura with Dana and Raymond.

Staff: Chahel

I have gone back to see Raymond. Something was happening, Raymond was busy or just not there. In the mean time, Chahel introduces Dana to me, gently “placing” him with me on the steps of the back deck, overlooking the massive expanse of the garden. Chahel didn’t “sell” me to him, but rather, told Dana I would safeguard him. What is it to be told that I would look after you; ensure you’re safe; that we can be candid and blunt, together?

Dana shared he has lots of grief with himself, which he acknowledges presents a paradox. He understands he is likely “one of those guys”, someone that otherwise “looks good” —yet is violent. He acknowledged he knew that meant he was an asshole, and he was sorry for that. A weird self pity... which is confusing, as I am unsure how to respond that he is not to be trusted.

When Dana offers to help, to help listen and share, to help “work the stuff” with me, I wonder; *Am I being set up? His self-spoken self-pity feels trapping; I feel stuck.*

He seeks to be helpful, he said, as he is aware of how fortunate he is, having people and services around him in times like now, and wanted to meet with me as an acknowledgement of that. I don’t sense that excuses, that he is excusing how he has come to be in emergency accommodation for men, only that he wanted to affirm what he called his “crapiness” as part of his willingness to meet with me.

Questioning myself, I’m careful with him.

*Self-pity is slippery, distracting...*

Together, Dana explores with me issues of ethics. He desires “resolve”...resolve to commit to a series, sequence, a chain of events and activities. He acknowledges resolve is a “thing” missing for him, “something” he doesn’t have, something that helps not only create—but sustain, relationships with others. Dana desires for a particular becoming, producing resolve in himself...he desires change with a specific purpose...I sense this as lacking something...Dana’s efforts have purpose, an agenda, desired outcomes.

As our kōrero finishes, Dana says he finds something coming to him, with me. When I ask him about this, thinking in terms of how do I ask about experiences of beginning processes of becoming, Dana shares this can become intoxicating.

Sharing with Dana that, for me time doesn't crawl or move with these encounters, but instead I experience a crawling, that we crawl, we move together, even if I'm not sure of where we're going—or how we got there, I explain that these feelings of movement began earlier, a few days ago, in part when I met with two other men at the whare, Raymond then Matt...and now him. With these feelings, it's as if I...through "us"...have become part of the research itself. He agrees, he smiles, he's breathless, and doesn't want to leave, just yet.

On my way out, I catch up with Raymond for just a few minutes. Even though we don't have anything in particular to talk about or discuss...we arranged for me to come back before he leaves on Wednesday. I suggest that rather than our kōrero being about "following up" with him...I'm thankful for an opportunity to follow him as his week unfolds. "Being there" with him has become an immense privilege...and we begin again, sharing experiences of change throughout our week apart.

I experience the *touch* of institutional expectations with a terrible *stuck-edness*, when I become aware of the *productiveness* of this *touching*. Thinking with a nomadic subject I am able to dream unexplored possibilities of what I am leaving behind when institutional expectations tell me what to think about, when institutional ethics tell me what they are doing to look after me, and when institutional practices tell me how to abide these commands. Meeting institutional expectations of mastery, inculcating a habit of mind providing possibilities of privileged access to academia, becomes difficult to quit. A nomadic account, though, helps me think this *touching* through felt experiences of politics of locations, which opens up affectivity as an *ethical activator* of *becomings* with memories of the past. Affectivity, Braidotti (2008) tells me, resists and disrupts institutional *touching* with the untamed differences of affective flow creating possibilities of “alternative social relations and other possible worlds” (p. 12). Nomadic remembering mobilises affectivity, sustaining different figures of thought, textually unleashing the posthuman potential of *untimely* visions (Bogue, 2006) of a self with a nomadic subject’s radically immanent flesh. Thinking politics of locations as *terrain* where virtual nomadic subjects roam, resisting *stuck-edness* through *crafting, tracing, placing, layering, and weaving affective processes of self-formation enabling movement with resistance, retreat, and disruption*, I once again remember encountering Mengué’s (2008) warning that the deterritorialization of thought always returns to codified, striated spaces, even as an *I* becomes a *we, in connection with others*. It is difficult to envisage nomadic narratives of my experiences without partially identifying relationships binding me together with other people, places, and things. That being said, an implication of writing a nomadic subject is a methodological joy of providing ethical accounts of inhabiting specific embodied subject positions where I am troubled by the possibilities of untangling all the identifying traces of others. Nomadically, I become a figure of thought (re)forming with different *experiences and understandings* of political locations, with nomadic subjectivity, in this way, becoming a circle of response between one’s selves, in connection with others.

Embodying writing, and writing affective embodiment, is writing *multiple openings*, both fragmenting my *story-ing* yet creating a metastability by creatively following *movement and transformation*. Rather than determining where the movement goes, though, a masculine practice prefiguring myself as a stable and representable and duplicatable image of thought, nomadic writing follows textual *affective potentia* to *trace* processes of *becomings*. With affective flow, thinking with a nomadic subject is creating an assemblage *on the go*, putting difference into action with a process of subject formation

*habit-ing* resistance to stipulating the assemblage up front. Thus, in the nomadic mode, subjectivity is creatively inhabiting affective assemblages before the assembled object of the nomadic subject. Creating assemblages by finding the pieces, the *right* affective flows to effect change, is a hard habit to quit, though. Thinking nomadically is not a constructivist ontology—but, rather, an emergent processual ontology, wondering what a body can do.

### **Heterogeneous Milieus**

Remembering the movement of affective flows with cartographic nodes of embodied affective memory, I can revisit what St. Pierre (2018) calls *living with theory* as an always already emergent practice of resisting the constructivist creation of subject positions in a *rush to application*. Living with *nomadic* theory, as iterative, non-normative processes of *experimenting with middles*, resists fixed images of subjectivity as a *method*, Jackson (2017) writes, producing a “stratified form of trustworthiness that validates research” (p. 666). This stratification privileges, that is, normativises, to my understanding, certain forms of knowledge production practices by *putting method before thought*, putting the doer before the deed, so to speak. Nomadic subjectivity is, instead, a *style* of post qualitative research. Living with nomadic theory is an attempt at embodying *collective assemblages of thought* producing *utterances* (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007), putting the *doing* before the *doer* as well as the *deed*. No longer limited to representing dogmatic images of myself as a thinking subject with *coextensive objects* of thought, my fieldnotes, then, to quote Deleuze, are attempts at “managing to stammer in one’s own language...being a stammerer of language itself” (p. 4). Fieldnotes, as *self-styling* assemblages, write a life *living with theory*, producing utterances attempting to embody forces and flows, and rather than concluding an assemblage of memories as valid, truthful, consistent, or correct, crafting nomadic experiences of fieldwork is an empirical practice of tracing processes of affective change to understand “how they become entangled, connect, bifurcate, avoid or fail to avoid the foci” (p. viii). Writing my experiences of fieldwork, expressing a multiplicity of selves otherwise off limits to normative subjectivity, is an emergent practice of producing *conditions* for creating knowledge of what a body can do.

3 July 2020

GN3: 3-8 p.m. at Papakura with George, Fergus

Staff: Chahel, Dayita, New staff,

Arriving a bit late due to traffic and an accident, Chahel asks what we should “call” me when introducing me to men tonight. His suggestion, something like a programme facilitator, is uncomfortable. This discomfort is recurring, a lingering frustration that I can't understand him—nor he me. Is he expecting me to run a group tonight? Is Chahel's introduction as a facilitator a way of lessening any resistance, hesitation, and resentment that men might feel towards psychology, or a researcher? Chahel's expectations of me are ambiguous, unclear...and I don't know how to respond.

*Why are we not able to talk about this?*

A bit at a loss as to how to proceed or what to do, feeling embarrassed, I sit in the lounge, and join George and Fergus watching TV. Before long, another fella is brought into the lounge by Chahel. We're introduced to each other, but within minutes both the man and Chahel leave, but I'm not alone. Through long, meandering, and wandering conversations about me, my background, and “what I am here for”, George and Fergus help me escape the funk I'm experiencing, inviting me, welcoming me... to share time together with long conversations about people, places and things from our pasts, our presents, and our futures.

Fergus and George express appreciation for Gandhi Nivas, in that they have spent a lot of time together the last few days, and attempt to share what this means in terms of changes in their lives.

Through encounters with each other, companionship and camaraderie in a time of crisis is helping them resist perpetuating familiar, but problematic, thinking patterns blaming their partners, for instance, for their violence. Both men are at the whare due to police involvement as a result of conflict at home, and neither expected to find safety, and possibilities of change, within the uncertain circumstances of relationships with other men in emergency accommodation.

Fergus quickly becomes my centre of attention, though, as George continuously digresses from our conversations every few minutes. George's constant movement is warm, if ponderous and distracting, and although he doesn't talk about himself, he expresses—not so much about people and places and things, but more that I'm aware of him, I can feel him, even as he digresses once more, both disrupting the conversation whilst challenging my assumptions that he doesn't make any sense.

I can sense jovialness and humorousness; he's quick to laughter; he apologises before, once again, digressing and, once again, apologising. Where we can, Fergus/I regather conversations that have gone astray with George's musings. The conversation goes on but does not always continue to make sense. I'm troubled that the details George shares are seemingly unimportant, and do not follow an apparent logic...yet Fergus is listening, following him, somehow. Losing count of the times Fergus and I reset, revise, and return to a conversation, we often simply forget the conversational lines...yet, other things are also happening.

*How am I going to make sense of this?*

Fergus isn't passive in receiving what George is saying, sharing, or expressing, nor does he ignore George, even as I feel patience ebbing, dissipating, and becoming boredom amidst the sheer volume of non-sense coming from George.

Yet, I also sense a commingling, a *glow* that is emerging.

George is hard work, and as we arrive at what I think is a cusp of being able to tolerate no more—we keep going. Rather than slipping away, Fergus comes alive when responding to and engaging with the unpredictable-ness of *kōrero* with George. He's having fun...

...not at George's expense, but *with* George and myself.

Might meeting George bring, although fleetingly, a set of affective conditions making possible what I sense as Fergus' patience with George? Braidotti said something like "freedom is extracted out of the awareness of limitations." If I'm following a *glow*...might Fergus and George too?

*Is this how George tolerates us, by sensing and connecting with our glowing(s), rather than what we are saying, or necessarily how we are treating and interacting with him? Is he following us, with this glowing?*

What if patience becomes possible, with George, in connection with Fergus? Patience isn't necessary nor required to "deal" with George...rather, patience emerges a productive affective experience of spending hours together...rather than something we possess, have, and carry with us?

I wonder, what political space emerges with different experiences of patience, then? Is this akin to when Braidotti says specific affective conditions are the contextually determined forms in which desire is actualized or expressed? Is enjoyment what becomes of our fleeting patience, with George? If patience is more than exceeding the limits of my own limitations, a state or way of being enabling me to “manage” him or my experiences of frustration with him...patience is not necessarily a virtue arising with societal expectations of “dealing” with people like him, a matter of tolerating him because we possess patience, or a matter of ascribing patience because we can tolerate him.

*I wish for an opportunity to talk about “how” they experience our evening together...but how do I ask? If kōrero enables a sense of belonging together...how are “we” in this together?*

I wonder of Fergus’ patience...he isn’t being “tested”, in that George isn't “pushing buttons”, nor can I see a “strategy” or tactic to his patience. Fergus is not simply maintaining his one social support at the moment, a life-line, so to speak, for instance. I am becoming uncomfortable with feelings of envy, of Fergus, of George’s capacity to engender patience. Distracted, the men appear to have headed to their respective rooms before dinner.

*What sense can I make of this...? Why now?*

Sitting alone in lounge, again, I wonder what is “around” when no one is with us, to do this work with? Do I bring traces of *affectivity* with me, sensible to others as they encounter me in the whare?

We join back up at dinner, and a warmth continues, with both men gracious and polite. Fergus has cooked and plated our food, and ensured drinks are filled; George welcomes us to share his tikanga, to bless the food and the company we keep through prayer. Eating in silence, mostly...a disruption emerges...a new staff member walking by, someone I have yet to meet, shares a question, wondering;

*Only if Fergus only expected a little gratitude for his fathering.*

The *unsaid* hangs in the air...Fergus’ expectations of his family, of their gratitude, is problematic. What’s *different* with me and George? Rather than high expectations and entitlement as a father posing a risk of violence, what if tonight is an opportunity of “relearning” what becomes possible with his kids through other affective experiences of coming together with other men?

*What might come of his relationship with this children, what possibilities are afoot?*

This research locates men in feminism as cartographic figures negotiating changing social power relations within socio-political debates, gendered and sexual politics, and cultural contexts. Posthumanist and feminist processual ontologies, as opposed to prefigured normative figures of thought, are employed as authorizing discourses (O'Neill, 2015) critiquing the reinvestment of gender inequalities with complicated self-narratives that recognise change and difference differently. Fieldnotes, in other words, are authorising discourses interrogating the ways in which men and masculinity self-practices are imbricated, as O'Neill puts it, in maintaining hegemonic notions of identity and self-formation, with posthumanist and feminist principles political activities expressing different, and differing, notions of a self. As a tactic of strategic repetition, working with nomadic subjectivity is a commitment to creating metastability and sustainability, by putting into action the virtual potential of affectivity through creative mimesis. Nomadic thought, then, is a practical method of affirming difference as a condition of self-formation.

With Braidotti's (2011b) help, nomadic subjectivity becomes a creative process of reconfiguring a concept of the self as "not merely a quantitative multiplication of options, but rather a qualitative leap of perspective" enabling subjectivities accounting for "a hybrid mixture of codes, genres, or modes of apprehension of the idea, event, or phenomenon in question" (p. 225). Cartographic figurations of the nomadic subject, based on an ethics of accountability to the historically-situated politics of place and time, bring into being knowledge practices normative self representation has declared off-limits to men (Braidotti, 2006b). It is the possibilities afforded in the transversal crossings of limits, of living past limits, that experiences of fieldwork tell me what we, as men, are capable of becoming. Men, consequently, become accountable for creative transpositions, a sensible process that empowers and sustains new social power relations that may otherwise feel unfamiliar and uncomfortable, or threaten previously taken for granted arrangements of socio-politico-economic relations. The dis-arrangement of affect sustaining social power relations becomes problematic, though, when celebratory disclosures of transposing social power relationships is sensed as fun, liberatory, and empowering, when social norms and practices carry an epistemological morality, suggesting what is acceptable in terms of what feelings should be possible, or what we feel men should feel in processes of becoming non-violent.

Beginning with reflexive memories producing a particular political sensibility (Blaser, 2014), my understandings of violence often begin with thoughts of my father and grandfather. Both men committed suicide, the same way yet many years apart. My grandfather died when I was an infant, and my father when I was a teenager, each involving a single self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head after both men developed symptoms of Huntington's Disease. A degenerative hereditary disorder with cognitive, affective, psychiatric and physiological manifestations, although the age of onset varies and can often go unnoticed for long periods of time, symptom onset typically emerges mid-life. Both my father and grandfather first developed recognisable symptoms in their early to mid 40's, prior to the development of a genetic test able to identify the presence of the disease. (Re)membering encounters with secrecy, disease, and violence as problem spaces, nomadic remembering forms a methodology for me, as an emergent philosophical practice in which affectively and discursively (re)visiting narratives of my experiences of problem spaces creates new encounters with the past. With a Deleuzian philosophy of middles, and thinking with Braidotti's nomadic theory (2011b), intensive encounters with taken for granted memories produce repetitions of encounters with "anomalous and unfamiliar forces, drives, yearnings, or sensations" (p. 96), with which memories become sensible. Emerging with novelty, variation, and difference, thinking nomadically enables me to revisit memories of problem spaces as heterogeneous milieus of materiality, with nomadic writing a practice of introducing affectivity as conditions from which change and difference emerges.

Thinking narrative accounts as selections of reflexive memories, rather than a collection of normative understandings of a self experiencing, inflicting, or witnessing relational encounters and events, nomadic narratives help me mark understandings of violence, and violence prevention practices, with novel and fleeting milieus of materiality rather than the surveilling and policing of men's experiences of violence. Encouraged with hope that Tocci and Moon (2020) form with posthuman scholarship disturbing presupposed dichotomies of presence/violence and absence/non-violence, *Men's Work* disentangles figurations of thought, to construct new unstable subjectivities through shared relational milieus of affective embodiment with others. In other words, thinking nomadically, as a knowledge production practice, produces experiences of affective flow as an ethical terrain for bearing witness to processes actualising new possibilities for men's capacity to mitigate, prevent, and avoid violence. Actualising new political sensibilities becomes

enlivened, allowing men to become actively engaged in the politics of change processes by thinking in collaboration with other men participating in this research project.

**One must indeed start from somewhere specific: a grounded and accountable location and the process of becoming is a time bomb placed at the very heart of the social and symbolic system that has welded together being, subjectivity, masculinity, compulsory heterosexuality, and (western) ethnocentrism. (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 31)**

11 November 2020

GN2: 10-1 p.m. at Te Atatū with Rē and OJ

Staff: Jabir

After sitting with Rē for an hour, I worry I have nothing to show of my time this morning, except a sore belly provoked by our attempts at sign language, shouting, and making curious faces at each other over a cup of coffee. Agreeing neither one of us speak each other's languages, we settle on laughter as a signal something was happening between us, what that something is for the other...we are left guessing.

In a rush to do something productive, I join Jabir on home visits. As we set out, Jabir explains a purpose of home visits is to make contact with families of men staying at Gandhi Nivas, and provide information about the services available to them as families and whānau of men bound by PSO's. The quiet of the car ride does little to assuage the uncertainty of how we will do this.

On our first visit, as we approach a lone figure on a porch, it becomes apparent the woman doesn't understand what Jabir is saying. She can't hear his voice over the sound of traffic, and makes no effort at coming any closer. Jabir says it's the right address, so we stand there for several minutes, gesticulating with ever louder voices. A tall man, Jabir's body is waving like a flag in the wind, moving in ways I do not expect, his voice rising in pitch and volume. I'm left wondering what more he can do to get her attention. The fence means we are unable to approach, and the dog's gnashing teeth makes circumstances rather fraught, so we decide to leave.

Arriving at another address, we get out of the car in the middle of a the driveway. The possibilities of another dog make approaching the house directly very uncomfortable for us both, so Jabir begins speaking to children playing outside with some toys, near where we're standing. Hearing his voice, I presume, their mom comes outside. Never making eye contact with Jabir yet hearing him out, I hear her say she's "fine", abruptly and with some finality. I don't doubt the kindness of her smile, though, as it is all that I can hear of her as she thanks us for letting her know about the services available to her whānau. We wave to each other as we depart her home.

As Jabir drives to yet a third house, I am unsure what we accomplished in the two hours it has taken to visit just two houses. Thinking of another hour stuck in traffic in an unfamiliar part of Auckland, with other wistful attempts at communication, I wonder, what's the value of a laughter, frustration, and a smile?

Back at the whare, I meet OJ as I walk in the office. He's staying at the whare, and has been here for a few days. We're both a bit bored. Excited after what feels like an unproductive afternoon, I welcome a presence I feel with OJ, and we spend the next several hours together, drinking coffee and sharing the strange contours of changes in our lives.

Afterwards, I'm confused. What did I explain, express, or produce in elaborating my place in the organisation, and my reasons for being at the whare today? What did OJ find interesting enough to spend much of the late afternoon with me? I can sense we're both following *something*, yet what are we following? I don't feel we are following an object, a *what* that explains the *something we are following*.

But I can *sense* something, not unlike picking up particles in the air to find my way...but not with a sense like smelling. More, there's something happening, produced...an affective current *flowing between us, amongst us, around us*, as we both entered the whare, together.

I don't remember thinking where this current leads...but remember a comfort, a comfortability, a *joy* finding ourselves together...with another man for whom this experience makes sense, or is it with another man who can make sense of this experience?

We began asking questions of each other...which became *playful* when asking questions not of each other, but of ourselves. The questions we ask are of our own storying, yet the questions also emerge from our own self-storying. The questions we place amidst the conversation welcome the other to respond. Asking questions of myself, only for OJ to respond, is both strange and satisfying, disconcerting and humbling, satisfying, tiring and energising.

OJ's stories follow a different logic...helping me to share my own experiences of change, of growing up in the proverbial small town in the U.S and escaping Michigan, in part, to lead a life where change is not frowned upon, where difference is not treated with fear and scepticism by others. In other words, I ask a lot of him, I ask him to make connections between the things, and we follow each other, further, keeping each other in sight.

Leaving for home later that evening, I begin wondering. How do I keep men in sight, what possibilities are afoot for fieldwork that does not rely on images of ourselves as static figures of thought from which we change, or images of ourselves as future figures of thought towards which we hope to change? How can I rethink an image of a self embodied with experience of encounters with men in the whare?

## **Masculinities, Wicked Problems and Naming Events**

I understand this research as contributing to the violence prevention sector through a (re)imagining of nomadic subjectivity as an ethical practice of supporting community capacity for actions and practices mitigating, preventing, and avoiding violence. With embodied understandings of change processes men experience whilst in the care of the organisation, as a tripartite, men, myself and Gandhi Nivas participate in this research project, in part, to disrupt the hegemony of heteronormative understandings of change predicated on certain proscribed power relationships between us. Gandhi Nivas supports conditions of change for men, their whānau, and the communities in which we live, requiring an ethics that understands change processes as a collaboration between differing and divergent stakeholders. This welcomes *difference* as conditions enabling capacities for change, and with an *ethics of care*, we can critically revisit men's affective experiences to remember disputed, forsaken, forgotten and ignored possibilities of change.

Together, early intervention is a process of re/thinking violence prevention as a practice—if only to resist hegemonic understandings of violence prevention which necessitate *interventions* to be successful. Prochaska and DiClemente's (1984) trans-theoretical model of change, and resultant iterations of their work, informs a wide-range of diverse disciplines, such substance misuse, mental health, and criminology studies, which create interventions as a commodified product of advanced capitalism, situating objects of thought, such as *masculinities* and *masculine practices*, or *drug use* and *drug users*, along a hierarchical *scale* of socio-economic worth. In other words, following O'Neill's (2015) critique of contemporary masculinity theories, rather than challenging problematic notions of masculinity, Men's Work offers *escape routes* from surveillance practices and other neoliberal profit-making machinery. An iterative process, nomadic thinking embraces change “alongside continuity, permutation, and retrenchment” (p. 116), so as to interrogate conditions sustaining dogmatic, taken for granted, and, often, inherited ways of thinking that asserts violence, and non-violence, as more or less gendered or universal problems. When masculinities and masculine practices are positioned as primary, as a *faciality* from which affectivity, traits, behaviours, and feelings are represented, recognised and sensed, this prefiguring genders our *selves*, inflicting violence on our thinking through enforced subjectivities enabling us to become responsive to the social forces and flows we assume, and presume, comprise our diverse social worlds. Whilst *figuring* is a part of a discursive nomadic self, the *aesthetic* of self-work is important. Nomadic thinking

enables me to revisit how affect is engaged in the discursive production of subjects and objects, with nomadic subjectivity an empirical process enabling me to *(re)trace* material inscriptions of the body, and how affect *re-inscribes* bodies in our *becomings*.

Whilst thinking nomadically, an ethics of care de-centres an epistemological focus of ushering in different masculinities to challenge hegemonic masculine practices. Instead, violence prevention means becoming politically active in challenging ontological conditions re/affirming family violence as an unanswerable wicked social problem (Rittel & Webber, 1973). Violence intervention, in this sense, avoids establishing stable, objective, and universal definitions of family violence. By eschewing epistemological questions of what defines men who use violence, a reactive response resulting only in imposing new and unique problems in terms in the production of interventions, violence prevention, as a nomadic process, acknowledges different men do violence differently. Rittel and Webber critique normative interventions to social problems, arguing that the “cognitive and occupational styles of the professions...were misled somewhere along the line into assuming they could be applied scientists” (p. 160), which is more applicable, they say, to engineers planning transportation systems with the development of roads, for instance. Instead, Rittel and Webber exhort us to consider that “[t]he formulation of a wicked problem *is the problem!*” (p. 161) (*italics in original*).

Crowley and Head (2017), revisiting the *notion* of wicked problems, enable us to distinguish social problems, citing Nie (2003), as conceptually *wicked by nature* and *wicked by design*. Our understandings of family violence are wicked, in so far that normative understandings of social problems are ontologically self-limiting. Rittel and Webber (1973) put it succinctly, describing these limitations with a tautological problematic, that “the information needed to understand the problem depends upon one’s idea for solving it” (p. 161). Family violence is *made* wicked (by design), according to Rittel and Webber’s argument, with political processes emerging with individualistic interventions determining how we *understand the problem*. This gate-keeps what amounts to knowledge—and what counts as *credible* knowledge production processes within the violence prevention sector. Family violence is ontologically contingent on specific understandings of the problems we face in the sector, and wickedly designed—rather than necessarily wicked by nature—given our collective inability to adequately address men’s *individual* use of violence in the home through interventionist approaches. Crowley and Head (2017) encourage research that disrupts *solutions-oriented*

*approaches*, that is, to my understanding, approaches that seek to eliminate violence with *interventions* aimed at *individuals*, or *groups* of individuals. Rather than a moral purpose or principle, nomadic subjectivity provides a *trajectory* of counter-narratives as a response to a call for empirical application of experimentation in writing a self to the limits of what a body can do, whilst our *sensing* of a *trajectory of counter narratives* is also a response to questions of *how* particular readings of a body amounts to science. My figurations of a nomadic subject are an ontological gamble, then, that the family violence prevention sector would ostensibly shift in response to rethinking what we consider the professional expertise of the stakeholders involved in the field. The gamble is that creating opportunities in how we understand the problem—as well as our ideas for solving it—will produce different possibilities for violence prevention practices in response. What is at stake, then, for me, is rather than “doing good”, the violence prevention sector produces a shift in practices derived with different forms of legitimacy.

(M) Ummm, with your demeanour, your laughter, your...like, that feels very real for you, you came to a house and things were not nearly as bad as they could have been?

(T) Since I understand, that house, like math design, or you can say atmosphere, I just coped and got it in me, I started enjoying it.

(M) Okay...it's something you felt coming into you?

(T) Yeah I'm like, okay, this is there, this is here, this is there, this is there (laughter), and this is there. They took me around as well, what they're doing. That guy was there, how he has been contributing his time to growing veggies, and around things, how he...

(M) This is one of the other men staying there?

(T) Yeah and how he has done the, his bit of work while staying here, and growing veggies, and taking care of the garden, and taking care of the kitchen and things. Like, how he has contributed his time and things like that. And his experience of other houses, and this house, and maybe the other counsellors, and from other all the houses, people. And this is the house, and things like that. So it was thinking quite a lot of imaginations as well, lot of good people and for whom bad behaviour and things. So, like, so I started enjoying it. So I was like, okay, this is the house, and, yeah, it's a good place, let's have good time, rather than...there is, time will come when you have your own thoughts to think about. That was also there, then you had a time to...have fun, had, maybe, good time, and, like, sort of thing, that was there. Communicate, meet as well. So everything was coming. So I will, like, taking it, like, a good time. Giving you thoughts, building your thoughts in the night, thinking about again in the morning those things when you wake up. And taking shower and doing shaving or whatever you doing. And then making your breakfast, and going, thing. You think about those things again and again. So it was quite a good thing sort of.

(M) So where I grew up, ummm...if a kid was naughty, you were put in a corner. Sit in a corner and told 'think about your mistakes'. Called a time out, I think, in certain ways of speaking, but nonetheless, you're told go sit there and you go think about what you've done.

(T) Exactly.

(M) That is not at all how you're describing coming to Gandhi Nivas.

T) Yeah it's, that's what I'm saying. Peaceful calm...and...you can, like, sort of fun. Maybe not fun, but I'm calling it, and I'm not getting it the correct word, but it's like I was enjoying it. Not enjoying but it was learning it through that process.

(M) Learning it...

(T) In a good way.

(M) Learning it through the process of doing it?

(T) Doing it and living into that moment. It was like, okay, let's pass it on, lets go through with that...

**(Talan, Interview, 29 May 2021)**

Following this narrative further with Braidotti's nomadic theory (2011b), an objective of this research is to support community-based organisations with professional practices that "work critically from within in order to exceed the present frame" (p. 19). This enables us to escape the wicked trap of research pertaining to family violence by destabilising violence prevention work as differing along heterogeneous or homogenous epistemological definitions of violence, masculinities, and masculine practices, challenging taken for granted conditions perpetuating both family violence and violence prevention interventions as wicked problems. Let me explain differently by beginning, again, with experiences resisting the presence of participants, Gandhi Nivas staff, and myself as a researcher, as individuals. These are familiar hegemonic narrative traps, conceptualising an individual thinking subject as possessing a unitary, self-regulating consciousness which predicates subjectivity. Colebrook (2002) describes this consciousness as "unchanging perceivers set *over* and *against* life" (my stress) (p. 128). For me, Colebrook's description problematises feminist understandings of the normativising processes of subjectivities, helping me make sense of, thinking with Cixous (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981), "a question of submitting feminine disorder, its laughter, its inability to take the drumbeats seriously, to the threat of decapitation" (p. 43). Whilst creative subjectivities occurring in the "therapeutic spaces" at Gandhi Nivas present unique ethical challenges and tensions, although not subject to decapitation, men who participate, in my experience, are interested in, and often excited by, working together in ways that become unfettered from the confines of certain proscribed power relationships. This acknowledges subjectivities available to men, when determined by roles, are insufficient to expressing how men feel welcomed, and how men welcome others, to participate in violence prevention work. Engaging in *kōrero* with men through fieldwork, interviews, and Men's Groups, I have come to understand *affectivity* as an embodied process of exploring possibilities, and therefore limitations, of our work, with violence *prevention* becoming ways of *making sense*, together, of the productive possibilities of our collaboration. We no longer discuss what is to be done, but wonder what a disordered body can do, together.

Fieldwork ushers in a productive *capacity* of posthuman thought by *rethinking* the myriad social encounters occurring on any given day at the whare through the gendering of affect. By attending hospital appointments together, offering a cup of coffee to men arriving at the whare with a police escort, and listening to men after long days at work or after they have lost their jobs, social encounters often occur as a form of *being there*

during long days men spend alone. *Being there* is a relational affective process, supporting men experiencing an unfamiliar *quietness* of being away from partners, children, families, and whānau, and the conflict, tension, and violence often permeating their everyday lives. This can be unsettling, frightening, and immobilising for men, whilst some begin their stay at Gandhi Nivas confident and comfortable, with fixed ideas about how to “get through it” until they can return home, or until they find another place to live. *Being there* is a relational affective process, supporting experiences of fear and uncertainty when men are legally prohibited from making contact with their children, partners, and other loved ones. For others, being kicked out of accommodation due to their use of violence is a familiar, if not frequent, experience, enabling them to take pride in comforting routines and traditions helping them cope, manage, and pass the time whilst away from the more familiar habits of their everyday lives. Fieldwork, less a plurality and more a multiplicity of practices, involves listening to men make sense of sharing emotional and physical space with other men, often for the first time. For some, rather than simply *time away* from their families and whānau, fieldwork involves supporting men experiencing distress with the absence of the financial means, material resources, and communication devices necessary for everyday life—whilst also learning to express *concern* and *care* for *other* men by cooking for each other and sharing food, doing each other’s laundry, and accompanying each other to government agencies. For many, shared living arrangements means staying up late at night with a roommate experiencing distress, anxiety, and sadness. Fieldwork involves listening to men find joy in shared living arrangements, sadness in environments where social and cultural differences are plentiful, and witnessing men struggle with cultural, gendered, and age-related shame when realising they have never learned to cook and clean for themselves.

Our encounters, though, have little to do with litigating or justifying *who did what, for what reasons, to whom*. Our conversations, I am told, both by men and Gandhi Nivas staff, are often the first time men feel *comfort*-able sharing experiences of using violence towards others. This experience of *comfort* welcomes men to dwell on the possibility they pose a danger to others, whilst *comfort* also sustains men when they become concerned with *patterns* of behaviours that suggests violence is prominent, frequent, and common in their relationships. Fieldwork means listening to and learning of the many experiences of men asking for help, and, in turn, offering care and concern to others. Fieldwork is often about rethinking social encounters by *affectively sensing* how to become part of the everyday lives of men experiencing *change* and *difference*, and transposing the limits of affective

experiences—whilst contending with an immobilising sense of helplessness arising with men not knowing what to do with themselves.

Following my resistance to hegemonic practices of subject formation, I turn to Laurie's (2015) critical analysis of possibilities afforded interrogating normativising conceptualisations of *men* and *masculinity* as a *quasi-causal object and naming practice*. Problematizing the terms through essentialist understandings representing *who* men are, *what* men do, and *the way* men do life in connection with others, Laurie reworks these concepts with a Deleuzian philosophy of an *event*. As a naming practice, *masculinity* "selects as it signifies, combines and divides as it describes" (p. 27), and resisting an essentialist logic "necessitating the existence of a discrete and irreducible object" (p. 25) of a *man*, Laurie instead (re)conceptualises "the conditions that allow the naming event to take effect" (p. 26). Rather than contemplating a series of terms signifying an *existing aggregate*, that is, instead of creating a more inclusive or accurate list of attributes defining a man or *men*, enlarging a list of activities detailing what men *can* and *should* do, or changing the *ways* men do things, following Laurie, thinking *conditions* is to escape the "interminable definitional loop" (p. 25) of tautological thinking habits of a *wicked problem* plaguing *the explanatory model* of hegemonic masculinity already pervasive within masculinity studies. Instead, unpredictability and uncertainty arises thinking *conditions* allowing a naming event to take effect, as a simple act of naming, Laurie maintains, is "never benign" (p. 26). There is always more to men, and masculinity, violence, and non-violencing, which *exceeds* the current frame.

Creating narratives of relational affective encounters, as subjective conditions producing a naming event of transformational *becomings*, this research project follows Laurie (2015) to bring into being "tense relationships between observation, description and representation" (p. 14) made possible with post qualitative research practices and a posthumanist ethics. To think conditions is to create unstable storylines, with discursive enunciations and textual stutterings imbued with politics privileging feminist and posthumanist ethics of movement, making possible a motility of thought otherwise unavailable to the hegemonic logic and reason of masculinity studies. The focus of this research is no longer the *being* of men, but, rather, affective *becomings* of men. Thinking along with Renold and Mellor's (2013) conceptualisation of *points of extension*, my nomadic narratives cohere with understanding *events* as multi-sensory arrangements of "nested forces through and along which every individual's subjectivity is organised" (p.

24) into a singularity. Both strange and with its own dangers, writing nomadic narratives is an *opening-out* of events, both dispersing and reconstituting nests of forces by tracing the boundaries between self and other(s). Memories of becoming entangled with others in research processes, transposes limits and thresholds of thought, forming new conceptualisations of participation in research processes. Writing nomadic narratives is to begin, in the middle, again.

11 July 2020

GN1: 3-8 p.m. at Ōtāhuhu with Sam

Staff: Sanyam

Arriving a bit early, Sanyam and Dayita have a handover, of sorts. An absence of “details” about the clients, what they’ve been up to, is confusing. But the sharing, their *kōrero*...is intense, affective; is this creating an *intensive* awareness of the day? I wonder...this feels like something that happens after an event, a critical incident, a *trauma* that needs processing...but productive, rather than reactive, I wonder how this “sets up” the day differently, what becomes possible when we *affectively intensify* our experiences, rather than describe a day, an event, a person? Is handover a collaborative practice of *molecularisation*...?

Sam welcomes me to join him on a trip to Middlemore Hospital. His demeanour is somewhat perplexing. It’s Sunday, he’s not visibly unwell...and he’s got no shoes on. No small talk; neither Sanyam nor Sam are from Auckland, and both are unfamiliar with the hospital, so would benefit, I’m told, from me serving as a navigator of sorts. That I’ve never been to Middlemore doesn’t seem relevant...

Sitting in the front alongside Sanyam poses some challenges to talking with Sam, who sits behind me, but we persevere. Sam explains having ADHD, which causes problems with maintaining employment, which disrupts his daily routine...for him, there’s a spiralling that occurs with an absence of structure to his daily routine, exacerbating his ADHD further, which in turn impacts on his capacity to work, if he doesn’t remember which day of the week it is...

I’m still unclear; on a Sunday, after losing both his accommodation and employment in the last few days, he’s wanting to see an ER doctor? I want an explanation, a reason, what he’s going to hospital for; a way of making sense of this trip that explains why I’m here.

Parking is problematic, and traffic is awful. Sanyam drops us off at the main entrance, and asks me to join Sam whilst he finds a place to park the car, and we get out at triage area. Am I following Sam, or am I meant to lead him into the hospital?

We keep talking...but stop. Covid; that’s right we need to wear a mask in the triage area.

As I ask the nurse where we might wait for our friend, Sanyam catches up with us, and asks me where I’ll be waiting.

*I'm not going in with Sam?*

Confused and upset, ignoring Sanyam...moping, wandering around outside the main building, amongst cigarette butts, empty soft drink bottles and cups...

*No car keys...I don't even know where the car is. How long's it been now? I'm lucky it's not raining.*

Five minutes. Twelve minutes. Fifteen minutes. Twenty three minutes...Sanyam texts; meet at the front of the hospital.

In the same seats, down the same streets, listening to the same radio stations, we don't speak about what happened. Why not? Why we were there, what happened? What was I meant to be doing?

Back at the whare, groups of men roam around together. The men don't know each other yet, but our interactions, tensions, budding friendships and shared cultures and experiences are present. I can smell, taste, and see men; they're everywhere.

Today, for such a small house, the whare is quiet; there's not much noise, only a few phone calls. Eight clients; ten men in total. We're waiting. I wonder; how does boredom contribute to men deciding to leave the whare early, and return home, breaching their PSO's? I don't want to "follow" the men from room to room; I don't want to sit here; I want to get out of here myself.

*How do I become part of what's going on, with the commotion, confusion, stultifying slowness, and constant feeling of being lost with men going about their daily lives?*

Sanyam is often spoken about...having an empowering presence; men suddenly find themselves no longer resisting, but sharing, talking, and engaging the world when working with him. No one has an explanation, only experiences of this with him. Is this is a measurable guide to success, of working effectively with men, doing without thinking?

This is uncomfortable to dwell upon. If I'm collecting data at the whare...how do I make sense of my experiences, and the experiences of others, if I'm not constantly surveilling the scene, watching the comings and goings of men...

*What do I miss?*

## **Chapter 3**

### **VWO, Normative (criminal) Subjectivity and Affectivity**

The subjectification of men as lonely actors perpetrating crime, in my experience, delimits rehabilitation with specific possibilities of thinking. This includes creating a unique cast of actors with unique responsibilities, such as a *support person* or a trained *professional*, within a process of change that is observable by, and amenable to, a criminal justice system. People such as *judges, lawyers, parents and psychologists, partners and children, neighbours, sisters, employers and probation officers* each have a role to play, however ill-defined, within a normative process of change that lies *within* the criminal. Concepts such as culture and gender become *influences, or factors, providing contextual* explanations to totalising, unitary, and static understandings of events-both stopping men and their becomings with implacable limits to the spaces they can move to and how men occupy and hold these spaces.

The individualisation of subjectivities privileges specific roles, rights, and relationships, which only permits *others* peripheral roles in supporting change processes, which remains *internal* to the offender. Criminal justice processes set conditions where desisting from crime is a combination of assessing, monitoring and changing personal circumstances, social relationships, and internal experiences of the individual, with the help of those others. Criminal rehabilitation takes form with corrective, self-normativising processes targeting risky bodies and deviant thinking, which contextual understandings of crime further limit with deficit-based understandings of men's responses to complex societal problems (Arrigo, 2013). Therapeutic levels of *motivation* are imperative for men to successfully engage with rehabilitative programmes and interventions supporting self-normativising change processes. The normativisation of subjectivity and motivation, that is, correcting deviancy through a deficit-oriented approach, hinges on an understanding of normativity as a positive disciplinary process of psychosocial practices from which a rightful future emerges.

Rather than *containing* men's participation in criminal justice approaches, through careful representations of their histories, cultures, and relationships *within* a singular narrative voice, Mazzei's (2013) elaboration of a *Voice without Organs (VwO)* is an opportunity to rethink *voice* in terms of critical alternatives to the *individual thinking subject*. Mazzei's conceptualisation of a VwO privileges *research assemblages* as a *body* comprising of "all of the forces that act on and through the machine of research" (p. 735). This notion of assemblages privileges *voice* emerging with an analysis of interconnecting experiences of

*becomings* in her research, *de-centring* the *researcher* as a individualistic subjectivity inhered with, and inhered by, particular rights, privileges, responsibilities and accountabilities within normative qualitative research practices and methodologies. Mazzei's VwO is a *self-reflexive* figure of thought, producing scholarship and knowledge no longer beholden to researchers and participants as distinct individuals, manifesting a new form of subjectivity premised on actualising what Mazzei describes as "a series of desires that resists the violence of essentializing discourses—about women, about small towns, gender norms" (p. 735).

Mazzei (2013) uses a Deleuzian notion that the indefinite article of a life is only the *singularisation* of *immanent* events becoming a singularity of an *individual* (see Deleuze, 2001). In other words, life does not come about before, after, nor through a single narrative of events, with a VwO becoming a processual conceptualisation of the subject *decoupling* voice from belonging to *an* individual. Rather than the singularisation of life belonging to *an* individual human, or animal for that matter, with a voice that is spoken, heard, or written as text in transcripts and recordings, Mazzei's (2013) VwO challenges the conceptualisation of *life* as *consisting of* and *belonging to* a universalistic and totalising entity, form, or sense of self. This offers partial, yet grounded, opportunities to explore subjectivity, agency, and change with an ethics of *accountability*, and how we come to embody processes of affective, collective, and relational engagement with others. My interest in Mazzei's conceptualisation of processual narrative research practices, and experimenting with the production of "practices that disavow an over-reliance on words as the primary source of meaning" (p. 739), enables me to re-think narratives produced through fieldwork, in interviews with men, and through a Men's Group. I imagine VwO's with a form of nomadic subjectivity empirically emerging with assemblages of affective forces and flows, producing a *collective immanent point of view* which challenges taken for granted understandings of change processes contingently *oriented towards*, belonging to, and contained within, *an* individual. With Mazzei's VwO, I wonder of research activities becoming inclusive of collective assemblages of embodied relational affective forces and flows emerging with creative subjectivities, transposing affective conditions in which non-normative change processes are *constituted in the given* (Deleuze, 1990/1969). Mazzei's elaboration of a VwO emerges, for me, as a multiplicity of points of departure from the hegemony of individualistic understandings of change, produces *lines of flight* destabilising taken for granted understandings of research practices, relationships, and *becomings*.

A VwO de-centres the individual thinking subject as a figure of thought engaging in normative qualitative narrative enquiry, with Mazzei (2013) contending a VwO “if allowed to exert its agential force, can produce a different set of questions and research practices that do not rely on a single source of knowledge, the knowing subject” (p. 738). With Mazzei’s conceptualisation of a VwO, which I understand as a *style of posthuman scholarship*, narrative research practices embodying affect enables me to experiment with Men’s Work as activities which “trigger new assemblages, ad infinitum” (p. 740). To re-think nomadic subjectivity, as a body *without organs* but with *voice*, is to re-think how reconfiguring forces and flows enables writing to textually embody different assemblages of thought. A VwO enables nomadic posthuman scholarship to (re)produce *voice* with both theoretical and applied forces of affect, and challenging taken for granted normativising knowledge practices, to embody possibilities of affective assemblages as figures of thought. The *fleshy-ness* of a VwO, as with any assemblage of thought, has its limits, though, as it conditions restrictive and productive forces of knowledge production with the *fluidity* of affective *flows*. In other words, the *fleshy-ness* of *fluidity* in affective *flows matters* by creating space for thinking and for voicing what a body can do, with a nomadic subject a figure of thought affirming these limits by enabling me to privilege subjectivities *voicing* the *fluidity* of affective flow.

2 January 2021

GN2: 2-8 p.m. at Te Atatū with J.

Staff: Moiz

Moiz is on site when I arrive. He's in a session, then another, then another. I loiter in the kitchen, then the lounge, then the kitchen, then the lounge...over and over. The fellas arrive/depart the whare without stopping as they pass through to their bedrooms. I hate being ignored.

Alone, I consider leaving before "J" finds me in the kitchen. He stops, and begins talking before I realise I never *hear* his name...

J is emotional and weepy, yet talking is not the thing we seem to be doing. Only a few shorts weeks since we came out of lockdown, he's been here four days; he's alone; he's scared; he desires change. Feeling his pain, given all the time I have been alone in the whare today, roaming room to room on the "look out" for opportunities to connect with men, how am I not prepared for the unexpected?

*How does one know, how and when to engage men, without the predictive logic of surveillance? How else might I sense what's going on?*

Thinking this question...I suddenly realise, again, I am not aware of J's name. An hour after our initial introduction, I'm suddenly nervous of being embarrassed with not remembering/hearing his name, as a sign I was not paying attention, or merely forgot. We watch tv. Cartoons, soap operas, commercials, and news reports about vaccination and the traffic light system offer opportunities to kōrero about our experiences of "now". Neither of us are sitting still; we repeatedly encounter each other as we look out windows and check our phones, open and shut curtains, change channels on the TV, listen to the rise and fall of other men coming and going around us, and make cups of coffee together.

The speed that which an unprompted, unstructured, and uncertain "hanging out" together *becomes* something *else*, of *being there*, not *with him*, but *being there together*, is startling. I get the feeling we're both experiencing a sense of "missing out" on the things happening around us...but differently.

Together, we come alive with bits and pieces of commentary on the news about businesses “opening up” after lockdown, filling the pauses and disruptions to tv programmes we’re watching with conversation about our lives before the reception goes wonky and the tv goes fuzzy once again. We dwell upon memories of recent stuff happening around us. He tells me of the where, the men that have come through, the boredom and strangeness of being alone, the unexpected joy of fleeting moments cooking with other men in the kitchen and the kindness shown by strangers folding his laundry. I share my struggles making sense of being there with men during the often overlapping periods of immense quietness and frenetic business of men in crisis, of a desire to make the most of my time by doing things that show men I’m there (or is it here?) with them-and a frustration that I sense this way of thinking is all wrong.

We both wonder out loud if we’re missing something...and agree; we’re both a bit lost. To my chagrin, J abruptly heads to this bedroom, leaving me alone, again.

If being together is about bearing witness to our lives, tracing attempts at enunciating, uttering, and muttering experiences of a world we share together, how do we sustain encounters both creating and created by possibilities of flows of materiality bending us?

*How do we become implicated in this bending...how am I going to remember today?*

Proposing a VwO as an object of production, I want to revisit textual practices of report writing, and (re)conceptualising subjectivity with a multiplicity of voices, disturb understandings of reports as (re)producing the voice(s) of men's family, whānau, and support people. With report writing a singularisation of affective, collective, and relational engagements with others within a textual framework, as *my* reports, affective forces and flows become more than data that I report on. Each report *becomes* a multiplicity of research assemblages *voicing* embodied relational and collective affective experiences, with my role selecting which assemblages become privileged in my reports. Challenging normative notions of *accuracy* (i.e., believability, truthfulness, fidelity), the complexity of posthuman narratives inscribing presentence report writing disrupts institutional requirements derived from organisational understandings of the *product*, I, as a probation officer, was expected to provide. I want to remember the precarity of this work, as the scope of the Corrections organisational *practice model* did not lend itself to sustaining different, divergent, and at times politically unspeakable, and therefore intolerable, understandings of personhood and other self-understandings. As informal gatekeepers of truthfulness and accountability, I also became concerned the affective participation of family and whānau of men potentially challenged, disrupted, and subverted institutional processes of the criminal justice system—which are *policed* through normativising social expectations of how community members *interface* with court processes—carrying considerable consequences for the parties involved.

With each report a risky endeavour of transgressing narrative norms of factual storytelling, writing narratives *voicing* affective assemblages also offers unique opportunities to produce narrative accounts thus *fraying* the hegemony, and therefore limitations, of the individually accountable subject. Surprisingly, though, my reports received frequent feedback, through both formal and informal professional channels, with Corrections staff members and Court staff affirming my reports were well received by District and High Court judges, defence lawyers, prosecutors, as well as the men and their whānau. A point of professional pride throughout a diverse career with Corrections, rather than limited to inscribing offending onto a man's body, or ascribing offending as the result of pathological cognitive processes such as poor decision making, the influence of antisocial associates, and cultural deficits and distorted beliefs, this feedback consisted of appreciation, for *bearing witness* to *escape routes* available to men entangled with violence and other criminal activity.

Voicing escape routes helps me re-imagine men's embodiment with the fleshiness of textual surfaces, which flow with different discursive traces conditioned with affectivities and intensities traced across the territories of a life. These enfolded textual and discursive inscriptions become ineffable territorial *incursions* into passive syntheses of affective flow, providing escape routes from restrictive and productive forces men encounter. Escape routes become a style of anti-*oedipal* nomadic thought, helping me *think*, with men, *possibilities* of what we might *become*, rather than a matter of *being*. I situate my understanding of *oedipal* with Braidotti (2011a), which, as a binary mode of relationship entrenched in our mental and socio-cultural habits, I experience as a *neoliberal imperative* to *capture* affective flow with precise, rational and conscious memories. Goodchild (1996) suggests this is a contemporary struggle I experience, brought forth by the capacity of capitalism to "fragment, privatize, and segment the socio-economic field" (p. 196). This *oedipal model of thought* is a process of over-coding memories, to turn memories of the past into capital for the purposes of *consumption*, as a resource of our hopes for the future. Furthermore, thinking of *voicing* escape routes with a *nomadic subject*, textual and discursive inscriptions can also provide a critique of how *oedipal models of thought* over-code memories, helping me resist restrictive and productive affective forces constraining what a body can do. A VwO embodying the fluidity of affective flow, extols both how we might live otherwise and how we might also live differently, by tracing the emergence of the generative capacity of affect in the *chaos* of a life outside the confines of time.

Collectively, these memories of voicing the fleshy-ness of men's bodies help me re-think experiences of fieldwork as processes of change. With narratives of fieldwork experiences steeped in thinking and writing forces and flows, voicing *becomings* of a research assemblage is an intriguing, if troubling, posthumanist practice. If fieldwork invokes multiplicities of research assemblages, emerging with unstable and continuous variations of affectivity de-centring and dispersing non-unified subjective selves enfolded in these events, this research is a narrative of my *self* becoming part of different research assemblages as the project progresses. To rethink the present in this way, nomadic subjectivities are open-ended attempts at embodying change processes premised on undoing fixed barriers, and making porous the borders and confines of scholarly fieldwork practices. Writing of *now*, in this sense, becomes a problem of thought in terms of which *self* is doing this writing, then. Raastrup Kristensen (2012), conceptualising a *normativity* of Deleuzian thought, situates Deleuze's philosophy as a metaphysics which "aims at

changing and not at describing or founding the world in which we live” (p. 11). Suggesting a re-conceptualisation of subjectivity “that does not refer to an image of man but to an image of thought...but thought that is thinking in the forms of knowledge constituted by man” (p. 14), subjectivity is not centred as a figure, but rather, an *object* of thought producing effects with a *praxis of thinking* thought with *concepts*, a praxis of putting concepts to work from the *middle* to disrupt *logics* of thought. Thinking a concept such as nomadic subjectivity, each textual creation of subjectivity, in discursive work such as fieldnotes, is an *immanent* notion of self-hood—expressing a life, rather than *the* life of an individual. This image of subjectivity, always already in a process of being *newly produced* as it is explained, creates knowledge *anew* with particular figurations of subjectivities rethinking specific conditions of existence.

In this way, I have come to understand experiences of fieldwork as experiments revisiting subjective processes of *molecular* becomings. After New Zealand *crushed the curve*, that is, after Covid-19 was eliminated in the community and social distancing restrictions were relaxed across the country<sup>24</sup>, I began visiting Gandhi Nivas whare in May of 2020. The first few visits were brief, around 2-4 hours at a time, and involved finding ways to share space with men with recent experiences of being forcibly, if peacefully and voluntarily, removed from their family home by the police. Each visit became a challenge of listening to the *storying* of “things”, with men’s narratives creating assemblages of different objects of thought which *bend* them in different ways. The nomadic narratives men share at Gandhi Nivas enable me to bear witness to *bending* as a *molecular* change process. Cohering not as a representation of men’s change, nor representing men as *bent* themselves (although this can and does happen, elsewhere, when men try to “evidence” that they have changed), with molecular understandings of change, men’s narratives become embodied, relational and affective practices, situating men’s *experiences* of bending by attending to the politics of locations they traverse. This enables a practice of *following* men’s change processes with mapping of affective flow, and the emergence of the gendering of affect, the gendering of social norms, and the gendering of social power relations. Engaging in *kōrero* with men at the whare throughout the New Zealand winter of 2020, sharing affective experiences of a life in times of pandemic, mostly shielded from disease and death through closed borders and lockdowns whilst much of the rest of the world, we struggled with unfamiliar experiences of political and economic turmoil

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<sup>24</sup> <https://newsroom.co.nz/2020/04/20/ardern-nz-to-leave-lockdown-in-a-week/>

amongst the catastrophic spread of disease. Men's narratives of global, national, community, and individual experiences of change enable the *affective* styling of experiences with hope and struggle, confusion and persistence, worry and safety, creating possibilities of new *conditions* of existence from which we emerge.

Linking fieldwork with DeleuzoGuattarian philosophy and nomadic subjectivity, my experiences of fieldwork have less to do with identifying men's specific politics and identity locations, though, and more revisiting *thought* with iterative, if often barely repeatable, transformative experiments of *becoming-molecular* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). With fieldwork experienced as a discontinuous series of blocks of becomings, rethinking experiences of change as molecular processes produces understandings of the whare as new figures of thought given shape as *spaces* where we might become *flows* of materiality. Rather than recalling names, or any other identifiable or defining biographical information, my memories of spending time with men at the whare emerge from experiences of hanging-out, constructing, dismantling, and re-constructing notions of (our)selves, experiencing *difference* alongside other men. *Being there*, then, as a research practice, is about affirming tensions, disruptions, and irruptions of possibilities arising with both familiarising (our)selves with changes within our homes, our communities, and our daily lives, whilst contending with shifts and changes to social norms, expectations, and social power relationships arising from *disidentifying with previous understandings of ourselves*.

I think of the minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and now years spent at the whare with what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe as non-localisable, yet transversal, movements of a *motionless voyage*. Understood as experiences of intensive difference and affective change, a motionless voyage is *nomadic travelling in place* within the whare, thinking my self "in relation to thresholds of intensity between which it evolves or that it crosses" (p. 54). Fieldwork, in this fashion, enables me to imagine mingling with men who otherwise may be travelling in place with their own voyages, with mutual, collective, relational, and affective practices attending to the politics of the locations situating men's *experiences of bending*. Travelling in place recognises *kōrero* enables men to occupy space where affect *flows*, enabling us to notice, if fleetingly, *movement* with memorable intensities shared and spoken together with figures passing by. Fieldwork offers an opportunity to listen, a practice of *being there with men* who willingly share their understandings of residing in the whare with experiences of traversing, and transgressing,

geo-political, social, cultural, and gender-based co-ordinates that otherwise situate our self-identities. A purpose of interacting with the men is not an intention to meet them on their respective voyages, rather, we attempt to make sense of change processes, by journeying *together*. But, as is often the case with my experiences of fieldwork, I wonder where to begin writing such conversations with men, again...

### **Nomadic Transformative Becomings Arising with Micropolitical Acts**

Fieldwork with Gandhi Nivas becomes, in part, thinking and writing change processes, with what Colebrook (2002) describes as a “flow or multiplicity of experiences from which any being or idea is effected” (p. 87). The production of fieldnotes within my work is a creative, textual practice of embodying experiences affirming forces that prompt *movement*. Taking a form as *micropolitical acts* (Garo, 2008), nomadic subjectivity enables me to (re)visit and (re)remember experiences, to experiment with voice, agency, and embodiment in the construction of a theory constantly *reworking* theoretical concepts *back into* theory. Unpredictable, yet empowering, micropolitical acts are experiments with tactics disrupting and transforming hegemonic social and community practices of gendered individualism implicated in men’s use of violence, specifically in a family harm context. Nomadic transformative becomings situate subjectivity, Braidotti (2002) writes, “in terms of flows of variations, constantly transforming within patterns of continuity” (p. 63), with micropolitical acts an *ethics* tracing experiences of interconnectivity and collaboration, as continuous and open processes of change, empowering men’s narratives. This nomadically *writing* narratives, tracing men’s change processes, becomes, in Deleuzian terms, what a body can do—but does not necessitate *what I am doing with men* during my visits to the whare. Nomadic becomings, as micropolitical acts, are never preformed, preplanned, or prefigured. Instead, as nomadic change processes, micropolitical *becomings* are always rewritten, reformed, and re-dispersed within unrepeatable experiences of affective flow.

Thinking within the confines of normative thought, that is, writing credentials of *my life* with a representational logic, time is frozen with a series of memory points, recorded and saved in order to express a perspectival figure of thought from which a stable and coherent point of view is derived. Deleuze (1990/1969) tells me, becoming a nomadic *actor*, thus “delimits the original, disengages from it an abstract line, and keeps from the event only its contour and its splendor, becoming thereby the actor of one’s own events” (p. 150). This enables, for me, Deleuzian political philosophy of distinguishing *affective*

*materiality*, by articulating cartographic assemblages of *heterogeneous milieus*. A *counter-actualization* of events, nomadic narratives provide starting points of change processes unable to provide final outcomes of specific events. Specifically in the context of working with men in the violence prevention sector, strategies of sustaining resistance to normativising practices of self-surveillance inherent to risk assessment protocols and risk mitigation techniques become important. Nomadic thinking disrupts the binary of self/other, where difference is a pejoration and site of otherness, what Arrigo (2013) calls “the risk of being in-and-of society differently” (p. 676), freeing the concept of *difference* as a disqualification to be excluded and contained. The role of *difference*, Boundas (2006) explains, is not limited or confined to *multiples* of ontologies or subjectivities. This is not about men learning to become different types of men, or men learning how to be different, better versions of themselves. Instead, difference forms the conditions of intensities, affect, irruptions and new middles, providing always already innumerable possibilities of ethical relationships with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities. A nomadic ethics believes in what a body can do, knowing there is always more to a representational frame of reference for the identification of difference as risk. The contemporary flows of affective intensities organising gendered social power relations become embodied differently through our sexes.

Jack calls; he and May are celebrating their 44th wedding anniversary on Thursday night, and he's unable to make group. We come to an accord; we'll meet Saturday evening, instead. As we're visiting the whare in Papakura, Jack offers to pick up Doug, as is often the case; he likes the company.

Arriving around 530 or so, Doug and Jack are already there, waiting in their car for me to arrive. Jabir is also present. Entering the office, our greeting acknowledges we have not seen each other since he contracted covid, just as the omicron surge took off in early March. I wonder how he's been since his return. Left unsaid is that several of his colleagues were thus exposed to the virus, with staff shortages precipitating two of the whare closing to new admissions, for a few weeks. With at least one resident also becoming unwell with covid, Jabir has been in the middle, of a doozy of a month for the whare...

*I missed you...I share.*

Whilst I can't tell how he understands my responses, Jabir asks about our plans for the night. Without a plan nor a structure to our visit, I feel the uncertainty of the vague answers I provide. Undeterred, Jabir invites us to make ourselves at home, and welcomes us to think about joining he and two residents in a short yoga and meditation exercise. He mentions he will be cooking fried rice for the house, and that we are welcomed to stay and share kai with the men, as well.

The manaakitanga is overwhelming; his welcome, the care I feel, is a tricky beast...and I stumble with what to say. Jabir extends my notion of hospitality, as a simple matter of *looking after us*. Being cared for by Jabir, my sole responsibility is to welcome the good things that might emerge whilst we visit the house; I am not expected to "find out" and "go along" with whatever is happening at the house.

Jabir, apparently not unfamiliar with these moments I am experiencing, is, again, undeterred with my uncertainty, and, once again, both encourages and welcomes me, Jack, and Doug to share an evening, together, with the other men.

As Doug, Jack and I enter the house, I notice Rawiri Mohammed sitting by himself on the back deck. He sees me just as I see him, his face lighting up with a big smile as I shout his name, which becomes the most rapid greeting I can muster in my excitement. I'm unclear if he was expecting us, but regardless, a sense of joy emerges from the four of us, and we rush to greet each other with hugs and handshakes. A bit surprised, not by the warmth between he and I, but between he and Doug and Jack, despite not exactly remembering each other's names, I feel a burden being uplifted, of not needing to toil so much tonight.

*What are these sudden possibilities that excite me...what is Rawiri Mohammad being made responsible for?*

The four of us sit outside, sipping cups of coffee whilst Jack has pride of place with stories of his 40th wedding anniversary last week. I feel my stories, of recently learning to ride an electric motorcycle, interspersing the intensity that comes with Jack's stories, producing a levity the three men take up in sharing mutual knowledge about growing up in South Auckland during the 1970s and 1980s.

However different and unfamiliar, our tales of growing up in New Zealand and Michigan bind us together, and, eventually, I welcome Rawiri Mohammed to share how he has come back to the house. Doug comments...

*...You appear more enlivened, more present with us...*

...that last time we saw Rawiri Mohammed, he was straddling a past, construed of violence between he and his wife when he struggles to become her care-giver during periods of acute mental health crises, and his desire for a future where he both loves her yet they live apart.

Rawiri Mohammed mentions, that although a future apart is yet to unfold, he is working on how to how he can care for her through love and friendship, the possibilities of which he welcomes nervously. Doug takes the lead, after all three of us craft narratives of how we experience difference with Rawiri Mohammed, explaining, today, he feels reassured, comforted, and emboldened. Doug asks, wonders, how our encounters have appeared to catalyse new and different possibilities for Rawiri Mohammed. As the evening progresses, Doug comments whenever Rawiri Mohammed produces narratives where he is no longer bound by his wife's mental health issues, and threats of self harm; Rawiri Mohammad has, in the past, storied violence as arising when he mentions leaving their relationship, the violence, he says, emerging in moments of feeling stuck with indecision. As things become *meaty, fleshy, and sticky*, Jabir appears, and welcomes us to join him in a short yoga and meditation exercise before eating dinner together. We gladly accept.

...

I think to myself...

*...My polyester pants are not made for this.*

The four of us lying unseen on yoga mats, Jabir talks us through breathing and stretching exercises in the dark. Shoes off and mentally quiet, purposefully holding my poses and actively breathing in sync with Jabir's instructions, sensing but not seeing, I lose track of my surroundings to become aware of others.

...

Sitting down for dinner, we are joined by another resident, Neil.

Jabir draws me to the side, and advises,

Give him space, allow him to join at his own pace. Neil struggles with acute mental health concerns, and today brought a visit by a community mental health team.

As Doug prepares to bless the food, Neil, although he has not spoken with us in the two hours since we arrived, joins us as we gather in a circle around the dining table. Within moments, Neil finds both common ground and companionship with us. A local lad, Neil quickly realises he grew up a short walk from where Doug, Jack and Rawiri Mohammed were born and raised, and becomes enlivened when we stumble upon a shared interest in Japanese anime and New Zealand short films. With the freedom and autonomy of no longer being beholden to a hierarchy of social power relationships where I am expected to lead, facilitate, and run the group, I sense something, an unfolding between the men.

Shared personal interests, common biographical histories, and overlapping knowledge about popular culture become forgotten when Doug and Neil realise they are both familiar with, and fond of, Japanese anime. Interested in different styles, different genres, and different eras of anime, though, I sense both men become enlivened when their respective unfamiliarity also creates opportunities to share themselves.

After doing the dishes for the group, I am mindful of time again, and begin "preparing" to leave for the night. Doug and Jack, although not beholden to me in terms of how long they visit, also decide it is time to leave as well. We are delayed, though, our departure put off when the men celebrate the warmth of a shared evening together. Through quivering voices, repeated handshakes and an occasional embrace, we laugh when Doug mentions that the Men's Group seems to often produce a mutual obligation to mention our experiences of the evening, the *difference* we experience in connection to what others share with us.

Perched at the front door, some of us eager to depart and others eager to stay...Doug shares we have become just what is needed of the Men's Group tonight. A chance encounter between six men, coming together in ways both unfamiliar and purposefully disruptive to what is already familiar, with his final words from outside the house, Doug looks inwards toward the men staying behind, and says;

*We create new, unpredictable opportunities, when we travel together in processes of change.*

**Men's Group: Doug, Jack, Rawiri Mohammed**

**Staff: Jabir**

**GN3: Papakura**

**9 April 2022**

Nomadic subjectivity is an *affirmative embodiment of affective change*, which, following Lundy (2009), acts “in order to serve life, in order to activate the healthy life of a person, a people and culture” (p. 200). A nomadic subject is not produced from a history in which time serves as *Chronos*, but is a possibility of remembering intensive *differences* and *affective flow*, putting *difference* into action to create a relational, agential capacity for action in the present. Memories are not an inescapable past, only sets of conditions that induce action. A process of *thinking* self-formation, memories become embodied with a nomadic act of *fabulation*. Bogue (2006) describes fabulation as a creative process, that:

**challenges the received truths of the dominant social order, and in this regard it “falsifies”, but it also produces its own truths through its inventions, and in this sense it manifests the creative “power of the false”. (p. 213)**

The goal of fabulation, Bogue goes on to say, is to:

**break the continuities of received stories and deterministic histories, and at the same time to fashion images that are free of the entangling associations of conventional narratives and open to unspecified elaboration in the construction of a new mode of collective agency. (p. 221)**

Writing narrative with a nomadic subject is a process of contending with conventional, received, deterministic codes, where one must embrace the frustration of *recalcitrant residues* of affect whilst wistfully desiring vanishingly *familiar remnants* of a normative self. Remembering in the nomadic mode, micropolitical acts are nominated and ventured as powerful, iterative departures away from normative subjectivities, towards other unpredictable becomings. Fabulation, Bogue poses, is a process of creating:

**untimely visions, becomings and powers that are dynamic but unspecified in their narrative possibilities, and hence temporal forces that may generate stories, but not themselves properly narrative elements. (p. 220)**

The fabulation of a nomadic subject, forms in the (over)fullness of molecular flows undertaken, that is, remembered, in writing nomadic narratives. Nomadic selves are reflexive exercises in re-remembering affective change, not in remembering facts of certain events, enabling a *textual* process in which affective memory creates *visions*:

**rendering visible the intolerable, thereby critiquing the present, while those same visions loom like giant mythic figures of yet to be explored possibilities (p. 220).**

The transposition of memories into rhythms of affective flow entangles affective lines, creating new opportunities for what constitutes data. Following and extending Deleuze's formulation of fabulation as the deterritorialization of thought, Mengue (2008) warns the deterritorialization of thought is never absolute, that fabulation, forming new smooth space, must also bring "some code, some land, some stable segment" (p. 232) of normative, representational thought with it. My fieldnotes, then, are not my thinking as writer/author/researcher, but imaginative cartographic narrative accounts, in a loop of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, tracing intensive differences in thinking.

Following autoethnographic rhythms and reverberations, nomadic visions produce *sense*, rather than a process done *with* sense. A purposeful practice of embodying the materiality of new *relational linkages* and *unpredictable connections*, nomadic narratives form a multiplicity of subjectivities able to endure and sustain *affect* as constant, nondestructive fluxes and transformations. The unrepresentable entanglement of data in connection with embodied materiality is sensed both *smoothing* and *unsmoothing* narratives, in DeleuzoGuattarian terms both deterritorializing and reterritorializing narratives. This privileges a poly-vocality of forces and flows, triggering embodied change processes with a multiplicity of *molecular becomings* (Cirell & Sweet, 2020). Nomadic tactics to working with men in the violence prevention field, as a way of introducing myself to potential participants, enables possibilities to figure not who I was or who I am, but rather, thinking nomadically enables non-discursive affective understandings of *becomings*, opening up possibilities of engagement where I figure my self, with fieldwork experiences, as *becoming-participant*.

15 October 2020

GN3: 4-8 p.m. at Papakura with Raymond

Staff: Bharavi and Dayita

When I arrive, Bharavi welcomes me with warmth, and we have a good laugh at the busy-ness of the whare; there's been a lot of men coming and going for a few days now. Already with a plan for me, Bharavi encourages me to find a spot outside, on the back steps of the deck, in the sunshine...she's been eagerly awaiting me, there's several men she wants to introduce me to, but there isn't much time.

I'm worried; I don't know where I want to be, and although I don't know where that is yet, the way I'm asked to "execute" this "plan" feels poorly contrived-I'm not interviewing men for a gameshow. I try thinking with patience, and go with it...unknowingly, to an unknown place with unknown men, and trusting Bharavi, go with the flow, with her and the whare, to spaces unnamed, as yet.

On our way past, Dayita briefly interrupts us; she wants to take a photo of me with a pink anti-bullying day feather boa. She and Bharavi love it, appreciating how I am working with "my men"... I am working for the betterment of our communities, for our women, as well. But I hesitate; I've not done anything yet!

Now emplaced on the steps, Bharavi sits Raymond in front of me-not beside, or behind, or adjacent, but in front of me, close enough to touch. *Close enough to know he smells of tobacco leaf, rather than cigarettes.*

Raymond comes with her so *willingly*, so wiling to go along with her, *appreciative* of her...smiling, he sits. I don't hear the sound of her questions, her comments, as requests or directions, pass me by. The speed at which she talks...the pitch of her voice and the staccato march forward of her accent... combines, *imploing* me to go along with her-*welcoming me* to go along with her—the doing, what we are doing *together*, yet to unfold.

There's something of keeping each other in sight...she must know what she's doing...men don't see her coming. But we sense her, she's sensible...

*I feel her.*

Raymond is a young; feels new to the world. Not naive, more he's somehow unattuned. He non-plussed he's speaking with an American, more he's captivated, activated, in thrall with the care being shown to him, by Bharavi, other men, and now me. He knows of my research...it's not that Bharavi and others have given him explanations...he's able to share thoughts of his own, he's read about me and my research, that I'm interested in change, about how we empower change, working with men. He wants to know what collaboration means. I share with him;

*if we think about getting together, to think together... we have already begun, it's what we are doing now.*

Coming together, we become an assemblage of connections; we both experience connections differently here, connections which form relationships of shared accountability between Bharavi and Gandhi Nivas, Raymond and myself.

*If a shared accountability enables us to kōrero...does it really matter what we discuss? If this is how difference emerges, how does kōrero become possible, and what does kōrero empower, in places like Gandhi Nivas?*

Playing with these ideas, with Raymond, I need his help figuring out some problems;

*I need to work out some ideas about my research.*

*What might be in this for men?*

*What would men want to ensure occurs for us?*

Raymond begins again, talking to me of the problems he is facing. He desires change by *reworking* them, figuring a way of through his problems...telling me he knows he is going to fail, that something will go wrong, a mistake or an error will be made...but he wants determination itself to remain. A holistic process of change means change processes that become fruitful, that multiplies possibilities by connecting different parts of his life. He doesn't want change to fail because he didn't achieve that *one thing* that he is often told *must* change.

...

After Raymond leaves, Bharavi sits Matt down in front of me. Matt is leaving, but before he goes, she wants him to talk to me, without expectations but as courtesy to her. She whispers;

*I hope he stays.*

Matt and I begin by remarking how we are both wonderfully perplexed with Bharavi. Gently, I point out that I don't quite know how Bharavi does what she does, how she enables what is occurring between us-even if neither of us know what it is that occurred, or continues occurring, or what happens as a result.

*For sure, mate.*

I welcome his company, yet also welcome him to leave. He sits, reciprocating a welcome to me, that he is not quite ready to go, but I'm welcomed to stay. I work out with Matt that somehow I just spent an hour and a half with Raymond...it's almost dinner time, now. We discuss research ethics, that I am feeling a tension. I am completing an ethics application, and that I need help figuring out questions, but I can't "just ask" men these questions, nor can I figure out how to ask these questions, differently.

I explain, with Raymond, we agreed accountability occurs as something *between us*...and I'm wondering what this means for men, to participate in this research. If what men "get" from participation is unrepresentable, unknowable, as a thing I cannot give but something that becomes of us, something that men "sense" for themselves...I ask Matt if this makes any sense. He agrees. The questions are pertinent, helpful, important to men...like himself...who are only just learning of change, after painful, traumatic things occur.

*I didn't know staying at Gandhi Nivas would be helpful until after I arrived.*

...

A few hours later, as Raymond, Matt and I cook a stir-fry for dinner in the kitchen, Bharavi joins us. I'm beginning to think Bharavi is always moving people, moving with people, always changing directions with funny little stories where she acts perplexed, or acts perplexingly. Out-loud, she wonders, what we three men thought of her today, what she was "doing" with us, putting us together like that.

*Finally, a glimpse!*

There's a partnership of coming together, with Bharavi, something which occurs *between us* that is not reliant on me or her. Although she simply sits us, delicately and carefully, together, she is diligent, attentive, *affectively* connecting with men. As she moves with men, men also move with her. Believing in both men and myself, as well as our work together, by moving with Matt, of creating movement with Matt, she wants to encourage him to stay; she has not been able to get him to do so, by herself.

Bharavi sits with us at the table, but is not going to eat. The soup is a packet, and awful, but the curried eggs are truly wonderful; an afterthought, but purposeful, Bharavi wants to contribute to dinner and it's all that remained in the kitchen. As Bharavi leaves us, we begin to talk about finding each other, experiencing joy sharing our respective challenges with others. Calmly and quite unashamedly, if a little unsurely...we remark how the evening worked out for us, how the evening enabled each of us, individually, to become something else from when we started.

*I didn't know people could do that...*

...

After dinner, having cleaned the dishes and kitchen together, Matt and Raymond sit outside, smoking, and I ask if I can hang with them. As we share our respective experiences of an inexplicable evening together, I become breathless, and stop hearing words, but begin feeling. Watching me, Matt asks me;

*Why you do "this"? Is "this" what you meant by "unrepresentable", like the question you were asking before? How do we talk about something, without knowing what it "is"?*

*Yeah. How do I ask men to follow me, to participate, and how do I make sense of men's participation, if "men's work" is not a group, a peer or social group that we can identify or describe? How do we know what it is we are doing...if this isn't an intervention?*

## Heterogeneous Milieus and Men's Groups

Reading Bogue (2006), reverberating flows of materiality and affectivity helps me understand *fabulation*, a nomadic process which ushers in “untimely visions, becomings and powers...and hence temporal forces that may generate stories” (p. 220). A Deleuzian concept, *fabulation* produces narratives with possibilities of thought, which “break the continuities of received stories and deterministic histories” (p. 221). Toiling amongst a multiplicity of middles with men, throughout a tumultuous year of fieldwork, our affective encounters become a *pick-me-up*, or a *pick-up* (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007), an iterative process Deleuze describes as “collecting up, chance, restarting of the motor, getting on to the wavelength” (p. 10). McCullagh (2019) posits normative thought relegates the non-human world to *material* for human action and a *resource* for thinking, that is, the non-human is limited to already-given and already-made ideas “that pre-exist the production process” (p. 146) of thought. Rather than the anthropocentrism of individualism, with the dogmatic universalistic notion attributing humans with the same autonomy, agency, and capacity for action, McCullagh establishes political action as an *emergent* process emanating from collective *assemblages of heterogeneous milieus*. McCullagh's conceptualisation of *heterogeneous milieus* broadens and extends an inclusive engagement with the diverse *ecological materiality* of the non-human and more-than-human world, forming an *ethics of heterogeneity* as the basis of political action and political space. This enables a philosophical shift of thinking of human sovereignty over action, to an understanding “by which capacities for political action are constituted by non-human forces, entities and elements” (p. 141). Recombining otherwise heterogeneous elements, this effects something akin to MacLure's (2010) concept of *glow*. Mapping assemblages of milieus with an ethics of heterogeneity, I *follow* materialist compositions, such as *glow*, to trace the production of political space within fleeting encounters with men, crafting memories with a narrative process *purposing* selections of events as cartographic points effecting experiences of *glow*. Neither *the glow* nor *the path* taken concerns, me, rather, what *glow materialises* matters.

A nomadic subject, a concept without points of origin but produced with cartographic points as conditions of emergence, marks *trajectories departing from*, rather than a *path towards*, self-representations. With movement *away* from self-representations, a nomadic subject effects *minor thought* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) by following affective memories able to navigate and embody both memories and counter-memories of events, taking up potentially overlapping and contradictory positions of location outside of my (or anyone's)

control. This means a nomadic subject is not *ready-made*, though. I understand my fieldnotes, in connection to minor thought, with Deleuze and Parnet's (2007) explication of a *minority-machine*. A concept of thinking *thought* as taking shape with an *assemblage* of *heterogeneous memories*, a *minority-machine* expresses and effects thinking with changes of vectors, directions, frequencies, and speeds, with nomadic narratives enabling possibilities of a life producing textual experiments tracing and following a *sense of glow*.

With political action no longer positioned as an *arborescent* outcome, arising from an anthropocentric *agential mastery* of intentional *action* that *nature* is not bestowed, McCullagh's (2019) conceptualisation of *heterogeneous milieus* helps me unfold the second research activity, a Men's Group, as opportunities for materialist experiments with men tracing "the capacities and conditions from which collective actions emerge" (p. 155). Tracing *glow* with written narratives of Men's Groups resonates the emergence of new milieus, producing unpredictable effects with the creation of new capacities and collective actions. Extending this thinking further, McCormick (2018), critiquing the introduction of *political materialism* with *posthuman experimentation*, concerns the possibilities afforded a dispersed self no longer identifiable as a normative *self* with even partially indicative eroded borders of flesh and embodied histories. McCormick describes ethical nomadic becomings as no longer subject to representing "truthful" understandings of histories and identity formation that provide the stability of a self-concept, as nomadic subjectivities are sustained with ethical responsibilities no longer requiring checking against the original "truth" of an event or memory. Putting this into a specific context of a social Men's Group, thinking with Braidotti's (2006b) posthumanist critique of power with a Deleuzian concept of *accuracy*, nomadic memory becomes how a self "resides rather in the kind of outward-bound interconnections or relations that it enables, provokes, engenders and sustains" (p. 171). Men, including myself, no longer occupy fixed and specific gendered spaces within a Men's Group, but rather the spaces we occupy become gendered with the outward-bound interconnections and relations we bring to the group. Nomadic memory becomes a gendering *linguistic signifier*, what Braidotti calls "merely one of the points in a chain of effects, not its centre or its endgame" (p. 171). Reworking materialist compositions of affect with men, we *de-centre* masculinity as the subject or object of interest with an ethics of *nomadic sustainability*, which privileges materialist forces enabling "a change of perspective that allows us to resist the unlimited

erasures, multiple evictions and enforced semioses of advanced capitalism, while allowing for flow and mobility” (p. 230).

Nomadic memory sustains *materialist becomings* with a *non-linear temporality*, that is, rather than thinking of time as a factuality which is able to account for and record changes in masculinity, masculinities, and masculine practices *spanning* a period of *measured* time, a figuration of time determining an *order* of things—and thus causative to how things must be known—nomadic memory triggers *nomadic minority storylines*. Colebrook’s (2002) description of *the movement-image of cinema* helps me understand minority storylines as non-linear intervals time, as a “divergent pulsation” (p. 43) that speaks to a nomadic capacity to (re)member memories with the jagged running of time. No longer a container to be managed, monitored and catalogued, time is disrupted, flowing in eddies and currents, not lines or points, which means minority storylines, and other pulsating neo-materialist becomings in the time of Aion, are unevenly tumultuous and clamorous, oftentimes producing a *convulsive* irruption of both familiar and unfamiliar experiences. Nomadic minority storylines form non-normative subjectivities of affectivity and intensity as entry points to what Bignall and Braidotti (2019) call “the complex and multiscalar consequences of productive encounters between differences” (p. 5-6). A form of posthuman critical imagination and fabulation, minority storylines are diffractive *readings* of *events* empowering, affirming, and sustaining embodied possibilities of change. As Braidotti implores, minority storylines are an acting on and acting out difference with stories of self-formation, enabling us to attend to the effectual possibilities of nomadic thinking as experiments. Whilst attending to *events*, *occasions*, *incidents*, and *happenings* at the whare and various locations in the community whilst undertaking fieldwork, 1:1 interviews with individual participants, and a Men’s Group, my fieldnotes themselves become frayed accounts of embodied nomadic memories. No longer limited to recording “details” giving rise to specific and singular representations of subjects, objects, and events, notes are not written with an *audience* in mind, that is, with a singular voice meant to be understood by others. Instead, narratives serve as cartographic tracings of affective encounters with limits to understanding processes I experience throughout the research. Nomadic narratives enable audiences to trace trajectories producing a *glow*, rather than situating the reader in specific locations through specific pathways.

Resisting the trappings of familiar thought, which reduces events to a collection of narrative figures pre-formed with specific cuts in time, I can begin by rethinking memories of cooking a meal with men, as part of *compensation* for their participation in research activities. I am inspired by the work of McCullagh (2019), here. Rather than focussing on subjectivities of a unified self, with whom I bestow anthropocentric capacity for agency, I attend to “that in virtue of which political action occurs” (p. 141), with minority storylines elaborating assemblages of *heterogeneous milieus* as conditions constituting an agential capacity to act with the emergence of new political space. A posthuman figure of thought, I conceptualise *heterogeneous milieus* to involve *processual* and *affective relationality* of human, non-human, and more-than-human entities, forces, and flows, expanding an awareness of complex entanglements “from which we emerge and which enable us to act” (p. 145). A collaborative capacity for action with the creation of heterogeneous political space, *inclusive* of the non-human world, is contrasted with the anthropocentrism of Western political theory, which, McCullagh says, “focuses on the uniquely human attributes of the political subject in terms of autonomous rationality” (p. 142). Whilst we do know some of what a body is capable, for instance, when the co-construction of knowledge in academic settings compresses *institutional touch* such that our curiosities become stifled and tensions disrupt how we hold and maintain ourselves in political spaces, it becomes possible to ask how a *return to perceiving* organised and stable *forms* of identity *matters*. These are not challenges of *thinking*, but of thinking at the limits of *thought*, too. Creative and empirical, rather than providing repetitions of already-given and already-made concepts privileging *individualistic* power relations and concerns, posthuman knowledge production practices are limited only in the unpredictable effects of practices acknowledging we do not even know *all* of what a body is capable (Deleuze, 1994/1968).

Desiring movement away from subjectivity characterised by expertise in repeated and familiar institutional habits, and professional practices consolidating patterns of interaction and forms of relation premised on social power relations eschewing the riskiness of experimentation and uncertainty, I draw on an elaboration of nomadism as a *cartographic mode* (Braidotti, 2011a). With Braidotti (2002) suggesting *majoritarian figures* are “constitutively doomed to be one step behind the reconfigurations of identity that are actually taking place in the social field” (p. 169), privileging unstable identities, then, I trace possibilities of using Braidotti’s nomadic theory to dis/entangle tensions arising with memories of the violence prevention field. Becoming a nomadic subject, virtual counter-

identities constructed with assemblages of affective intensities emerge with thinking *memories* as relational processes, disrupting what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) elaborate as the “centering, unification, totalization, integration, hierarchization, and finalization” (p. 41) inherent to the figuration of a normative *molar* subject. I use autoethnography as an experiment to write my own past, crafting new futures by disturbing notions of narrative unity, stability, linearity and mastery to create political agency. Posthuman scholarship, thinking again of Braidotti’s (2011b) nomadic theory, is to acknowledge non-normative subjectivities are not “the measure of all things, but more like a sedimented accumulation of leftovers” (p. 131), a creative process able to produce new relationships with others.

(M) But I'm curious about having a staff member here, because not every (Gandhi Nivas) house has that, and not every house that supports men has that opportunity. But I'm just, I'm curious why that was important to you, that somebody was here on site like that.

(T) So it's just being they were there, so it wasn't important but it was a good that knowing someone new, and something what they been gone through, learning their background and things, and their experience, and maybe out there tackle and gone through with their pasts. Something like big talks, that's also quite...and the meeting time was point of discussion as well, going through with the others.

(M) Is that something you would do when you weren't here? Is that something you would do with your friends?

(T) No. It was a totally different, because you cant have that sort of experience anywhere else. Maybe you won't talk about it at all, but here it was maybe normal, like, also okay. Because you know what, it's totally different. You don't need to share or tell anyone, I think it just...question comes up outside, somehow. Anyhow, then you maybe tell something, bits and things and maybe bits and things, and then second day you tell more about it, then the third day something else different, and things like that. But it's wasn't necessarily to tell or share things. It was just when you cooking something, you share experiences. you share them, then you have others, there were a few other topics, as well, were discussed.

**(Talan, Interview, 29 May 2021)**

Following Talan's figuring of experiences at the whare, I have come to understand nomadic writing with an embodied praxis of creating *affective molecular connections* with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities, forces, and flows. An ethics of care expands on and enlarges what we can connect with, which enables Talan to experience an ethics of care for his self-narratives, and his politics of locations, rather than something like Maslow's hierarchy and "himself". As a self-reflexive process tracing *affirmative* sensorial and cognitive data, Conley (2006) suggests a sense of self can be put into action "between identities, not so much to undo them but rather to question" (p. 107) critical structures figuring thought, that, instead of bringing forth new connections and subject positions, confine dialogue and erect oppositions of thought. Thinking of a social Men's Group as experiments allowing one to become actively engaged in the politics of men's experiences, nomadic thought is enabled with written notes of my experiences of fieldwork, providing evidence of events, some now re-remembered many years later, in the scribbles of journals and diaries delineating possibilities of different affective memories challenging objective normative *truths* of an event, occasion, circumstance, or experience. By attending to outward-bound relations that enable and sustain memories, fieldnotes remember conditions, rather than effects, and survive as non-metaphorical textual *schemes of representation* for encounters and events, and endure by challenging representational conventions in order to change the structure of subjectivity. Thinking with a nomadic ethics, my notes *become* virtual experiments with an *affective* logic ordering writings, and rather than creating objects of thought captured, stabilised, and stored in any single note that requires interpretation, I attend to a *glow, to rifts, irruptions, hesitations* and *pauses*, as *data* experienced and *felt*. With MacLure's (2013) suggestion that an affective logic engenders a possible emergence of *sense*, notes are not an attempt at remembering the man who wrote the notes, nor my experiences of men, events and activities. Nomadic writing is, instead, an attempt at uttering the ineffable, that is, my experiences of *encountering* "something that is befalling us" (p. 662), privileging a *sense* of an *event* that I sometimes understand as *glow*.

Returning to revising, reworking, and re-remembering post-qualitative sense data, well trodden habits seeking "which" or "what" individual nomadic subject to write with, or which to write of, are constantly on the horizon of thought. The figurative singular *being* that is "doing" an activity of revision, if at all successful, is not simply re-tracing often bare writing, reworking "data" to create disjunctive and transversal lines of flight from a normative subject. Working the writing, so to speak, is not a lone(ly) figuration of a self

studiously swapping, switching, adding and subtracting words and sentences on a computer screen. A line of flight becomes possible when revision practices create new possibilities of thought with what Braidotti (2011b) describes as “productive planes of transversal interconnection among entities and subjects” (p. 33). Engendering new, unbounded smooth space in the time of Aion, nomadic writing, as Conley (2006) puts it, crafts a logic of affective flow, engendering possibilities of a self “that is neither fixed nor bears any clearly delimited borders” (p. 98). My attempts at (re)writing nomadic subjects produce rhizomatic figurations, a practice of following multiple itineraries of investigation which privilege affectivity *differently*. Rhizomatic figures make possible different experiences of *sense* by following different connections, discursive enunciations and stutterings. A hope with my nomadic writing is that these processes become comprehensible by creating *voice(s)* that ask different questions, *differently*. Voices, imbued with politics privileging feminist and posthumanist ethics of movement, are not a *transcendental practice* of ridding myself of undesirable experiences, or replacing experiences by gaining or sustaining narrative connections where thought becomes disjunctive and glows—which would more or less prefigure and identify what to write. Nomadic narratives, as cartographic accounts, are textual selections of events in the middle of things, producing possible lines of flight with whatever affective logic I am writing with, logic that welcomes gaps of thought otherwise sensed with wondering “how did I get to here?”—if only to think of movement once more.

Revision becomes a process of *smoothing* writing, which I understand as creating the conditions for the emergence of data *evidencing* an affective logic of sorts. Nomadic writing creates *conditions* of *smooth space* by challenging normative social, cultural, and academic practices which take form in the DeleuzoGuattarian (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) concept of *striated space*. As I understand it, striated space is experienced through the perception of organised and stable *perspectival* forms of identity, prefiguring normative narratives with recognisable *coextensive objects*. Striated space presents properties, organised and measured to form and perceive things, with time, as *Chronos*, linearly ordering narratives through individualised moments of time of the individualised subject. Smooth space can be understood as a shift from an Kantian understanding of time predicated on the *soul*, which might ask questions such as *what do you want to do with your time?*, to that of the *cosmos*, of *Zoe*, producing different possibilities of thought with time an undifferentiated pure empty form. Smith (2023) helps me understand *smoothing* space is a process of freeing time “from its subordination to movement” (p. 51), which

determines movement as something that only becomes possible *through* time. Smooth space is created with multiplicities of *differences* that become known with *symptoms*, that is, difference is *sensed* with the evaluations of touch, embodied feelings, and affect. A challenge, then, is *following* affective data *differently*, again (and again and again), creates new assemblages and becomings whilst *becoming entangled* with affective data *all over again*. This conceptualisation of re-working writing(s), with *glow* sometimes *sensed* and *experienced* with a *thrill* of writing *working*, of writing *doing something*, nomadic writing is a practice of doing *just enough* to trace and sustain a sense of affective flow. A reflexive practice, nomadic writing is also cautiously not wanting to get too caught up in the mechanics of figuring out which words work, and do not work. Each rewrite is an iteration of reworking writing only *thus far, for now*, situating writing in place and time. Furthermore, again thinking with Conley (2006), a nomadic subject *molecularises* possibilities of thought with *micropolitical strategic tactics* resisting normative identities, enabling me to continue collaborating with men whilst keeping each other in sight during uncertain times.

Commencing from 23 June 2020, fieldwork has itself become a repeated process of iteratively refiguring myself throughout this research project, within the ongoing fluxes and flows of Gandhi Nivas as an organisation, and the men participating in this research project. With “early” experiences of fieldwork, occurring throughout 2020 and the early months of 2021, involved visiting the whare “alone”, by myself, contributing to the research project progressing to 1:1 interviews (in April 2021) and the Men’s Group (in May 2021), “my” experiences of fieldwork prefigure the subsequent research activities. Whilst organisational changes involving, for instance, renovations to the whare and shifts in covid pandemic responses, in connection with personal considerations, such as an increase travel expenses and employment commitments, continues impacting on *how, when, and where* fieldwork occurs, the inclusion of other men’s experiences, as affective *informants*, effects *different* imaginings of Men’s Work, only some of which are textually included in this writing. By creating textual, nomadic, affective *windows*, research involving men’s understandings of change means enlivening processes of *becomings*, with voices that do not answer to our name. I use my body, not feelings of my body but *feeling with* my body, to do this thinking, this writing, this way of *living with theory*. With this research, though, supporting an agenda of keeping victims safe with community-centred engagement models keeping men connected and in sight with culturally responsive holistic support, what becomes of *men* empowered to address their harmful

behaviours? Producing becomings of non-violence with minority storylines, what figures of thought become possible when *difference*, no longer a pejoration, both *empowers* and *affirms* a productive capacity of a self? What does nomadic thought tell us about what a body can do? I am reminded by Bogue (2006), that in these new middles, to think these questions is to see *deeply*, to see the *intolerable* to our *present* selves, is;

**...to engage in a critique of the received truths and realities of the present. A moment of hallucinatory, clairvoyant vision is one in which the intolerable becomes suddenly visible, but one also that makes visible new possibilities unencumbered by the past. The hold of history, of the forces that have shaped our present, is broken, and the actual of what we are becoming surges forth. History, story, narrative continuity, yield to the event, a disruption in causality, a gap in the orderly and regular sequence of world occurrences. (p. 219)**

(M) I'm curious if that makes sense to you, Doug. Because I think, if I'm thinking about Gandhi Nivas, it's a conversation I have with Gandhi Nivas quite a bit. When they talk about change and difference, they're not talking in terms of this man needs to change that, or, he needs to be...

(D) Everyone knows what they need, themselves. Like, why I like it here is because I'm safe. I got two influences, when I come here. I got the men, who were the ones on the front, on the front lines of their families of their economies, you know. And then I got a government run knowledge base. Win win.

(M) Hmm.

(D) Like there's a dude, he was on the edge of acting out one night. He was at, we were at the, ummm, you were there. We were at the Tuesday night group, and, there was like all these things just kept assaulting him, like, *Ahhh yeah, man! Fuck I keep telling the bitch to shut up all the time, and I shouldn't do that!* And I'm just like, bro, good, you're in the right place. You know. He said stuff like, *well I had to tell her what to do.* But he should know to get out of there.

(M) Hmm.

(D) You know, and that that's why this place was the perfect place for him. It's...

(M) Safety has different meanings, there, though, because safety also means that you don't have to go rushing in, eh? As somebody who's part of that group, somebody who is present with those experiences this guy's had.

(D) Vibrations that were going through that room, yeah.

**(Doug, Interview, 15 December 2021)**



## Chapter 4

### (((Men's Group Narrative)))

Texting and talking with numerous men over several weeks, with few offering a commitment to attend, the more I do the less that seems to occur. I don't know what to tell the two men joining me, I don't know how to explain the reasons more men are not with us. I tell them, instead, although our group is not big, next week will be better.

Distracted, a feeling of dangerousness emerges with delaying this any further. We are here; the group, however small, is here. We gotta get this thing going, fast. But how to begin?

As we wait for the pizza to arrive, both men, asking differently, wonder what I want, and what I hope to get, from the Men's Group. I want to understand how a Men's Group can better support men's processes of change, to work with groups of men so that we may think how we do this differently. I know Men's Groups are not always popular, that men often experience them as a waste of time. I know from my own experiences groups are not always helpful at reducing violence, and can, in fact, lead men back to old habits if not help learn new ways of enacting violence towards others. Both men stand firm. They tell me they do not know what they are meant to be doing, what they are here for.

Responding to what I think is a plea to help understand the purposes of our evening together, I reiterate an interest in how communities can support men with processes of change. The moment I stop talking, though, I become aware of my body and a discomfiting nervousness. As I consider my feelings, the men continue on and I am told this is not a rhetorical question requiring a solution, nor are they inviting a response. Both men express patience, though, explaining whatever we are doing tonight, this is not gonna work for them. To run this group, Darcy shares with me, we need starting points, although not beginnings as such, because we are all in the middle of our own stuff...

*I had a training session at work, to learn safety practices for the hoists and lifts in the warehouse. I thought the trainer haughty and self-important; he had a high self-belief in his own experience and expertise and wanted us to do things his way. I appreciated the trainer for sharing himself, though. He gave a slide presentation with photos of his family. They were dumb photos, just things he carries around with him in his wallet, or in his truck. But he offered parts of himself as starting points, opening up the training with himself, telling us the things that he finds important, connecting these to his sense of self. These starting points, gave me an opportunity to engage him, and I learned something, both of himself and of myself.*

Just as the pizza arrives, Manu raises again that he does not know what we are meant to be doing tonight, that I seem confused—yet overly confident. I barely hear him, my heart pounding. He's lost; what is it that I want for us. With that, Darcy acknowledges, if nothing else, he wants us to share food whilst we think what this means, what our group might become, together. And so we eat, and I begin sharing with them that I am not sure what I am doing. Despite running different kinds of Men's Groups for over 20 years, I don't know where to sit, or what to say. I'm nervous, my belly hurts. I don't know what to do with this group, with you two. I am starting to think I needed a plan. I feel like I'm failing; this is new to me...

**Men's Group: Darcy and Manu**

**GN1: Ōtāhuhu**

**20 May 2021**

## Memory Work and The Men's Group

A cartographic figuration of affective memory, this narrative is a partial account of three men sharing an evening of discomfort and uncertainty at the first Men's Group, in May of 2021. Darcy previously resided at Gandhi Nivas whilst subject to a Police Safety Order (PSO) resulting from family violence, which prohibited him from returning home. Manu sought support from Gandhi Nivas in the form of an anger management programme, after an incident of family violence he links to a period of heavy alcohol consumption, and although the police were purportedly involved, to my knowledge he was not made subject to a PSO. Several weeks before, meeting to discuss their participation in the research, both Darcy and Manu shared a desire to join a social group for men, in order to enlarge, expand and extend social supports available to them. Both shared a belief that, as they explained, the Men's Group offers "something different" that neither had tried before. In doing something *different*, meeting with a group of men to think about *difference* and *change, differently*, Manu and Darcy sought encounters with unfamiliar *social forces* we imagined, together, as emergent possibilities of the group. Both men joined, in part, as an expression of *hope*.

Manu, who identifies as Māori, and Darcy, who identifies as Tongan, became intrigued with a notion the Men's Group is an iterative activity, where each and every time the group meets, we *become* something different. Uncomfortable with labelling us a *self-help group*, nor purporting to offer men a therapeutic *intervention* helping them address their use of violence, both men helped discursively figure the Men's Group as a non-representable process resisting definition. Meeting with both men, separately, on several occasions, we began with envisaging the Men's Group as an opportunity to express and embody *change* and *difference*, in ways *responsive* to the needs of men experiencing change. These conversations became opportunities to use *kōrero* as an open-ended, culturally responsive *participant recruitment process*, enabling me to experiment with nomadic narrative as a *tactic* affirming men's diverse experiences of violence and understandings of change, as a way of welcoming men to join. Manu expressed a desire for new social relationships predicated on understandings of mutual respect, based on culturally specific concepts of *manaakitanga* and *whanaungatanga*, as he feared seeking advice from his male friends, given the presence of permissive attitudes about violence and alcohol use in his social circles. Darcy explained his participation as an opportunity to experiment with social forces empowering him to resist socio-cultural and gendered norms sustaining expectations about himself, and beliefs about the use of violence against women. Both

men were critical of culturally specific social attitudes and gender myths tacitly condoning violence as entrenched cognitive habits they found challenging to change. In other words, both men resist situating antisocial relationships and gender as *objects* of change requiring self-surveillance and careful monitoring, and invoke social relationships as empowering *conditions* of change. This notion, that participation in the Men's Group, putting *difference* into action, offers possible *conditions* of change, helps situate affect and affective flow as imperceptible and ineffable, yet *sensible*, discursive resources to discuss men's participation in this project.

This narrative, derived from notes recorded at the conclusion of the first group and re-drafted on multiple occasions, helps me re-encounter memories arising with feelings of inadequacy. Despite years of creating, facilitating, and administering small group activities, in both medium sized community projects and large statutory organisations for a diverse range of men and boys across multiple countries and cultures, I began the group that night immobilised, confused, and fearing failure. When we met, Manu was back living in the family home and contemplating counselling, whilst Darcy, with active family violence charges before the Court and subject to a *protection order*<sup>25</sup>, resided by himself whilst under an electronically monitored bail curfew. Both men, connected by our involvement with Gandhi Nivas, joined the group to *kōrero* about our daily lives. When I revisit memories of that night, much as I did not know then, I still do not know, now, where to start. To create a sense of movement, to *begin again*, I bring forth this iteration hoping to de-centre *myself* as a subject of interest and *men* as objects of interest. My first attempts crafting narratives of the evening emplaced myself along a hierarchical scale of capacity and aptitude, with feelings of failure and incompetence, to quote Braidotti (2008), a "rhetoric of the lament" (p. 17) I struggle to resist. Lament voices memories of letting the men down when *only* two attend the group, sustaining what Goodchild (1996) suggests is a struggle brought forth by the capacity of capitalism to "fragment, privatize, and segment the socio-economic field" (p. 196). A territorializing process which enables over-coding memories to turn the past into capital for the purposes of consumption, thinking myself as a capable and competent professional, *wanting* to consider myself capable and competent, that facilitating a "group" of two men should be easy, I want to think of myself as capable of *doing better* than this, that more men should be attending. I remember this subjective *othering* of myself with experiences of drowning in self-pity and

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<sup>25</sup> <https://www.justice.govt.nz/family/family-violence/court-orders-for-family-violence/protection-orders/>

contempt, the sweaty anxiety and fidgety nervousness combine to present me as incompetent and unsure of myself, a figure of thought straining to gain salvation in a future free of these feelings.

It is here, Goodchild (1996) tells me, a nomadic subject can resist capitalist habits of thought by reworking memories into “material for a new mode of expression” (p. 200). I understand the work undertaken in writing nomadic narratives is not in remembering facts or being certain of chronological events. Instead, nomadic thinking is a *reflexive* exercise in remembering affective change and the creation of new space, of *smoothing* space with multiple affirmative processes of *defamiliarisation* in which the normative subject enters into relationships with a multiplicity of human, non-human, and more-than-human forces. Stretching the concept of *multiplicity*, Braidotti (2016) privileges processes of defamiliarisation as spaces where “knowing subjects evolve from the vision of the self they had become accustomed to” (p. 388), with Boundas (2006) expounding the concept of a *nomad* as an “attempt to summon those who are in a position to stand against the state’s capturing forces” (p. 21). Creating an ethical subjectivity no longer defined in terms of repeated habits privileging memories of the past for purposes of consumption, Boundas alerts us to the unorthodox nature of thinking intensities as forces “responsible for the genesis of entities...whose mode of existence is to actualise themselves in states of affairs” (p. 4-5). A departure from habitual and familiar subject positions, nomadic subjectivities can become problematic, though. For instance, in moments of vulnerability where I attempt to *open myself up* in a flow of events of a Men’s Group, Braidotti (2008) cautions processes of defamiliarization can produce subjective transformations of *disidentification*, that may result in the “loss of cherished habits of thought and representation, which can produce fear, a sense of insecurity and nostalgia” (p. 19). Whilst eager to counter a mode of remembering in which I fail to realise the *preferred* subject who is confident with his capabilities and experience, my writing, frustratingly, does not respond to purposeful *expressions* of affect. I cannot *show* you an alternative figuration with a purpose-built version of myself, a liberated subject no longer tethered to these experiences and feelings. By embracing both frustration and different encounters with memories of the evening, my nomadic writing provides textual experiments, tracing a *sense of glow* arising with an identity taking place between the binaries formed of the normative figure and *other*. Both relational and driven from the *outside*, my narrative experiments construct assemblages of affective intensities emerging with memories and counter-memories of the evening, embodying alternative figurations of virtual counter-

identities able to inhabit *affective locations* as conditions of transformative encounters with the men. Whilst unable to provide final outcomes of evening, affective intensities create *minority storylines* as entry points to understand a relational, agential capacity for action in the present.

Rethinking memories of the group by affectively *embodying* politics of locations I inhabit, Braidotti (2011a) helps me understand a nomadic narrative subject is a complex set of co-ordinates, a figure of thought inclusive of affective conditions seeding change processes that continue outside of my control-but that which I, and others, can sense. That is, as memories of the evening, and the hundreds of Men's Groups occurring since then, continue unfolding, iterative narrative accounts become loci of terrifying encounters with various academic/professional/gendered expectations of myself. I am reminded by Braidotti, though, that the nomadic subject *clashes* with the heteronormative figure, rather than *replacing* a normative subject, enabling and sustaining and renewing resistance by suspending the binary opposition of subject formation and self-critique. There is *always more to me* than the *present frame*. Nomadic subjectivity becomes a tactic of traversing disruptions to self-images that I continue experiencing anew throughout this research project, activating creative resources such as affectivity and relationality to destabilise sedimented memories giving rise to experiences of *estrangement from one's self*. A nomadic subject becomes accountable to the politics of my locations by affectivity with a capacity to actualise a multiplicity of identities not afforded constituency within narratives drawn with a unitary normative subjectivity.

A purposeful *expression* of subjective *becomings*, rather than representing the static sameness of *being*, thinking and writing of the Men's Group is a tactic enabling me to exceed the politics of normative subject formation. *Smoothing* space enables me to embody partial and fleeting political locations, not to overcome experiences as obstacles. Braidotti (2006b) situates nomadic transpositions as a process of rethinking a normative subject "in terms of affectivity, inter-relationality, territories, eco-philosophical resources, locations and forces" (p. 205), with nomadic *subjectivity* a non-representational and non-structural style of *thinking* the affirmative generative capacity of *dangerous passions* of affective flow, to interact with and interpret, not just label or identify, the mindless, generative and affirmative vitality of *life*. Writing with a nomadic subject, I do not hope to transcend a set of observations, outcomes, and conclusions about my capacity or aptitude, nor to rid myself of feelings of failure and incompetence. I have come to

understand my narrative writing as a practice, not of *forgetting* in order to overcome— but of *retaking* what is *already given*, to dance on the feet of chance, to differ from oneself and all that that has come before.

6 April 2021

GN1: 430 p.m. at Otahuhu for the Ahimsa Group (Anger Management) with George

Staff: Mahir

Arriving on-site, Mahir is busy in the office, in a rush it seems. I pass by with a wave, relocating myself to the lounge, where group will be held. The clock shows I got an hour before we start, and I begin wondering about "practice". Practice, it seems, often involves (re)working our interactions with others. What happens when practice is about our selves, though, what happens to "others" when our work does not involve how controlling/influencing/determining/supporting/motivating change processes? What happens when *reflexive practice*, rather than something we *have* or *do*, is engaging with the formative processes of (our) selves? Stumbling upon confusing thoughts has become a familiar habit when visiting the whare...

George comes into the lounge, and introduces himself before asking if he can join me. I am not sure how to welcome someone who has more *right* to be here than I do, so begin asking George about where he's come from for the group.

*Where's home?*

*Were you working today?*

*Have you been to one of these before?*

We begin to chit chat, both of us sharing we have done anger management work before, although neither of us is sure what today's particular session is to be about.

I'm sceptical of George's familiarity, which frustrates me; I don't want to trust him, but equally don't want to be mistrustful. I hate that sharing my work experience, facilitating men's anger management, relapse prevention, and self-help groups, becomes a distraction when I'm nervous...

George, though, shares his interest in talking to others about change processes.

*I'm unfulfilled...things have not happened, occurred, or have stopped. I'm tired of never getting anywhere, and want help.*

*Well...I think you've come to the right place!*

Sitting together, quietly, for a few minutes, I wonder of my discomfort with his earnestness, which I conflate with manipulation and conceit. These habits of thought, my expectations of others, are irritating...like an old scab I continue rubbing, preventing the wound from healing, from becoming something else.

...

As the Ahimsa Group starts, I begin with silent criticisms of Mahir. There's no introduction, no beginning of any sort, other than Mahir *starting* the group when he joins us in the lounge. The next 30 minutes, listening and feeling around for the men who've joined the group, is *very long*. Some of the time I can account for; George is quietly attentive, watching other men, the two men to my right both elicit comments about "women" that go nowhere but become a shared joke between themselves. Cautiously, I begin talking. Not wanting to interrupt, but, instead, wanting to disrupt what is taking place...I welcome the men to share, to help me ponder their statements a bit more. Moving with movement of the group...I work for an hour, oftentimes asking questions or putting my own narratives of anger and frustration to the men...creating, what I hope, are openings for them to become involved with me, rather than flags in the ground for what I know or what I believe. Mahir joins the other men in responding to my input with "yeah, like that!", "like you said", and "for sure, bro!". But I'm confused...referencing my statements, I begin to see, is using them to extend their thoughts, enabling them to think differently than what I am saying, proposing, or suggesting. Unintentionally becoming part of their thinking...feels dangerous.

...

The end of group arrives just as unexpectedly as the beginning, with no conclusion or finality. Yet...as one man stands up, something becomes undone and we move apart, dispersing back into our own thoughts. Finding myself alone with Mahir for a few minutes after group, feeling vulnerable, more vulnerable than if I was running the group myself, I talk with him about my interactions with George. I put away my concerns, for now, hoping Mahir gives me feedback on my contribution to the group tonight.

Walking out the door an hour later, I'm still left wondering...

*What does he want me here for?*

With an expensive education, and years of professional experience across multiple countries supporting men from diverse cultures, my nomadic subjects affirm the knowledge and practices I have learned, trained, mastered, and passed on to others, are not productive. When nothing is “working”, I feel little else to draw upon to successfully run groups. With my professional history mostly predicated on relationships where my role wields legally sanctioned authority over others, for instance, as a probation officer with whom men are “required” to engage with as part of a Court order, where failing to engage carries a risk of incarceration as both a motivating deterrent and potential punishment. I remember resisting these patterns of thought, as a matter of professional ethics but also as cognitive traps that would pose risks to my physical safety. A self-identity where I exert “authority over” men, wielding coercive power, where I make things happen, is a dangerous habit. With narrative of our first evening together as a Men’s Group, thinking with my participation in an Ahimsa Group, I am able to trace memories of fear, uncertainty and embarrassment, putting into action cartographies of affective experiences affirming a multiplicity of memories empowering movement away from expectations of mastery, professionalism, and authority. My discomfort becomes sensible when I think of movement as a process of taking chances by breaking dangerous self-thinking habits.

Rather than a thinking subject Colebrook (2002) describes as “unchanging perceivers set over and against life” (p. 128), my subject emerges from reworking narratives in consideration of Scott’s (2009) elaboration of self-formation. A tactic of working critically within the limits of knowledge formation, my nomadic subject creates conditions for further, uncertain self-becomings. Freed from a singular point of view of the unitary self with a detached, yet totalising and unchanging overview of the night, my participation in the Men's Group becomes a form of nomadic collaboration, navigating, as Scott puts it, “structures that govern the establishment of truth” (p. 359). The flows of interconnection I experience with the men form nomadic narratives that act on and act out difference, embodying understandings of change as discontinuous processes composed of discontinuous events that do not fit neatly in tidy accounts. This account signals, rather than represents, the material forces I experience (if fleetingly) with the complex locations we inhabit together, and provides conditions for political agency, of movement, within our embodied interactions. I am not helpless, far from it, as with a little help from the men, my narratives repurpose affective memories, effecting subjectivities that transpose negative (potestas) affects (fear and embarrassment) to positive (potentia) affects, empowering and

sustaining uncomfortable, yet fruitful, ethical embodied encounters with the men (Braidotti, 2011b). In other words, this narrative helps me make sense of what a body can do, and tells something of what is yet to become of us.

The complexity of our locations also hinders tracing subjective becomings through linear and totalising paths, requiring care for oneself and others through dangerous spaces. Nomadic affective subjects, as cartographic figures of social transformation affirming self-formation as an affective process, become accountable to others with material relations that empower and sustain us. This enables a process of movement away from habitual practices recognising bodies as static figures of thought onto which I ascribe risk, deviancy, and normativeness, empowering me to resist recursive practices of surveillance reifying the totalising and debilitating madness of both the kept and keepers (Arrigo, 2013). Nomadic narratives of the first Men's Group reimagines enfolded politics of locations as affective conditions from which our subjective selves emerge, offering a multiplicity of possible opportunities for Darcy, Manu, and myself to keep each other in sight. This is no easy task. Together, as we wonder and experiment thinking what a body can do, our becomings are no longer ours, alone.

In this particular account, (re)remembering the perils of "stopping men in place", I privilege affective memories of Darcy and Manu that encourage, welcome, and sustain a multiplicity of relational becomings only partially accounted for with this narrative. Putting into action affective relationality to figure thought, iterative versions of nomadic narratives continue unfolding difference differently, to meet the needs of men, differently. A challenge of this research, then, becomes how I bear witness to becomings of the Men's Group, keeping myself safe in unpredictable processes of change which no longer answer to my name. Returning to fraying as posthumanist methodological tactic, my narratives affirm an outward affective mapping of (our)selves with multiple webs of interaction, helping me understand where I am caught up and stuck in places. Social entrapping, wrought with myriad institutional, professional, cultural, and gendered processes territorializing how I experience events, enable me to bear witness to the Men's Groups with resistance to, retreat from, and disruption of social processes disciplining how we connect. Nomadic narratives converge at intersecting processes of reterritorialization that are felt, rather than surveilled, with affective assemblages the virtual rearrangements of materiality that I use to craft, trace, place, layer, and weave a mosaic of symptoms and signals to embody change processes. Each narrative iteration of a Men's Group is a risky

endeavour, though, as affective memory offers unique and never repeatable opportunities to bear witness to escape routes from our entanglements, revealing both potentials and limits of what becomes possible with the Men's Group.

**(((Men's Group Narrative)))**

They are two of my favourite men at the moment; Jack and Doug do not know one another, but warmly greet each other, shaking hands and exchanging names. For the next ten minutes, as we await the arrival of others, we shed our jumpers and jackets whilst making cups of coffee and tea. The two men, whose ages are separated by a few decades, do not wait on me and welcome each other in recognition of attending their first group together. I listen as both men acknowledge a belief that *whanaungatanga* and *manaakitanga* are important to establishing comfort amongst strangers, and begin sharing details of themselves with each other.

I join them in the lounge, sitting at the window so I can watch out for others. When Doug asks about plans for the evening, I notice my attention has drifted elsewhere, wondering about other people and other places. With an exaggerated seriousness, I mention a presentation and pat the computer sitting on my lap, which is met with laughter from the men. I'm pensive and nervous; we continue waiting.

A few minutes later, as the sun slips out of sight, I acknowledge *we might as well start*, which poses a problem; the presentation is intended for a *group* of men. Jack and Doug wait patiently as I explain the presentation is constructed of photos. Each photo, taken of people and places and events important to me, offers different memories as entry points to understanding my experiences of change processes.

The sun now gone, and feeling sweat pool under my armpit, I share with the men...  
*...I'm nervous. I'm nervous. I'm nervous. I'm...*

Organising and running trainings, forums, and lectures in front of hundreds of people for government departments and university students is of no practical use tonight, neither offering comfort nor confidence when expressing the politics of my life with *just* two men. As sweat now drips down my body, rather than becoming immobilised yet again with embarrassment, I share that although I don't know how to do this, my hope for tonight is that we can figure out, together, how this might work. With their help, my nervousness and uncertainty might become something else. I don't hear, but feel Jack and Doug quietly implore me with a comforting welcome...

*Go on.*

**Men's Group: Jack, Doug, Lal**  
**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**  
**27 May 2021**

## **Becoming-nomadic**

Jack and I met in mid-2020, whilst I was conducting fieldwork at the whare in Te Atatū. By happenstance, he stopped by to have a cup of coffee. This became a habit both welcomed and encouraged by Gandhi Nivas staff; socialising with others became a safety plan put in place a few months before, enabling Jack to return home after staying at the whare for a few days. Although he was not subject to a PSO, Jack introduced himself by explaining his involvement with Gandhi Nivas through narratives connecting experiences of bullying in his workplace, carefully implicating how he was bullied for both “very real” neurophysiological disabilities effecting his mobility as well as more “made up” beliefs about his physical appearance. His narratives weaved together experiences of social exclusion and isolation within his workplace, forming an assemblage of both negative affects (potestas) and positive affects (potentia) sustaining different possibilities of becomings—some of which contributed, and continue contributing, to the presence of violence in his life. His narratives weave together experiences of social exclusion and isolation within his workplace, forming an assemblage of both negative affects (potestas) and positive affects (potentia), sustaining an affective sense of othering producing a self-image, Jack says, where violence is an acceptable consequence for those that wrong him.

Prior to coming into contact with Gandhi Nivas, Jack sought help from the police after becoming overwhelmed with both a desire to use violence against others and suicidal ideation. Presenting himself to a local police station, Jack informed the officers on duty that he “killed someone” in order to get a hearing with the officers, after “laying down” on a busy street failed to attract the attention of pedestrians and motorists passing by. Jack is unsure how long he was detained, or, more accurately, his narratives provide multiple accounts of how long the police held him in custody, but after making enquiries as to his admission of murder, and finding no cause to detain him, the police transported Jack to the Gandhi Nivas whare in Te Atatū. According to Jack, the whare became a refuge, a place of peace offering respite during a particularly difficult period of social isolation, enabling him to safely reflect on experiences of other-ing precipitating, sustaining, and re-entrenching different permutations of gendered-based beliefs about violence. It is at the whare that Jack says he began thinking about forces contributing to his sense of self, and several years later, he continues sharing these same narratives, offering his memories of isolation, as problem spaces suffused with heterogeneous milieus of materiality, to other men.

Jack frequently shares narratives of these events, he says, as a way of becoming accountable for the support he continues receiving both from Gandhi Nivas as well as through his participation in this research project. Materially comprised of affective memories, rather than a representative story with a specific and particular train of events ostensibly centring himself within a process of change, Jack helps me understand narratives as practiced yet unpredictable gifts he shares with others. These gifts, to my understanding, offer an affective ethics of care for other men's politics of locations, where Jack's care is felt, rather than relying on a sense of 'getting it', opening up affectivity as an ethical activator situating his, and other men's, experiences of bending. Sharing how he came to stay at the whare, Jack's affective experiences of social isolation become a social support for other men also experiencing distress, affirming a gendering of their socio-cultural locations that is otherwise unavailable to me within the privileged political locations I inhabit. As a tactic of thought, Jack's narratives put into action self-reflexive experiences marking understandings of violence, and violence prevention practices, with memories and counter-memories of the past, tracing novel and fleeting milieus of materiality which men can follow. Putting difference into action, these self-encounters produce new opportunities for men to create an agential capacity for action within the conditions of their own experiences.

On countless occasions, Jack's nomadic narratives break open his experiences of change, enabling men, rather than for himself, to create subjectivities with understandings of where and how reflexive reverberations are experienced. Careful to craft self-understandings unconnected to specific events and final outcomes, his narratives become a form of mapping affirmative sensorial and cognitive data enabling men to question social structures where men become stuck in processes of change. These affective self-encounters effect *small* changes that show little differences in men's affective understandings of events and interactions with social structures. In other words, although he often asserts he's still "a dangerous man", Jack's narratives give voice to becomings emerging throughout change processes, particularly empowering positive self-understandings as a father, husband, grandfather, and friend, for both himself and others. Often temporary and fleeting, these *fractures, irruptions, rifts, hesitations, and pauses* (re)produce sensed reverberations with audiences, helping men develop understandings of change processes as experiences they cannot *know*—but feel. This forms an affective, ethical form of trustworthiness with which Jack becomes part of a relational assemblage empowering men's change processes, enabling *affective* change

processes for men that I can *sense* and *feel* emerging *differently*, with each iteration of Jack's narratives.

Spending several hours together on a Friday evening in the dark of winter, a few months after the events involving the police, throughout our initial encounter Jack's early embrace of the research project suggested men may be keen to participate in what felt like a risky proposition at the time. Jack shared experiences of his minimal formal education as producing a tendency, a habit of thinking, he says, diminishing what he thinks he is capable of doing in life. I had become stuck, repeatedly confronting a notion of trying to answer why men would agree to share their experiences and understandings of change with me and other men. Materiality, to my thinking, was only a matter of how, with engagement a purposeful, if messy, relational form of producing materiality empowering change. Jack's continued engagement and involvement in the Men's Group challenges a logic of what men gain by participating in interviews and social support groups. Jack's participation helps me understand nomadic thinking, in part, enlivens change by having non-localisable effects otherwise unavailable with interventionist approaches within the violence prevention sector, empowering unpredictable differences in social relationships and material experiences of social worlds. Engagement is no longer predicated on a logic of having the right materiality to enact change, or a matter of producing non-violence with the right kind of materiality. This continues offering insight and guidance as to how the research project might be explained to men struggling with complex social circumstances. Supporting men with an ethics of care is a matter of wondering what a body can do, putting our differences into action, acting out and acting on these differences to empower change processes. Since our first evening together, Jack has attended and participated in over a hundred Men's Groups, the most, by a significant margin, of any participant in this research project. His interest and belief in this research project, maintained and sustained over hundreds of hours across numerous locations, and with different and disparate communities of men throughout complex and tumultuous times of a pandemic, has become part of an assemblage of conditions sustaining me, and this research project, through uncertain times.

Separately, Doug and I met about a month before our encounter at the Men's Group, during a weekly anger management group held at the whare in Ōtāhuhu. Doug had sought emergency accommodation after experiencing conflict and violence within his family relationships at home, and continued attending anger management sessions, as a

form of self-care, after returning home. Formally referred to as Ahimsa groups, the theoretical material incorporates Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim cultural traditions espousing a respect for all living things through avoidance of violence towards others. An informal assemblage of men coming together to share understandings of conflict and wellness, violence and safety, and control and autonomy, the groups, open to men both staying at the whare as well as living elsewhere in the wider community, is particularly salient for recent migrants to New Zealand, men accessing violence prevention services for the first time, as well as men who self-report “failing” other anger management groups. The course is specific to a New Zealand context, and with a total of 16 components includes basic information informing men of family violence legislation and the role of law enforcement and the judicial system, how control and power as well as care and concern can manifest in intimate partner and parenting relationships, opening up dialogue with men about their experiences of socio-cultural gender norms. The curriculum acknowledges many participants requesting emergency accommodation and seeking support from Gandhi Nivas experience social isolation and struggle with complex financial, social, emotional, legal, and immigration-related concerns linked to resettlement processes and their use of violence. Whilst some men complete sessions as part of bail conditions, or as part of a judicially-monitored agreement with the police for a more favourable sentencing recommendation when the programme is successfully completed, the groups recognise participants, whether residing at the whare or in their own home, often experience multiple crises, including transportation issues, and are able to complete the sessions in any order.

Participating in Ahimsa groups eschewing a notion of a group invoking spaces where men learn when and how violence occurs, or a victim-oriented intervention elaborating the impact and consequences of anger and violence, we do not learn to identify triggers suggesting when we become angry, nor do we account for ourselves by creating safety plans plotting alternative courses of action when violence is imminent. Although these conversations are important, and occur as outgrowths of the course curriculum, Ahimsa groups resist understandings of violence intervention and prevention strategies that reinvest in self-surveillance practices. Doug and I became familiar with each other over several weeks whilst attending Ahimsa groups, during which I noticed Doug was particularly interested in sharing affective narratives of cultural practices, gendered and gendering norms, and self-understandings. I understood the repetition of memories as

distinct affective experiments, which, at the time, felt like a *constellation* of embodied experiences Doug attempted reproducing during the groups.

Although I was uncertain how to express appreciation for his willingness to share affective memories, *relating to* rather than *of violence* that occurs in his home, I welcomed Doug to consider joining the Men's Group. Initially resistant to naming the Men's Group as a form of social support for Doug, we maintained a *kōrero* over several weeks, attempting to rework different understandings of a Men's Group which Doug found useful, given his attendance at other support services offering religious fellowship and guidance, as well as 12-step self-help groups, took up a lot of his time. Doug also shared that he had reservations about participation; he had attended anger management groups in the past, describing them as "useless" and a "waste of time". Over two years later, with a frequency of participation second only to Jack's, Doug now describes his involvement in the Men's Group as a top-up. Topping-up, Doug explains, is a frequent yet unpredictable form of self-support that helps maintain and sustain his familial and work relationship(s) when other forms of self-care are insufficient or unavailable, or when he feels concern for the trajectory of these relationships. Doug explains differences produced with different iterations of the Men's Groups *empower* change through disruptions and pauses to his experiences of problematic relationships and life events, rather than (re)producing a change in behaviour or set of circumstances.

The ever-changing cast of men joining the groups become fruitful for Doug, rather than a hinderance, as their diverse narratives of violence provide a multiplicity of escape routes from the stuck-edness he sometimes experiences with change processes. Encountering other men, Doug explains, offers unforeseen, if fleeting, opportunities to resist negative and repressive (*potestas*) forces and sense an enhancement of his capacity to connect with others. Rather than limited to the time he spends with a Men's Group, though, Doug shares with men new to groups that, in his experience, the work between us is the creation of a capacity to *carry* affect, as a form of memory, *out of* the groups into our communities of belonging and everyday life events. Doug's explanation of his experiences helps me understand men's participation through a double affirmation, that our participation also helps other men make sense of the challenges of their particular experiences of stuck-edness as well.

### (((Men's Group Narrative)))

I am in the office as Jack arrives, soon followed by the others. The men are interested to hear of my time away hiking, my birthday celebrations, and my moving house, whilst also worried how I am feeling after becoming ill last week. As we depart, laughter follows us along the sidewalks of Ōtāhuhu. I tell them I am feeling better. We talk of the misery of walking for two days in torrential rain through a national park and a joy of donning an extravagant caramel-coloured suit to strut around the city on my birthday. After a long pause demarcating an end to the stories, I hesitate. I consider blaming a loss of words on the slow thinking resulting from several days of bedrest after becoming unwell, yet I resist. Instead, I share with the men a worry, that these stories are unfamiliar retellings of familiar events. Remarking on the habits of professional practice acquired over a course of my career, the stories irrupt with an uncertainty of what I am allowed to share with them. How do I know if I've crossed a line, shared too much personal information? No longer in roles where my life is split along neat definitions of what information counts as private and professional, I neither occupy a position of authority over the men nor am I a leader in charge of the group. Instead, I tell the men, I confront fear in re-finding new ways to share of my self each week, knowing what I share week to week is entirely different from the weeks before. Although I have spent many years working with men, talking about sexual offending and violence against partners and children, I am uncertain how, let alone if I should, talk about an anxiety that my income only just covers my share of the mortgage for our new home. Although trust we each other in the Men's Group, change is messy stuff.

The men, responsive to the uncertainty of my involvement in the group, share exquisite figurations of thought situating their experiences of becoming enmeshed in the group as one of experimentation and hope. The men have faith in the support of the group, which, they are careful to explain, my involvement in the group produces, even as the group re-forms each week with differing assemblages of men, offering new and unpredictable possibilities of difference to their lives. Doug shares that the Men's Group helps sustain his marriage, his participation, he tells me, producing new understandings of the challenges he confronts rather than simply helping him cope with the problems of his relationship. Josh welcomes opportunities to socialise with older men, and whereas, as the youngest participant, he finds the age difference between us confusing, he relishes feelings of camaraderie between us confusing, he relishes feelings of camaraderie produced with relationships emerging with the group, rather than familiar habits of cynicism associated with mistrusting others. Jack is thankful the group provides opportunities to repeatedly share with others knowledge produced in his daily life, creating memories of relationships which, more than giving him a sense of self-worth, also sustain a sense of self that changes whilst navigating social exclusion elsewhere in the community.

Manu embraces the group as providing opportunities to conceive new forms of social relationships, experimenting with a sense of self no longer limited by forms of masculinity with social strategies gleaned through years of problematic alcohol consumption. The men, no strangers to religious and community-based support groups, tell me their experience of the Men's Group arises without precedent elsewhere in life. The men, no strangers to statutory and voluntary anger management groups offering intervention-led strategies, tell me their experience of the Men's Group becomes known in the emergence of shared spaces of interconnectivity with others.

Reflecting on the Men's Group, then, over coffees and ice cream, meeting the same day and time each week, not only do we talk of ourselves, we also explore experiences of sharing our selves with the group. Less about exposing parts of ourselves hidden from others, rather, we produce new understandings of identity and personhood outside affective confines we have become accustomed to.

Our involvement with the group is a social terrain welcoming creative multiplicities of transformative identities, our selves, untethered from a binary of oppositional resistance to social expectations, emerging differently each week.

Becoming lost with possibilities produced working with different assemblages of the Men's Group, we are not deterred by an absence of certainty to what we are doing. We commit to change, knowing self-pain becomes part of our change processes. Instead, thinking of the support proffered with our participation and involvement with the Men's Group, we celebrate the group as a place of safety whilst experimenting with the messiness of thinking what we might become in connection with others.

Sitting in McDonald's, we hatch a plan. Wondering of expanding our conceptualisation of the group, we are no longer bound to hanging out at McDonald's, and resorting to the comfort of familiarity. We will meet on Saturday at the Botanic Gardens in Manurewa, content to spend a few hours walking the grounds, sharing the verdant space of a public domain with others. Josh is upset he is unable to join us, having already committed the weekend to important family matters. Doug, less enthused about a small gig for his band on Friday night, is unable to join us given demands on his time in travelling home from the show. Jack and Manu both eagerly anticipate getting together, and, worrying the weather forecast is for rain in the afternoon, ask about plan b.

Reassuring the group I will monitor the weather forecast, we will meet at the gardens, we also have plans to relocate to a nearby pool hall in case of inclement weather. Jack and Manu clap each other on the back as we depart McDonald's, content with the possibilities of our planning.

How might I write up that Doug had a rough anger management group on 13 July...I sat next to him. Although I missed it, he became upset with Mahir, who was evidently giving Doug answers, offering feedback that things will all be okay. Doug said he wanted listening, not answers...empathy. So I sat on his shoulder, taking up iterative opportunities to engage him with the conversations, not motivating or even checking on him, but rather, producing affective connections, affirming an interconnectiveness amongst he and I, amongst the group. A therapeutic type of engagement that doesn't make it better, but makes new affective encounters...giving it all I had, all I am...which is also to suggest offering him, all that I might become.

The entire room, according to Mahir, recognised/felt/adjusted to these affective processes...and rather than joining or remaining outside of group, the men contributed to his struggling with affective therapeutic support. Our becomings beget the becomings of others...begetting the becoming our own becomings...with affective flow...

**Men's Group: Jack, Doug, Josh, Manu**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**15 July 2021**

Empowering change processes means differences in relationships and affective flows can occur in places where surveillance cannot occur, which gives different meanings to changes in intensity and power that can be sensed. This produces changes to self-accountability when becoming part of the whole throughout my fieldwork experiences, opening up questions of, stable or otherwise, *where* does a sense of *how* things *should be* come from? Enfolding my own masculine work within this thesis, processes of embodying *becomings* can become part of this reporting. That is, returning to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), rather than *doing the work* as an “arborescent, mnemonic, molar, structural” (p. 295) singularity evidencing solutions to this problem, this thesis provides research experiences suggesting nomadic processes empower change by *enfolding* affective traces inside narratives, whilst *unfolding* affective traces within new middles. Nomadic thinking helps me sense *difference* whilst navigating tensions, and rather than resolving issues of power, engaging flows of materiality to produce *difference* de-centres the navigator as an object of interest. With thinking *affectively* a tactic of self-styling, subjectivity takes form with affective traces *unfolding* with new middles. These middles also *enfold* affect as a process of *textually* preparing affect for *weaving*, with weaving a *material-semiotic* process also done elsewhere, by others, with different audiences. What I desire is a stickiness, a thesis of sticky networks making subjectivity more *fleshy*, a stickiness of fleshy connections that can become the *beginnings* of *new middles* for both men, and different audiences elsewhere, participating in this research. A stickiness of fleshy connections becomes meaningful when *rethinking* experiences of social power relationships, academic/professional practices, and everyday life events when men encounter the gendered *pre-figuration* of relationships. This becomes possible not only when we revisit understandings of events and experiences, through textual narratives, but fleshy connections can often be beginnings of conversations when men do not have the knowledges to talk about them. Similar to when I don’t have recorded conversations of fieldwork, interviews, and the Men’s Group, where embodied affective memories are all that remain, a *middle* is both a problem and a solution. We do not just *do* first, as this is part of the material-semiotic knot. Engaging men, attending to affective politics of locations as *middles*, sometimes our *becomings* emerge *first*, un-surveilled, after which we return to embodied memories in order to *sense* the *becomings* of our becomings. This is work of the Men’s Group.

Here, my concern for an ethics of care is differently understood through problems of “not knowing” and a desire “to know”, to predict according to habits of thought situated with,

and situated by, surveillance practices honed over several decades. These practices become implicated in prefiguring relationships through experiences of deviance and risk, yet, the dangers I contemplate, the *dangerousness* of men working together to prevent violence in affective spaces where surveillance practices do not reach, a *re-working* of dangerousness is needed to come along with me. After several months of fieldwork, a concept of *working together* as an iterative process of sensing *resonances* and *becomings*, together, became of interest. I became aware of change processes exceeding the limits of surveillance practices, rather than resisting the use of surveillance practices on the grounds these are merely ineffective, or inefficient, *epistemological* practices to understanding change processes. For instance, the linearity of fieldnotes becomes a problem of patterning movement, that is, movement becomes patterned when crafting fieldnotes with linear narratives of remembered experiences. The opportunities for escape routes occur when patterns of thought become frayed, the *fraying* an opportunity to do differently, to *bear witness* to change with *new political locations* an *ethical reporting practice* of men *mitigating*, *minimising*, and *resisting* the gendering of violence. Disrupting the linearity of time itself becomes an *ontological* practice in which evidence of non-violence is often only sensed as the patterning of different repetitions (un/en)folded affective movement in narrative form. Becoming non-violence is wondering what a body can do.

Breaking apart the *thinking with men* is important to this work, and breaking apart the parts of importance becomes possible because the laying down of affective traces populating those broken open bits bring a reader through experiences I share with men. The first Men's Group, an encounter of not being able to meet the expectations of men, leaves affective traces of how I come to establish a relationship with men in the whare. It is a story of the importance of institutional authority—yet of letting it go, offering up that I do not know how to begin, *empowering* men to begin *with me*. Whilst I did not bring into being the affective failings of authority systems, of my experiences of a *keeper* of a *captive society*, within this writing, what men sometimes elaborate as experiences of being victims of the system, of *incarceration*, which I need to do with men, *bearing witness* with nomadic narratives is sometimes the best that can occur. Actively engaging and enlivening narratives by bearing witness to troubling and problematic experiences of affective flows, nomadic thinking carries a relationship of *betweenness*, a subjective location where *engaging with* is not just a matter of relating experiences meeting collective, familial, community-oriented, and societal demands with representative

narratives of change. Betweenness is a constant bustling, of creating affective movement resisting political locations that, because I affectively engage men, does not mean I condone or sympathise with them, yet bustling also creates possibilities and opportunities for change by (re)producing desire, desire that, rather than creating *the* change, imbricates different memories and experiences of events and encounters as *productive assemblages* signalling change processes. My research becomes a textual fabrication of men's productive assemblages, perpetuating and sustaining movement with rearrangements of assemblages men trust *reassembles* concepts of violence/change outside of their control. Joining the research project only a few days apart, both Doug and Jack sought opportunities to embrace possibilities of change with other men. I continue wondering, rethinking events by embracing possibilities of change with memories of patience, care, and generosity offered by both men throughout our work together, what new figures of thought emerge with *affective* memories becoming a liberating vitality with which to rethink?

### **...Recalcitrant Residue**

My relationships with men participating in this research emerge with their *material-semiotic investments* in the production of new knowledge practices. I understand these investments through research relationships *affirming* geo-political, social, cultural, and gender-based co-ordinates of participants. In other words, the political co-ordinates of participants such as Jack, Doug and myself, inform affective assemblages, with participants becoming known with embodied *politics of locations* producing subjectivities of *becomings* traversing a multiplicity of locations. I resist thinking of processes of becoming as producing, causing, or containing *therapeutic dividends*, though. Nomadic subjectivities, which I also understand as *blocks of becomings*, are not exclusive to, nor retained within, predetermined, set, and stable points in time—nor are these processes *therapeutic* in a normative, homogeneous sense. A nomadic subjectivity traces process of becoming across latitudes and longitudes, with Braidotti's (2006a) nomadic ethics incorporating subjects structured through latitudinal (affects) and longitudinal (intensity/potency) forces, limited in form only by the affects sustained, and in duration by how much affect is able to be endured, helping me to understand my *resistance* resists *therapeutic-ness* as a source of healing, condition of transformation, or a *normativising* experience increasing one's capabilities, capacities, and worth. Participants become known with subjectivities traversing a multiplicity of material-semiotic investments, *becoming* incorporeal transformations of power relations, effecting and affecting

categorisations and stratifications of our experiences, if only to break things open, again, differently. My posthumanist understandings of relationships are inclusive of assemblages of embodied subject positions, cohering with a multiplicity of new and novel knowledge practices. To explain, let me recall a fragment an early encounter with Jack, from our first interview:

**Okay. At the time, I was, I have, because of work, and all the stuff I've been through, I have this thing where I, I can't, I can't hack out arguments. It affects me, and because my daughter, at that time, and her partner, had a bit of an argument, so I went, in the end, long story short, I went to the police station. And I have, actually, I'd cut my hand, because of some cuts off the fence, that's what I did, and I cut my hand. And then I went in there and I walked in, and they said, they saw the blood and they said – what's the story? Where do you come from? I wouldn't tell them. so I said, no. So I waited there for 24 hours a day, well a day at least, a day, yeah 24 hours, because it was the next day that I end up coming here.  
(Jack, 1st interview, 4 June 2021)**

Recording our first interview, just as posthumanist theory helps me make sense with Jack's narratives, Jack's narratives help me make sense with posthumanist theory. To do the creative work of tracing, en/folding, weaving, and *following* affective *glow*, I rework transcriptions of participant interviews, each time thinking *anew* processes of *becomings* through assemblages of affect and flow. I left the first interview with Jack feeling his narratives of change elaborate understandings of assemblage theory in ways unavailable to me, *by myself*. His narratives of intensive difference, I am learning, re-produce an agential, *machinic* capacity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of affect, a self-styled tactic used to explain Jack's movement through his world. Thinking *thought* with Deleuze's concept of a life (Deleuze, 2001), Jack's narratives enable me to consider change processes, not through dialogues pertaining to essentialist notions of masculinity, or *what* brought about a series of encounters with others, rather, (re)thinking Jack's narratives as opening up affect, a machinic *capacity* of affect becomes adequate to understand *how* Jack experiences problems, difficulties, and change processes. This machinic capacity enables me to sense connections Jack's narratives draw between dialogic argumentation, employment experiences, paternal concerns, police and law enforcement, bodily injuries, signification and verbal utterances, empowering an embodied subjectivity unimaginable to me alone. Jack invokes an uneasy patience whilst experiencing harm from the world around him, his narrative expressing understandings of change and difference in his lived experiences of the world, storying *how* change processes occur, keeping Jack in sight

with challenging nomadic narratives of frustration, fear, pain, danger and isolation. This is a *monistic* understanding of subjectivity, a Spinozist appreciation of bodily limits and affectivity as the actualization of one's self, the relational interconnections and negotiations with affective forces enabling us to enter into intensive flows of Jack's *becomings*. Jack's narratives discern, choose, and select forces sustaining complex interconnections, privileging understandings of a self as a matter of embodiment, rather than an essence, with which, as Braidotti (2006b) writes, Jack's narrative "calls into question the inner fibres of the self" (p. 69). A capacity for sustaining multiple ecologies of belonging in the context of monumental processes of change, is the *potentia* of the nomadic subject's *intensive* constitutive desire to endure. Jack's affective self-styling challenges the normative individualism of Western thought, which not only *values* personal attributes and skills, but privileges an *ideal* subject by excluding others as undesirable, as well. (Re)thinking Jack's narratives in a nomadic mode of thinking, the intensive capacity of a *machinic assemblage* acknowledges and embraces a positive ethics of affirmation with a productiveness of all affect. Jack no longer thinks alone, but with a little help from his friends, we wonder what a body can do.

The productive positivity of affect thus becomes an expression of conatus, a form of subjective self-preservation affirming *difference* with processes of *becoming-otherwise*, in contrast with, in Braidotti's (2013c) words, an *ideal* subject, which is "positioned at the pinnacle of a hierarchical scale" which rewards "zero-degree of difference" (p. 28) from itself. Jack's narratives affirm affective experiences of social exclusion form with breaching social practices and hegemonic norms, yet, re-thinking relationships with others, in connection to men who are violent in the home, though, our interview is not concerned with habits of thought linking issues of violence with normativising masculine practices of mastery, self-regulation, self-direction and control. Engaging Deleuze's conceptualisation of a life, in order to follow Jack's affective experiences further, I wonder of the capacities of nomadic thought, as a political posture enabling posthumanist engagement practices keeping men in site by *re-imagining* the untimely possibilities of affective experience and memory. With Jack's narratives both resisting, challenging, and retreating from issues of normalisation, normativity, and recognition, he helps me understand Colebrook's (2012) exhortation, that thinking a life with nomadic subjectivity;

**We would be exposed to all manner of powers: institutions, affects, habits, desires, pure predicates, potentialities, order-words, spatial distributions, a**

**general interweaving of multiple and discordant strata. But it would not be “us” as self-legislating beings who approached this terrain – as if we were within this life to which we were immanent. (p. 95)**

Furthermore, thinking politics of locations with rhizomatic affective figurations, Jack’s narrative creates possible becomings by departing from normative thought with a proliferation of lines of flight. A line of flight is an activity of thought that does not preexist the act of drawing the line, but instead, lines of flight are intensive passageways of deterritorialization, enabling narratives to rupture, crack, and disunify figurations of selves (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Never a matter of being but only of becomings, a line of flight engenders new, unbounded possibilities of subjective experiences. The rhizomatic figuration of Jack as a nomadic subject is an iterative process which molecularises identity, with lines of flight enabling subjectivities cohering with affective connections with human, non-human, and more-than-human forces, opening up narratives with memories allowing a nomadic subject to become actively engaged in the politics of the present. With Jack’s becomings known through unbounded opportunities of unstable and dispersed politics of locations, we can begin to wonder how specific conceptualisations of subjectivity produce conditions of thought enabling subjective agency and a capacity for political action, enabling me to keep him in sight.

Working within the confines of normative conceptualisations of men who are violent in the home, thinking Jack as a nomadic figure helps me understand Lorraine (2008), who suggests representative thought risks “constituting oneself as a lacking subject” (p. 62). Lorraine tells us narrative, constituting a self as lacking, leaves the subject “restricted to fantasising the objects that once acquired will give her the satisfaction she seeks” (p. 63). I find myself disturbed with a production of subjectivity that is lacking, which transcends gaps, holes, and absences with the acquisitive consumption of objects of desire, including movement through (better or worse) decisions, actions, traits and skills that give agency and mastery over life. The individual thinking subject inherits a certain terrain of thought in which the normative subject, as matter of being, uses humanist concepts of reason and rational action as constitutive principles presupposing the individual thinking self as good and bad, the logic of reason dictating which action, decision, skills, and traits might be more desirable, expected, and required at a given moment. Rather than a subjectivity limited to the presupposed “I”, Jack’s narratives share a sense of becomings, which requires a radical repositioning and recomposition of the conditions of his subjective existence. Jack’s nomadic thinking ushers in subjectivities of experimentation,

figures of thought forming evolutionary processes of de-identification with normative self-representations and defamiliarisation with normativising self-representational practices. I understand these narratives not as forgetting affective experiences in order to overcome feelings of othering, rather, Jack retakes what is already given, to differ himself from all that that has come before. Nomadic subjectivity is a matter of compossibility (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). Jack creates a figure of a self through relations of convergence and divergence between a series of differential affective relations, producing affective conditions from which a multiplicity of selves emerge. But, revisiting Jack's narratives, I wonder, returning to keeping men's change processes in sight, returning to the where to begin, again, I want to remember other beginnings, the emergence of other formations of thought at work, of difference emerging as origins of political action. With a notion of political activism less about autonomy and social power, but inclusive of formations involving forces and flows, sharing my relationship with Jack as a research assemblage, a machinic assemblage, I return to other narratives, to reimagine new and novel figures of thought.



## **Chapter 5**

## **Normativity**

Nomadic subjectivity is helpful in finding “another way” of travelling through embodiment, of (re)membering the potential embodied possibilities/capacities of affectivity. The potential of affectivity, though, seems limited, if not limiting, when (re)thinking the pain of suicide and taboo secrecy of genetic disorders, and revisiting genetic deviance and doomed pregnancies. I wonder, then, what happens when we experience pain and terror, the distress of these experiences moving us so that we follow/feel embodiment? A reworking of risk of dangerousness is needed to come along with me, knowing the dangerousness of affect and affective flow, the dangerousness of men’s violence, is not disappeared when no longer paralleled with me, as a “Corrections man”, for instance, who assesses, mitigates, and manages risk, or when a genetic test confirms the absence or presence of a genetic anomaly. Although I might welcome a life no longer terrorised by the possibility of inheriting a genetic disorder, or, as I get older, an absence of children might become an affirmation of other affective connections made possible in the world, in other words, although suicide and suicidal ideation, as forms of violence, might feel more “remote”, less close in terms of affective proximity, the absence of violence does not assure the presence of non-violence. Even if we do not desire reliving memories we’d rather forget, as objects that hurt us, reencountering affective memories, though, produces new possibilities, opportunities, and capacities, even if these memories are not always “helpful” towards an ethics of sustainability. We can still wonder, sometimes, what a body can do.

As experiences of becoming-otherwise, fieldwork and interviews with men suggest the less paralleled I am to normative understandings of risk, deviance, and change, which I continue to bring with me after a long career in Corrections and a lifetime of experiencing genetic abnormalities, the less the men will be as well. Posthumanist thought helps us think how we, professionals/keepers/watchers, perpetuate a captive society when we require consistency, or congruency of being, from ourselves and others, by putting our professional practices and ways of being in direct conflict with an ethics of producing difference in the world. This opens up possibilities of moving with men, and men moving with me and my experiences of terror and hope, through territories we occupy, enduring together through our becomings. A form of ethical relationality, our becomings affirm affective experiences, transposing negative affect, such as terror, rather than ridding ourselves of it. My nomadic subjects produce potentia sustaining our collective actions by embodying affect as mobile connections moving us through the spaces we occupy in

our communities, shifting the emergence of potentia as an empowering force in connection with theorising multiple becomings, together, with others.

30 September 2020

GN1: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Ōtāhuhu with Cris

Staff: Bharavi

Arrive at the whare... a busy-ness is afoot. Bharavi is working the 1st shift. She is doing thirteen things at once, but not actually doing any of it/them at any given time...her “messiness”...her motion and movement...neither a personal attribute or trait...her ways of being are hard to endure; frenetic, loud, in constant motion, I wonder what sustains this-and what this sustains?

Bharavi asks that I take a new client to the GP. Cris arrived yesterday evening; he is experiencing anxiety, has been awake all night. At some point between “last night” and “this morning”...he began walking around the house and along the roadside. Bharavi’s already been in touch with the family this morning, and they’ve said this is uncharacteristic of him. He often rarely leaves the house, alone. Bharavi explains how he is presenting...rather than what he is presenting with, or a judgement about how he “should be” on his first night at emergency accomodation. This feels important; *self-reflexive* rather than an *assessment* of fact-this is how Bharavi is experiencing him, rather than what he is experiencing. Something like an ethical statement of herself vs a moral assessment of his functioning.

Bharavi’s already tried to register and book an online appointment for him, using the details of the GP provided by the family after Bharavi called Cris’ mother. The GP cant locate him on their system. We meet with Cris to discuss going to the GP in person. He’s attentive, but unresponsive, so the conversation is limited to encouraging and welcoming his participation in these activities-however that might be. I’m tasked with driving him to the medical practice, on the other side of Auckland in an area I’m not particularly familiar with, but traffic’s light and Cris willingly joins me in the car without prompting-so we go.

On the way, as we begin crossing into a part of town with heavier, commuter traffic, I turn the radio off to keep my focus on the road. Without the radio playing, I notice Cris is doing *something*, a *groan*...not in pain, but...something else is happening. I sense he’s communicating to me, trying to communicate *with* me. Barely perceptible to my ears, and more something I feel through my car seat, feeling a low rumble—what is this groaning meant to do? There’s no words, and the groan barely registers as a *sound*...yet I get *something* is happening for him-but what? How is this communicating to me, what does it do?

He doesn't answer questions, does not respond to my entreaties...but Cris responds differently at times, the groans changing texture and shape within the confines of the shared space of the car. I wonder about the limits of responsiveness, rather than the limits of a responsiveness...if there is "nothing wrong" with him, what he's doing is "working"...his groans are producing connections, becoming an assemblage with my frustration, irritation, and impatience.

I wonder, what are the consequences of this "strangeness"—I can sense *discomfort*, but I'm not "getting" him. What is he thinking/sensing here, with me, now?

Pulling onto the motorway...torn between slowing down or speeding up, I become worried. Do I try to get off the road quicker, or do I play it safe? How does one become-molecular in the confines of an unfamiliar car ride in unfamiliar terrain with an unfamiliar person...and why do I invoke *familiarity* and *unfamiliarity* when I become lost in these circumstances? What does this do for me...and for Cris? As we approach Pakuranga, I decide taking a more firm, affirmative, directive approach to what we are doing. I've forgotten masking mandates and social distancing mandates mean visitor access to the medical practice is limited!! Parking the car, it isn't as simple as being fearful of what Cris will do, as in breaching protocol, but I'm unfamiliar with "what do to" both in response to these issues but also with social distancing protocols...how does one "do" without a role? "Who" am I, in this circumstance, and how do I introduce myself to the reception?

We arrive to a busy carpark on a busy road, and I ask Cris to wait near the car.

Going inside on my own, I approach the GP administrators and inform them Cris is here to see a GP, that we don't have his GP information, and that Cris presents with some challenges so I am supporting him as a community worker. There is some resistance, or at least some "strain", as the clerks seem as unfamiliar with this as I am. They can't find a record of him, and ask for his health identification number...I explain we don't have this, he doesn't know it, he hasn't said a word to me in the almost two hours I've now spent with him. The administrator asks if maybe he belongs to the other medical practice down the road...I suggest this isn't likely, but go back to the car to ask Cris.

But Cris is gone. I wander around the building and he isn't here, he's gone. Back at the car, Cris reappears, coming from the other direction...we must have circled around each other as we both walked around the building. He says "yes", he's sure this is where he came before, doesn't know any of his details and doesn't have ID.

*Hmmm...*

Back inside, I speak to the clerks again, painfully aware that there's something wrong now, the strangeness of Cris saying three clear sentences combines with a notion I shouldn't be in the medical practice without a legitimate purpose, without confirmed details that we SHOULD, in fact, be here... and now two administrators are looking into their computer system, trying to help. Still unable to find his details, they stumble across his health identification number, which also confirms he is not part of the practice.

*Fuck.*

The senior administrator asks, again, gently, about "who" I am in relation to Cris, what sort of community support this might involve. Through our face masks, all we see are each other's eyes, our wrinkled furrowed eyebrows...our frustration palpable, able to be shared through the bare few centimetres of our faces we can see of each other. I explain Cris arrived at emergency accommodation last night, without revealing sensitive information about the type of service Gandhi Nivas provides, and without breaching confidentiality, given he's not actually a patient here. Their smiles reveal they know something of our circumstances. Less information, or details, or a "thing" that which we can exchange, but rather this *knowing* is an invitation, a welcoming, to share what we can in order to help each other, enabling me to explain I am from the community, that I work with men, he "lives with us", and wants to see his GP for stress/anxiety etc. The women's faces further reveal a patient smile, a kindness for me in a tough moment. They give me directions, they make a call to the other practice, letting the administrators there know to expect us, that we're on our way.

Outside, Cris is gone. *Again.* Walking around the building, this time in both directions in case he's following behind me. Nothing. Inside again, asking the same staff if they've seen Cris...nothing. Now seems like a good time to contact Bharavi, which is brief. Head into Howick, just a kilometre down the road, check the shops. Back in the car, I check the roadside and the side roads into town; Nothing.

From the car window, the first several businesses appear to be high end retail shops for women's clothing. I am not convinced he would be permitted entry into these places, nor does it seem likely Cris will know how to navigate the rules and regulations of these shops. Watched and followed, security would likely be called; he'd be excluded, washed away like a bad stain. Doors would be closed to him, he'd be asked to leave. If he's thought to pose a risk to people, if "left alone", I worry the police would be called.

I'm beginning to feel...nervous, anxious, doubt, and concern for Cris, which is distracting, and doesn't feel useful to finding him.

I turn back and head back to the GP's office, and contact Bharavi. I've not seen him use one, but can she check if Cris has a mobile number by contacting mom. We're in luck. He's got a phone and picks up when I call him. He mumbles something about a bar, getting a drink. The receptionist helps me decipher Cris' location as a bar, a few blocks further from where I turned around in town. Offering to pick him up, or for him to come there, he doesn't reply so I head over to him.

At the Barrel Inn, I greet him as he pauses in the door way. I ask if he has had a drink, he looks back toward the bar, and says yes. I suggest I am not able to transport him back to the where, if he has had a drink; he again looks back and says go on without him and walks further into the bar. I call Bharavi. He's declined to leave with me. I'm put through to Sahasra, and I'm told;

*you shouldn't be here*

Cris approaches me, looking at me from inside the bar through a large plate glass window, trying to listen to me. Sahasra advises I am to inform Cris of Gandhi Nivas' phone number and address, offer to have someone pick him up (if he is sober) and depart. This isn't a negotiation, an ultimatum...but I'm not sure what I am meant to be doing to "support" Cris.

By then he's gone away from the window, and the bartender is standing near me, in the doorway... looking like he is wary of Cris coming in...leaving me impression Cris has not had a drink at all-and neither am I welcome here anymore.

Shit, I've only got my personal phone. Back in the car, parked outside the bar, I call Bharavi back, and have her text him the contact details as I don't want Cris to have my personal details. Bharavi wants to speak to Cris, I hang up, and find him wandering outside the cluster of shops surrounding the bar; he's been sitting quietly, watching me from afar. I invite him to go back to the whare with me, or we can have someone pick him up, but he's also more than welcome to get a taxi back. Encouraging him to have a word with Bharavi, he is amenable to getting into the car out of the wind to talk with her, but before talking to her he quickly agrees to head back to the whare.

On the way home, he is making similarly strange noises, but now these noises feel like he's apologetically crying, before he abruptly begins "sleeping" and making snoring sounds, only for him to wake and start over again. I wonder, as we pass through "no man's land" of urban motorways, how I can make sense of this with the disorganised urban "space" between Howick and Ōtāhuhu. Cris conveys unfamiliar embodied affect...enabling him to go on with me, and I, somewhat, with him...my voice with his crying; my asking questions with his "sleeping"...although he is clearly not sleeping nor crying.

*What the fuck is happening between us.*

Driving back through Ōtāhuhu, he becomes more attuned to those around him, much more "present" and organised in the car as we pass by the familiar buildings and shops. Back at the house, he follows me into the whare, where Bharavi greets us. As Cris heads off to his bedroom, Bharavi acknowledges having "confidence" in my capacity to handle men and "manage" situations such as supporting them at medical appointments...meant she was asking me to support Cris without considering the possibilities of what might happen, which normally would not be a big deal...yet, unable to give me specifics, Bharavi is afraid she didn't follow rules and processes and policy.

By now, I'm well aware that we "got into this" together, and I share as much, that as much as "something" did happen, 'nothing' also happened as well. Neither of us know what this "something" or "nothing" is...but we're in it together. Bharavi contacted Cris' mother, who organised for his brother in law and an uncle to take him to GP later in the day. We debrief about his "presentation", and I explained something of his "disorganised" behaviours...mindful I have no reason to attribute these to mental health or drug issues...rather than try to express how one might "perceive" it, I wonder if expressing how I experience him would be more useful. Bharavi agrees...although she asserts he didn't "do" anything wrong, either, no particular rules were broken...but today was more a manifestation of things we simply do not know, but instead of things we feel.

The uncle shows up with a cousin in short order, and affirms that Cris does not go for walks, does not leave the house, does not “do things” on his own—in fact, violence sometimes emerges as a response to the family trying to get him out of the house. Both men confirm Cris’ mother “mothers” him incessantly, without blaming nor suggesting that this is wrong...which is more a comment about his “capability” to look after himself.

Bharavi goes to Cris’ bedroom, as she has a few questions she would like to ask him...but comes back in a hurry.

*He’s gone!! Again!*

Collective narratives, linking unique, often fleeting, embodied experiences of political locations men bring to the whole, often creates collective demands to combat, resist, and retreat from. But rather than support, condone, or perpetuate the politics of men's locations, affective flow enables us to experiment with affirming, welcoming, and caring for affective figurations men bring with them in the Men's Group. In this way, we are both capable of breaking, of cracking under the strain of resisting, tolerating, challenging and retreating from men's different affective memories, whilst fleshy affective connections become beginnings of conversations when we do not have the knowledges to talk about our affective encounters with others. This helps men resist both a prefiguring of gender, but also a gendered pre-figuration of relationships. A stickiness of fleshy connections becomes meaningful in keeping men in sight when experiences of affective memories produce, and reproduce, social power relationships, professional practices, and understandings of everyday life events that arouse feelings of dangerousness. Differently embodying relational encounters with men, fleshy connections help counter-actualise events, processes, and experiences, helping men construct minority storylines, ushering in new starting points to our experiences of each other as relational processes.

Affective relational fleshy encounters are not ready-made, though, and with both memories and counter-memories of events taking up potentially overlapping and contradictory positions of location outside of our control, although we are unable to provide final outcomes of events, with affective flow we construct assemblages of affective intensities producing alternative figurations of a self able to inhabit potentially paradoxical locations of transformative encounters with others. Nomadic affective experiences, rather than representing our selves through culturally appropriated terms and terminology, increase the inclusivity of potential understandings of complexity. The individuation of a self, contrasted with the individualism of a self, welcomes constellations/assemblages/woven fabrics of being, becomes a figure of thought. Eschewing the neoliberal individualism of interventionist approaches, we make good with experiences of affective flow, with an understanding of the whole, as places of peace, enabling us to take care of others through taking care of our selves. This changes how we "measure" change. Change is no longer something we fail/succeed in doing, which informs taken for granted expectations that putting interventions into action is meant to produce change. Challenging a hegemonic definition of masculinity as taking care of others, which lends to confessional pastoralism and patriarchal habits of thought, when we are taking care of our selves, we are "indirectly" actively taking care of others by way

of our affective connections with others, even when these ethics of care support the barest possibilities of differences in changes to how we understand ourselves, relationships, and violence. Occurring between the binaries of self and other, fleshy connections become a tactic of marking understandings of violence, non-violence, and violence prevention practices, with affective memories and counter-memories of the past putting difference into action to create a relational, agential capacity for action in the present.

(M) I'm curious if that makes sense to you, Doug. Because I think, if I'm thinking about Gandhi Nivas, it's a conversation I have with Gandhi Nivas quite a bit. When they talk about change and difference, they're not talking in terms of this man needs to change that, or, he needs to be...

(D) Everyone knows what they need, themselves. Like, why I like it here is because I'm safe. I got two influences, when I come here. I got the men, who are the ones on the front, on the front lines, of their families of their economies, you know. And then I got a government run knowledge base. Win win.

(M) Hmm.

(D) Like there's a dude, he was on the edge of acting out one night. He was at, we were at the, ummm, you were there. We were at the Tuesday night group, and, there was, like, all these things just kept assaulting him, like, ahhh yeah, man! Fuck I keep telling the bitch to shut up all the time, and I shouldn't do that! And I'm just, like, bro, good, you're in the right place. You know? He, stuff like, well, I had to tell her what to do. But he should know to get out of there.

(M) Hmm.

(D) You know, and that's why this place was the perfect place for him. It's...

(M) Safety has different meanings, there, though, because safety also means that you don't have to go rushing in, eh? As somebody who's part of that group, somebody who is present with those experiences, this guy's had.

(D) Vibrations that were going through that room, yeah.

(M) Because I've also been part of other groups with similar, similar circumstances, where people take it upon themselves to, to kind of fix it, you know, to make it okay and safe again. And that doesn't work either, really.

(D) No, I think everyone that was here that night, understood it, and more, he would, more a case that he was just the only one, or the newest one to the group, and everyone was kind of, yeah bro...

(Laughter)

(M) Hmm.

(D) And yeah, and we put ourselves there, that's for sure, but as I've said before, it's better, if I'm bored enough, then I will.

(M) Something else that comes to mind when you share stories, is we often talk about men, because it's a Men's Group, and the house supports men, so we talk about men accessing services, but we don't necessarily talk about what men are supposed to do...

(D) (Laughter)

(M)...we don't identify.

(D) That would be...no, yeah.

(M) That would be no?

(D) No, keep talking, please, I interrupted you.

(M) We don't talk about what masculinity is, we don't try to stamp it, and say, here's how to be a man. Somehow, for me, I like to think that we can connect that, with that idea of being fruitful.

(D) It, umm, it has a place, but, only up to the point, ummm, it becomes important, like the priority. When we come here, we're not, only men. We talk about the problems we have with our women, we're men.

(M) Hmm.

(D) That that's it.

(M) Some of the guys who come here also talk about their problems with their men...

(D) Well, then, they're a man.

(M) Hmm.

(D) Umm.

(M) Is it important, the people who are amongst us, here at the houses, is it important that they're only men?

(D) You mean women, come into the house as well?

(M) Well, no, not not, not maybe that extreme...

(D) Maybe you just phrase your question.

(M)...but we also don't have a lot of visitors. We don't have, you know, we've got women staff, but we just don't have certain types of complexity, that maybe we have to deal with elsewhere.

(D) I'd say yes, that you don't have life complexity, you have a sense of care-given priorities. There's some food on the shelf. Help yourself. You know. That's not always a given at home. There's a quiet room, if you want, that's not always a given at home. You can watch what you like on the TV, it's up to you. It's another, not always a given. I like my shed, for a very good reason. No (making noises). No noise. I can have the radio on, and I can have it as loud as I want.

(M) What sort of expectations might you then have in a place like this. Because you're saying there are certain things that aren't there, as well, but what sort of expectations does a place like this have?

(D) Have you heard of a, have you heard the word Tapawingo?

(M) Can't say I have.

(D) It's a it's, literally means place of peace.

(M) Tap...

(D) Tapawingo.

(M) Tapawingo.

(D) It used to be a camp we went to when we were kids, Christian camp. And it was a little farm—

(M) Is it a Māori word, Tapawingo?

(D) American Indian.

(M) Okay.

(D) And, loved going there. Place of peace, also. We could go away Friday night, come back Sunday afternoon, ummm, couple times a year. Oh beautiful, great. Awesome weekend, you know.

(M) I might just write that word down.

(D) Yeah, place of peace. Didn't have to, things don't have to go my way, as long as they're not blah blah blah...you know. I don't mind, giving of myself, to unselfish people.

(M) So, what might your obligations be, coming to a place of peace?

(D) Obligations? Take care of myself, self care. In other words, care, because to take care of myself, I gotta be taking care of people around me, in my vicinity.

(M) That's a, really thoughtful. So in a place of peace, which...

(D) Self care...

(M) ...is hard to come by, and...

(D)...self care. So I am taking care of myself, so I am taking care of others, because there's others there. So, I won't, you know, be as wild with, shooting from the hip.

(M) Okay.

(D) I'll be taking careful, maybe think about it first, for a few whiles, you know. I have, these days I have thoughts, to say, to do, you know, all the ground-working, but like ahhh, there's no need, actually.

(M) I feel like Thursdays, you often come and share that with us. It's those moments where, almost feels like even in the midst of a busy work day, you have a moment of peaceful reflection, even in the going of the moment, you know, it's not past, you're not reflecting back, it's often it seems like what you share with us at the Men's Group.

(D) Do tell, time will tell. Let's do the time warp again!!

(M) I think you're pointing out some really interesting thoughts. Because some of the work these houses and we do in the Men's Group, does treat time a little bit differently, eh, when they're...

(D) If people can learn off that dude, who is, not upset, but kind of upset at himself, and the, you know, really down on himself, really going Oh Bro!!! If people can learn off him...and I was just amazed. His clear moments, just kept kept coming out, coming out, coming out, and coming out. If people can learn off that, they can definitely learn off me, and that's what I am encouraged by. Because, I've... been dragged through the wringer.

**(Doug, Interview, 15 December 2021)**

After the first Men's Group on 20 May, we met a further eleven times before an abrupt national *lockdown* came into effect on 17 August 2021<sup>26</sup>, in response to the emergence of the Covid *Delta variant* in New Zealand. By then, ten men in total formally participated in at least one iteration of a Men's Group, and whilst we were unable to meet in person for almost four months due to social distancing requirements, several participants maintained periodic contact with me, either through phone contact or text messaging, during the long months of social isolation. The phone calls and text messages, for many of us, were often the only form of interpersonal contact, outside of our immediate families and whānau, for days on end, as Auckland, where all of us resided, experienced both heightened and extended social restrictions compared to the rest of the country. On 3 December, changes in New Zealand's national pandemic response came into effect, and after 107 days of varying levels of social restrictions<sup>27</sup>, which began with stay at home orders prohibiting contact between households and eventually included prohibitions on leaving the city of Auckland itself, the Men's Group was able to meet in person on four further occasions before the end of the year. Even when we could not create or re-encounter affective memories together, in person, maintaining phone contact and textual connections produced new possibilities, opportunities, and capacities that sustained us throughout the lockdown. Whilst these were not always documented, recorded, observed, or surveilled by others—or ourselves—a capacity to reimagine affective flow through these encounters became “helpful” to sustaining an ethics of accountability towards each other for the months we were apart; we became thankful for what a body can do. The affective movement of men, and of men following the affective movement of others, began to inform how we imagined the future becomings of the Men's Group.

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<sup>26</sup> <https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2021/08/new-zealand-to-enter-covid-19-alert-level-4-from-midnight-tuesday.html>

<sup>27</sup> <https://thespinoff.co.nz/society/03-12-2021/aucklands-almost-four-month-lockdown-in-numbers>

Jack contacts me early...just as I am about to contact him. He asks what is happening tonight. I encourage him to attend, but we cancel making dinner for the where tonight, as the where are empty...

Jack arrives around 430 p.m. I hesitantly suggest we start early after Doug lets me know he is not attending. I explain transportation issues mean I need to leave early, which Jack appreciates. He says the challenges of everyday life influence what we become....and what becomes of ourselves. Around 530...we depart for McD's. We take an easy way to get there, and out of respect for Jack, who limps, hops, skids, and sometimes hobbles around given his mobility issues, we cross the road together, making ourselves extremely visible to motorists. Walking together creates space enabling us to ask, tell, and share with each other stories about ourselves that we otherwise might not do, so openly at least, with other men around. We talk of illness, disease, violence and anger, change and difference...our bodies enabling us to make connections between ourselves and others. We talk less of "ourselves" than of our selves. It's hard work, inherently unstable and unreproducible. This, though, is usefully productive. We don't close nor capture our selves with essences or traits; we are not talking of who we are, or who we were. With narratives, we are always already becoming unfixed, undone, incomplete...

Thinking with Jack, I always become more than I once was.

We share so that "gists" can be made, formed, produced...we come into existence through these "gists" enlivening our selves with trials and tribulations of a life, but we are neither the gists themselves nor the trials and tribulations?

At McD's, our usual seats are unoccupied. We eat in quietude, though this is punctured by brief discussions, and an awareness of others immediately around us. Jack tells me about his wife, Fay, about his life with Fay...they lost lost twin children soon after birth, which still punctuates his life...and, suddenly, I realise I am a divorcee; I've lost children; I've quit a six figure career six years ago whilst in my mid-thirties; I have a complicated medical history, including multiple bouts of depression and anxiety, where I have sought escape routes from historical and genetic determinism; connections with my birth country have become frayed, and I'm estranged from my family. Experiences of home, movement, and safety have been found elsewhere. Not unlike men I am spending time with, these political locations both elude me and sustain me, whilst informing who I become.

We return to the whare around 7 p.m. so I can get home on time. Jack is very aware that he has spent the last three hours with me, and comments that he's been alone with me. Jack is both blissfully unaware of the fact that the Men's Group is but two men...yet is also blissfully aware the Men's Group is but he and I. There is a quiet appreciation, just a smile and the close physical contact of pat on an arm and hand on the shoulder, that becomes an acknowledgement we're sharing differently, tonight. I've missed him, it seems, and he, I; we've missed each other the last few months, and, now, we're becoming something else, together.

I wonder...*what might become of us in the new year?*

**Men's Group: Jack**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**30 December 2021**

I wonder, though, if good times are not in the forms of activities and things to do, but the possibilities of doing, and, in particular, becoming part of assemblages where men become non-violent through affective encounters with human/non/more-than-human forces and flows, when affective experiences men bring to the whare are inclusive of terror and hope, for example, what new possibilities occur with the politics of our locations when our affective experiences reverberate with others? Within the whare, as sites of difference and change, what occurs when sensorial and cognitive data engages the politics of other men? With nomadic theory a technology of crafting an open engagement with gendered understandings of issues such as mental disorder, deviancy, safety, and violence, affectivity becomes data, introducing variation and difference to our understandings of embodied experiences as things I/we cannot know—but feel. This creates moments of resistance, and moments of connection, sustaining new possibilities of selfhood with active, affirming processes of becoming-otherwise experienced with a glow, for instance. This re-remembering—asking how did I get to here rather than where is here—helps us rethink movement and change processes, once more, with symptoms that are sensed, with touch and embodied feelings becoming a challenge of self figuring affective data, which is figured, differently, again (and again and again). Affective encounters with others creates new affective assemblages and becomings, whilst our becomings become entangled with the emergence of new and novel affective data in connection with others, all over again.

A nomadic mode of thinking, we can begin asking questions of the answers we provide.

**Who, or what, do I become, when I embody multiplicities of a self produced with feminist transpositions of affective flow?**

**What political hopes and aspirations emerge, as a practicing professional, for our field?**

**What changes are afoot, as a man, when I no longer prefigure my self, as a man (or an otherwise gendered self)?**

Finding affinity with Flood's (2019) argument, that violence prevention aims for men and boys "should speak to questions of identity, offering males new ways to negotiate and perform gendered identities" in ways that "also should actively encourage men's disinvestment in gendered identities and boundaries" (p. 170-171), I want to clarify a similar aim for myself. I embrace Flood's political argument of identity disinvestment, if

only in terms of resisting the anthropocentric and modernist humanism underpinning his work, as I remain concerned the politics of normative identity formations delimit men's recourse to change. Yet, a feminist political agenda of Flood's work is a source of connection; finding hope as a profeminist man is sharing a common accord with others as we work towards not only producing hope in our work with men, but also, if fleetingly, when we produce hope, as affect, when accounting for our work with other men. Hope sustains my work but becoming entangled with others in the violence prevention sector, our hope also sustains the hopes of others.

Committing to other principles offered though Flood's (2019) accounts of working with men and boys, namely that we must develop interventions committed to enhancing the lives of men and boys that must also address diversities among men and boys, I want to put forth unstable and transformative nomadic change processes informing future-selves as able to sustain continual, if partial and fleeting, engagements with feminism and profeminism. If I eschew the stability of a unitary notion of being a profeminist man, comfort arises with what we might call becoming-profeminist, a process of subjective transposition tracing re-encountered memories, privileging transformational affective change as an unstable and open-ended process. I venture becoming-profeminist as a concept, to figure a subjectivity of movement, with a notion of a self a cartographic methodology of arranging productive differences of thought. Becoming-profeminist is a figure of thought, as Braidotti (2011b) puts it, affirming "the qualitative shifts or ontological leaps from generative chaos or indeterminate forms to actualized or determinate forms" (p. 226). Tracing differences in thinking does not produce a subjective figure from plural differences, nor multiplications of differences. Becoming-profeminist expresses transposed multiplicities of differences, both affirming and putting into action resistance to not just gendered norms, but also gendering norms, expressing a nomadic way of being that respects, and often resonates with, hidden, ineffable complexities of men becoming non-violent.

(M) I want to somehow connect to that idea of fruit that you're using, which I think it's a great concept...

(D) Healing fruit.

(M) ...because that's very different from saying, here's an intervention. Go off and use it. Which is often what programs working with men try to do. Here's this thing, go off and do it.

(D) Fruit...

(M) But fruit's different. Because fruit becomes something else, doesn't it?

(D) Well, intervention was my first idea, too, when I had an alcoholic girlfriend, and she played up, like, on the terps, like. Intervention (laughter). Didn't do anything. Ended up slapping her, because she was drunk, and hitting me, and then she went and told everyone that I hit her. And, ah, so, it doesn't even sound like a fruit, intervention. But healing sounds like a fruit.

(M) Hmm. So if I'm thinking of like the Men's Group, as something you become part of, that helps you produce-it's fruitful?

(D) We come pick from the tree together.

(M) Okay. You and the men?

(D) Hmm.

**(Doug, Interview, 15 December 2021)**

## **New Terrains of Thought**

Becoming disentangled from taken for granted normative discourses of the violence prevention sector, I want to affirm becoming-feminist as a profeminist praxis neither requiring us to empower men, nor that men are empowered. Instead, the narrative accounts included in this research, I hope, contribute towards becomings that, as Flood (2019) implores, “appeal to and intensify (my emphasis) men’s reconstructed, emancipatory, or anti-patriarchal interests” (p. 108). Whilst different figurations of becoming-profeminist, as methodological emergent practices, empower new possibilities within men, our communities, and the violence prevention sector, I also want to respond creatively to contemporary challenges, such as mitigating the potential resistance associated with men’s involvement in anti-violence and profeminist work. As Flood et al. (2021) concludes;

**Knowing resistance’s typical forms, dynamics and origins is valuable. It enables feminist advocates and organisations to be prepared for backlash and to have strategies in place for responding to or preventing its expression. (p. 403)**

This is a particular concern as men experience not only struggle and resistance, but also resentment, both towards practices holding men and masculinities *accountable* in gendered spaces, as well as when personal reflection on men, masculinities and masculine practices becomes a condition of change. DeKeseredy (2019) documents a failed political pattern of *progressive retreatism* involved in addressing these challenges. *Men’s Work*, then, is a multiplicity of interconnecting processes, where efforts to affirm differences as a component of men’s wellbeing become enlivened with community-centred engagement models. Within community settings, change is enabled by drawing on posthuman scholarship as part of our work in the violence prevention sector, offering men opportunities to embody community practices resisting anti-feminist hostility and countering pro-masculine discourse, whilst becoming accountable to others with material relations that empower and sustain us. Posthumanist thought also helps us ask how becomings of non-violence, particularly those possibilities that are affirmative—in the sense at least that they are “of affect” in flow and not in sediment—produces and reduces, perpetuates and *extinguishes*, sustains and abstains from violence with *different* possibilities of thought, as well.

(M) I don't wanna just stop things. So I guess I'm kinda teetering towards asking one final question, that we can explore a little bit. And that's something you have touched upon a few times, it's that you have safety. What does that mean for you, the idea of safety.

(D) In an environment like here, we're...which is a safer feeling than home, when I'm outa sorts. So safety means I can I'm free to explore my feeling, and not keep too much of a lid on myself, because people here have some sort of mandate for care. And, if worse comes to worse, they'll tell me I'm wrong and I can trust them. That's safety. Then, there's no point in being upset at home. You just get, nobody knows. I know what to do at home, nobody else does. So, there's no way to go home and have it work out, if I'm out of sorts.

(M) It's two things that you've kind of seemingly shared there. One is, for me, a comparative type of thing. So, rather than saying, this is safety, and you might say that too, I'm not saying that that isn't the case, but there's a sense of coming to this house, recognising that where people come from, might actually be really problematic and challenging and risky and dangerous. And so coming somewhere where there's a relative type of safety is important.

(D) You know, when you got parents, you have the safety the parents provide. So I, I didn't get that kind of safety at home. But I kind of get it here. There's over people are overseeing stuff, I can be upset with somebody else, in the house, and not be a, not be a real concern. Ummm, it might be something talking about, with a counsellor. But, it's not going to like get me upset...

(M) You're upset so it's unsafe.

(D) You, it's your fault. It's not gonna, no one's gonna do that.

(M) Because you're talking about...

(D) No one's gonna go, it's your fault. Shouldn't have done it. I'm right.

(M) Using that example, because this is something I've talked to the staff here about, as well, so I'm mindful, I'm trying not to put words in your mouth. But you're talking about safety as something that has conditions, almost, conditions that create safety. So if you've got a place, could be home, it could be workplace, it could be bus stop, for all sorts of reasons. But certain conditions can arise, that create an experience of safety. So you're seeing that staff here overlook stuff, you know, they're in charge of different things. And it's not about putting their finger on you then.

(D) And they've...they've got a charge of care. They say they actually have to consider not what they think, but what their charge of care concerns itself with. My wife and kids don't do that. They've got a charge of care, they don't even care. Where I have to come along, and see what's happening in the whole place, and to keep my nose out of stuff.

(M) That's a big responsibility.

....

(M) Well thank you for contributing to the safety of others, in the future, by joining me tonight. And thank you for joining the Men's Group, and contributing the safety of others there, and thank you for contributing to your own safety.

(D) Hmmm. Hmmm.

(M) Is there any other questions, anything you want to go back to, anything else you want to talk about?

(D) I guess I thought I guess I still I am identifying my own safety. Because, I walk home at 10 o'clock, around here. In my neighbourhood, no problem. So I'm safe, I know that. But, there's another sort of safety I'm worried about, and it's where I put my time and trust, and, what part of me I share, and who I share it with. That's the one that I need to come to terms with.

(M) Safety as a moving concept, eh?

(D) Yeah. Not all of safety is for your life, I don't often feel like I want to live. I do it grudgingly. Quite happy to, just, yup, take me now! Quite a lot of the time, me and my wife. First seven or eight years of our marriage, and like, ahhh, Lord. This is...lord, uhhh! It's got some payoff, now.

(M) Provided fruit.

(D) Yeah yeah. Like an avocado tree. Takes five to eight years just to eat...

(M) (Laughter) And then you have hundreds!

(D) Woohoo! And we're rich. Let's make some oil.

(M) Well, thank you for contributing to my richness.

(D) It was mine too.

(M) I'll put push stop now, if there's nothing else.

**(Doug, Interview, 15 December 2021)**

Working together with our un-comfortabilities, worries, and troubles, men's care for other men does not transcend or overcome problems with relational affective encounters with others, nor do we displace or sidestep these issues. Men's Work becomes a question of how do we *hold/occupy space* in these encounters, and, importantly, how do we *retreat* from *dialectical encounters*, as a masculinist practice of exerting power to control territory? What new terrains of thought become possible when men's affective experiences of becoming a member of, or departing from, the whare, becomes dispersed with multiple embodied processes, so that a reciprocal relationship endures, with the whare becoming part of a man's figure of thought of himself whilst the man becomes part of the whare as well? What happens when men agree to participate in an interview, or join a Men's Group, even when men are not being addressed? In other words, what experiences occur for men, when men's participation is to turn up at the whare, and actively "observe" men *becoming*, a group or them(selves), *together*? *Joining* is not about, or limited to, joining *in action*, joining *other people*, and joining *shared space*. Men's experiences of change mean the chaos and ambiguity of *arriving* at the whare, *joining* a Men's Group, or *participating* in an interview *becomes* problematic. The ways Men's Work is conceptualised in this research enables men to carry affectivity within them(selves) when moving in/out of the group, and in/out of the whare, in ways where normative groups create boundaries, such as when requiring men to become "inducted" into the whare or a group, or taking "breaks" from the cognitive workload of therapeutic tasks during the course of an evening. What unsaid possibilities are at play when different *entries* into *affective space* enable *different* arrivals, *different* occupations, and *different* departures? Thinking in a nomadic mode, these questions are not about *being*, but about the virtual possibilities of our *becomings*.

Possibilities of these becomings are not already-given, as already-made *products* of *effective* engagement processes. With a nomadic mode of revisiting affective traces enfolded with re-remembered memories of both interviews and Men's Groups, I want to activate empowering transpositions of events in an intensive, zigzagging, *diagrammatic* process of composition. This helps me understand how engaging men does not pre-exist the production process of thought. Memories emerge with a nomadic subject's *intensive capacity* to create new relations, which become empowering disruptions to the sedimentation of memories. This *capacity* is no more a natural essence or aptitude inherent to human *flesh* as it is a recurring behaviour or choice of a human *self*. An intensive capacity is what *becomes of us*, the *remains* of our *selves* when *remembering*

memories. A nomadic subject helps *molecularise* the striation of space sedimenting memories, a subjective process actualising memories of Men's Groups with a *composition of passions* (Braidotti, 2011b) that emerge with memories of engaging men in informal, unstructured interviews. I remember interviews with men as spaces where affectivity emerges as a *disrupting* force to the hegemonic logic of a thinking subject, which then unfolds memories of Men's Groups. In other words, when I remember Men's Groups, I am also drawing upon memories of interviews with men, (re)producing embodied feelings of resistance to create space for other memories to cohere, which I assemble, and re-assemble, with specific narrative compositions. Let me explain.

**(((Men's Narrative)))**

(J) So like I said one thing and then she said, okay, it sounds like this, or, it could sound like this, and then I'd pointed her in the direction of it sounds more like this, and she's like, okay, so have you ever thought of this or this? It's like I've done this, or, no I haven't done this, and then it's like okay, well maybe you should try that. It's like, okay, but what if, and they say, well, this, this and then it just kept branching off. It was just like, I'm here—and there is two options. Where if she's the person where it's, like, there's this or this, it's like, okay, this one. She like, okay, what about this. This one. So what about this, this. And she just was basically like my navigation system. Through that curvy-ness, and when I got to the end of it, you know, I was actually blown away. Like I was riding my bike when I was talking to them and I was completely blown away. I just stopped my bike I was like I know what I have to do. And I just said thank you so much, I love you for this thing. Thank you, like, I'd give you a hug right now. Like straight up, I'd give you a hug right now. And she's like, oh, like thanks, I'd give you a hug too. And I was just like (noises) I just hugged the phone. I literally hugged the phone. I was like...

(M) A great feeling...

(J) Yeah it was because there was...I feel this day and age people are too self-centred. They don't really, like, there are the rare few that will help you or listen to you. And a lot of people just don't really wanna hear your shit to be honest.

**(Josh, Interview, 29 April 2021)**

### **Non-violencing: Tocci and Moon**

A nomadic ethical framework produces political and philosophical action, helping men experiment with tactics embracing possibilities of disrupting and transforming social and community practices of gendered individualism. Thinking nomadically, possibilities arise in connection to thinking, again, with the work of Tocci and Moon (2020). Enlivening an issue that educators in the pedagogy of peace education are limited with a supposition violence and non-violence are binary opposites, Tocci and Moon produce an experiment. They propose thinking “a conceptualisation that renders non-violence as distinct from the absence of violence...a sense of non-violence that can be imagined, pondered, experimented with, and implemented” (p. 2). Engaging taken for granted assumptions of non-violence, Tocci and Moon disentangle lines traditionally figuring non-violence as not being violent, by thinking non-violence in gerund form, diffractively constructing new figurations of non-violencing as a concept of thought with which different possibilities and opportunities emerge. Reimagining the field of non-violence education in connection to my experiences of violence prevention, working with Tocci and Moon’s (2020) imaginative work is more than reconceptualising a field of work. Transposing familiar terms and familiar boundaries, whilst resisting a universalism and generalisability traditionally governing normative knowledge practices, Tocci and Moon create figures of thought able to construct and sustain new political space for non-violencing pedagogy. Tocci and Moon’s interest in possibilities, rather than definitions and certainties, acknowledges the possibilities of a non-normative non-violencing pedagogy cannot be stated in advance, but only emerges through practice. With non-violence conventionally understood as a stable representation of a state or activity, much as an individual might be encouraged to walk away from an argument with a partner, spend time cooling off to avoid conflict, or work on communication skills, Tocci and Moon disturb anthropocentric beliefs pertaining to the efficacy of agential control over both violence and non-violence, as ways of being. Whilst peace politics praxis normatively represents violence as a likely response of those who would use non-violent activities to legitimate their own use of violence as a “necessary” response to such actions, Tocci and Moon posit subsequent repetitions of non-violence, invoking a reliance on “doing what works”, also becomes susceptible to control, disruption and subversion, when such actions are predictable. Tocci and Moon problematise the normative stability of violence and non-violence as concepts, probing the effects of repeated non-violent activism, stipulating these “can be upended if accounted for in advance” (p. 16), suggesting, paradoxically, non-violence can, in fact, reinforce the standing and power of those against whom the non-violent protest actions

are taken. When thinking non-violence in traditional terms, by doing what we believe will work, Tocci and Moon argue the traditional figuration of non-violence diminishes the possibility of changing precipitating conditions of violence. Re-conceptualising non-violence as inclusive of the impossibility of certainty, that non-violencing as an act or practice cannot become known in advance of its effects, and therefore cannot be predicted, Tocci and Moon's work suggests the effects of non-violencing can be nomadically followed, instead.

Tocci and Moon (2020) situate non-violencing pedagogy as an inclusive political philosophy, welcoming openness and uncertainty as to the consequences of our actions, non-violencing as a concept emerges with interconnecting material-semiotic practices of thinking thought as building generative capacities for heterogeneous political space. Re-conceptualising non-violencing as a multiplicity of practices, Tocci and Moon introduce Deleuzian philosophy to actualise new possibilities and opportunities for actions mitigating, preventing, and avoiding violence. To think non-violencing as virtual open-ended possibilities of thought in action, engaging paradoxes of Taoism and Deleuzian philosophy, their work conceptualises non-violencing as a pedagogy "which exists without naming" (p. 17). Rather than teaching specific tactics or methods of non-violence, which can be countered in advance so as to maintain the power of those opposing the non-violencing, conceptualising non-violencing pedagogy as providing soil for creative thought, creating conditions for non-violencing does not necessitate a curriculum or pathway. Referring to a pedagogy of non-violencing as "a destination without a map" (p. 19), Tocci and Moon produce a concept of non-violencing thriving with unanticipated, unexpected and uncertain opportunities. Situating Deleuzian philosophy as "an attempt to rethink the world as a vital, dynamic arrangement of connections and becomings" (p. 11), Tocci and Moon's conceptualisation of non-violencing brings forth variations in arrangements and connections of thought, the effects of which emerge with violence becoming less possible, reduced, and mitigated.

This reconfiguration of arrangements, by attending to investments giving rise to normative notions of violence and non-violence, Tocci and Moon's (2020) conceptualisation of non-violencing necessitates "fostering a faculty for uncertainty, unpredictability, and even unanswerability" (p. 15), which, it is hoped, would develop into capacities for thinking with moral and ethical dilemmas encountered in war and conflict. Tocci and Moon's non-violencing pedagogy helps enrich the violence prevention sector with figuring thought as

knowledge practices reducing violence through new ways of thinking of non-violencing. This conceptualisation of non-violencing extends thought past the anthropocentric limits of an individual being non-violent, by challenging taken for granted notions of a thinking subject's privileged control over one's actions. Producing a cross-cultural diffractive dialogue enriched with Laozian Taoism metaphors and Deleuzian philosophy, Tocci and Moon embrace possibilities of variation, uncertainty and difference with philosophies of immanent and monist understandings of life. Non-violencing, as a concept, is an effect of a thought thinking a thinker, thinking thought sustaining, and sustained with, the creation of new heterogeneous political space. Tocci and Moon's work on non-violencing asks, with what infinite possibilities of thought will non-violencing have made an affirmative difference in the world, a figurative nomadic process of becoming worthy of the politics of the present that holds promise, when working with men who are violent in the home. In response, though, I wonder, what consequences arise when we leave peace out of our activism; what are the effects of non-violencing when what a body can do becomes devoid of peace? What becomes of peace activism?

(C) I say, like, I was the main reason why I got out of this place, to see bigger and better things for myself. And that was all a part of this, I was growing older, through my 20's, as well, you know, I was sick of doing, I was sick of seeing this place, you know, and I was, that was sort of adding to me having enough to possibly, you know, making a change. And that's me individually, you know, some people don't really think like that you know, they...some people get sick of things and still keep doing it and that, you know, but that doesn't necessarily mean that they gonna start changing. Because, you know, they're sick of what they're doing, but that for me was what I wanted, and in order for me to be around those people and that, I had to fit in with them, and not be an outcast, and, you know, just because that's not the place to be doing it. Because, like, if you adapt to new environments, you know, whatever goings around around you, majority of behaviour is, you know, you either gonna look ugly or you gonna fit in, and that's the type of, you know, society that we live in today is, like, where you live and fit in like, you know, and so yeah nah, I adapted and I got, things were going well, actually I started to see the brighter light of things.

(M) This is beginning of last year still?

(C) Yeah yeah, and this is in, you know, mid way through coming through and, meeting great people great friends real supportive you know. Like zero violence, you know, nothing. It was like the negative, the negativity that was so majorly there, had all of the sudden just disappeared for a moment in my life you know. For that, that's why I call that the golden year for myself, because that right there was made me wake up and realise, that there was more to life. And so, you know, I'd, I spent a whole year there, because I loved it, you know. I could've went on the plane the next week and went back to Auckland, like, nah man, this is not my type of thing, but I knew I had to, like, that change of mind-frame was, like, it was like, you know, nothing I had ever known but I knew that there was a great, you know, possibility of, you know, becoming a happier person and yeah.

(M) Can you can you explain how you knew that, if it's not you ever had seen or experienced before? Can you explain how you made sense of that?

(C) That's a tricky question, Matt. So, like...I knew like...so like...like, you know, I had, well, I hadn't seen what, from what I've seen, I hadn't seen, you know, any of that here, you know. I hadn't seen you know...people living those lifestyles around me, you know. And...well I didn't know that's what I was gonna be you know in for. I had no idea how everything was gonna be, until I got into it, and...you know all I know is when I left here is that I just wanted something different than what this was, you know, and I know only way to try was to go out there and you know, and I didn't know whether it was gonna be better or worse. But, you know, it worked out in my favour where I was, you know, putting myself around these people, you know, from other countries that, you know, have all these ambitions in life, you know. Where they get it from, I have no idea, but you know, just the morals of living with everybody, you know, just, that's a normal life you know. That's what I consider normal and I thought the life I was living was normal because everybody normalised it. So like, you know, travelling and, you know, you doing normal things like that.

(M) seems like you get the difference between

(C) Yeah

(M) You get a difference between normalising and normal

(C) But like cooking, yeah cooking. Cooking and, you know, just sitting at a table talking. Just normal things like that, you know, ahh, hiking, stuff that I had no interest for that I never knew. Like I heard about it but I never ever would have went there you know. And I guess, yeah, so, I mean yeah, just my, like, you know, being there was, just that changed me. Like, my mind-frame opened, I had seen, like as I was living there, you know, I was feeling for the people back here. And I was like I was, like, you know, ahh man like I wish that you know there was people that I wish could see this, and do these things, you know. But I know that I've never seen these things in life, like how I was, I know a lot of people just like, you know what I mean, they've never seen those things, they never did those type of things, you know, like beautiful places and sceneries and stuff, like it was a beautiful place, man.

**(Cameron, Interview, 21 April 2021)**

## Thinking Thought

Sharing memories of interviews, remembering with men not necessarily present for other events, enables new memories. This is not a process of explaining how, by interviewing men, I learned how to run a Men's Group *better*. A Deleuzian practice, as I continue storying a relational understanding of interviews and Men's Groups, different narratives emerge *inclusive* of passions not limited to my own. Remembering Men's Groups as events, I am able to make affective connections with passions situated with politics of location emerging with interview participants. The Men's Group, for me, is a *machinic assemblage*. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987) explain, a *machinic assemblage* is a *diagrammatic* "intermingling of bodies reacting to one another" (p. 81), which "performs the coadaptations of content and expression" (p. 71) by *necessarily acting on* "semiotic flows, material flows, and social flows simultaneously" (p. 22-23). A machinic assemblage does not have meaning by way of an essence, truth, or identity, but, rather, as Malins (2004) explains whilst *mapping out the body*, *meaning* emerges with a multiplicity of bodily *functions or potentials* that arise with *affective connections* forming with *other* bodies, machines, and assemblages. Memories of interviews, produced through iterative readings of interview transcripts, assembles, enables, emits, empowers, combines, and, importantly, blocks and excludes affective potentials and functions whilst storying memories of Men's Groups. The inclusion, or *intrusion*, of participant interviews subsequently helps me remember, differently, experiencing new connections, and instead of simple over-coding understandings of Men's Groups, re-remembering interviews with different figurations of memories helps me produce an *ethics* of the event.

In this nomadic mode of remembering, stories emerge with connections to human, non-human, and more-than-human forces and flows sustaining me through troubled and troubling understandings of how to explain the Men's Group. My nomadic memories of interviews, and Men's Groups, do not signify, but as *collective assemblages of enunciation* give voice to what is unspeakable and express conditions of a life from which they emerge. Memories, then, affirm witness-able accounts empowering men to become present in a multiplicity of locations, with nomadic narratives, thinking with Bogue's (2007) critical appraisal of Deleuzian philosophy, a methodology of "construct[ing] new, provisional truths that might open unforeseeable possibilities for life" (p. 142) for men, like myself, who desire change and difference. These unforeseen opportunities for change include a capacity to become actively involved in different ways of supporting, not just accessing or engaging with, community-led processes of becoming non-violent.

Following a Deleuzian constructivist approach to subjectivity incorporating philosophy, science and art in processes of self-formation, narrative transcripts of interviews help me produce a multiplicity of cartographic *affective* accounts of my experiences.

With Deleuze's (1995) philosophy of thinking the world as multiplicities of lines, Deleuze's work with Guattari provides an opportunity to no longer think *thought* as simply extending lines along points or re-drawing lines back to less problematic points of *thinking*. With a figure of a subject no longer beholden to the concept of a singular point of view where thought might originate, and eschewing fixed historical explanations of thinking as working lines of thought with (more or less) fixed and settled end points or beginnings, with DeleuzoGuattarian political philosophy this research project figures *thought* as deviating from *the middle*. Thinking *nomadically* provides an opportunity to no longer think *thought* as simply extending or re-drawing memories. *Difference* in *thinking* emerges with *lines of flight* travelling along multiple unpredictable *affective* paths. Thinking differently becomes a discursive *tactic* bringing into being possibilities of intensive difference and affective assemblages, where the *I* of this research project reflexively modulates and resonates intensive evaluations of embodied feelings and affectivity. Embracing a DeleuzoGuattarian logic involving *disentangling* lines of thought, if only to (re)form new emergent formations of thought, a nomadic subject becomes new *entangled* rhizomatic complexes of affectivity, experimenting with what a body can do.

Rather than purposefully representing experiences of difference with stories of change, I understand nomadic narratives as something akin to Buchanan's (2008) conceptualisation of (re)thinking *thought*, as a concept, by "tracing a line back to the productive unconscious" (p. 74). Buchanan describes Deleuze and Guattari's work together as a *renovation* of psychoanalytical concepts, creating a DeleuzoGuattarian *schizoanalytic revolution* by conceptualising the unconscious as;

**...something like a head full of unruly thoughts that have been made to look into the mirror by a domineering conscious only to be told they are something other than what they see. (p. 27)**

Although I do not linger with a pretence that becoming a (*pro*)*feminist* academic is comparable to other forms of intersectional marginalisation, I privilege nomadic affective narratives written out of *normative* changes in thought. Reverberating with the eternal return and Nietzsche's dice-throw, narratives writing a nomadic subject figure thought to

experiment with *chance* as a mechanism for the production of *difference*. With an achievement of normative thought the obtainment of specific desirable outcomes procured with repeated cognitive habits and actions, normative narratives confuse chance and randomness with causality. Forcefully (re)writing narratives as throws of the dice, I can begin, again, (re)thinking particular troubling memories of Men's Groups when political struggle goes *underground*, that is, when affectivity *disappears* from narrative. This *going underground* is often a deliberate, if sometimes unintended, effect of writing social power relations our subjectivities are written through, as, sometimes, the safest place to remember affective experiences and reimagine change processes is in places unable to be surveilled by others. Thinking nomadically enables me to retrace this *going underground as movement* of thought, producing possibilities for escaping the representational confines of thinking with surveillance practices by reimagining Grosz's (2010) re-articulation of concepts of freedom and autonomy. With a nomadic subject a *qualitative leap* into the forces and flows of becomings, as a process of subject formation requiring an ethics, an *analysis* of variations in the differential flows of subjectivation takes into consideration relational forces, degrees of intensity, and duration of subjective selves. Braidotti (2017b) suggests a Deleuzian politics of action *emerges with* a process of subject formation, rather than a *product* of it, for subject formation is not a *given thing* nor a matter of *cause and effect*. Different nomadic selves are a matter of degrees of *difference* from one's self, which "engages our collective imaginings and desire – in response to world-historical structural transformations" (p. 300) to become worthy of *life's* events, rather than an autonomous, agential *producer* of events.

Nomadic subjectivity can be readily approached as an ethical practice, enabled by philosophical convergences of feminism and materialism, and with Grosz's (2010) work transposing constraints of "modernist" appreciations of liberation and emancipation goals and objectives held by feminist ideals, thinking nomadically we can produce new understandings of *power*. I conceptualise a *nomadic form* of power as changes in thought, *differences* in *thinking* "where freedom is conceived not only or primarily as the elimination of constraint or coercion but more positively as the condition of, or capacity for, action in life" (p. 140). Nomadic subjectivity, in this sense, engages Grosz's Bergsonian notions of a life. The transposition of difference(s) of degrees is the *actualising* of our specific socio-historical circumstances, entailing a *single roll of the dice* by Nietzsche's *good player* (Deleuze, 1962), which affirms the nomadic subject as a (necessarily) situated, partial, and contingent *object* of thought *figured* with fleeting

utterances and discursive *material-semiotic* practices of accountability towards others, rather than an *inward* process of expanding possibilities of action. Nomadic ethical practices, what Braidotti (2013b) calls a *political economy* of “intersecting patterns of becoming” (p. 176) produced with the transformation of the *naturalized* differences adhering with normative subjects and subjectivity, form the soil in which my understandings of the Men’s Group emerges. Men’s Work, in this fashion of supporting men’s change processes, again thinking with Braidotti (2006b), becomes “the necessary premise to the enlargement of one’s fields of perception and capacity to experience” (p. 186); nomadic subjectivity is a practice of putting into action the virtual possibilities of one’s becomings in processes of becoming-nonviolent and activities of non-violencing.

A nomadic mode of remembering links writing affective movement with an unintended effect of (re)writing social power relations and political struggle, producing uncertain endings and unpredictable conclusions. Writing nomadically enables me to trace the Men’s Group moving *into* and *through* social spaces with narratives embodying the *doing* of social work together, by resonating iterative *material-semiotic* processes as experiments that I unpack with memories of interviews and other iterations of Men’s Groups. These processes unfold in the writing, from one plateau to another, but are kept together with senses of resonance and men becoming, *together*. When perusing fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and group notes, criteria is not usability but the evocative *affectivity* that becomes apparent as a patterning of movement, disrupting the linearity of our subjective selves and time *itself*. In other words, thinking nomadically, I remember, *differently*. Thinking nomadically patterns repetition of movement with the enfolding and unfolding of affective traces, yet repetition is never *refolding* affect, as this would be reconstituting narrative through the same affective differences. Neither is it *composting* difference nor the *compiling* of multiple affective traces, as difference is not limited by time, the sequencing of changes in affect, or through the presence of other material organisms. Writing nomadic narratives of the Men’s Groups acknowledges we do not yet know the possibilities of our own becomings.

(K) Yeah, exactly. But this yeah, so, it's a very broad, the process of change. I guess, you know, it's...I was talking to my partner about it this morning, I said let's sort of brain storm on this process of change, and what does it sort of mean to you. And, she was, give me an example. So, we sort of, you know, took it. I was going, we'll put it into, sort of, my situation, you know, from, you know, not being one person. And, you know, wanting to, obviously, get to the same result, you know, being happier, and what happens in between. But I think the process of change can apply to so many different, so many, you know, moving, changing schools...

(M) Very flexible, eh?

(K) It is it is, yeah, that's right. I said we'll just try to concentrate on where it's relevant to, sort of, our situation, and she was, yeah. We're just sort of, so, we're just brainstorming, and putting out, you know, words like, you know, sort of, obviously, what you're sort of feeling at the start of the process of change, you know. You got your feelings, your emotions, you're embarrassed, you know, trust, and, you know, majority of that real hard. Process of changes is, you've got...Put you in a dark place, and you're not wanting to be in the dark place anymore. So, you know, you sort of got to rifle through for all those feelings that you're feeling initially, you know, and then we're talking about, you know, you're feeling all these feelings at the start of this process of change, and, you know, now we're looking on, you know, what's the next step after, you know, processing all your feelings, you know, the next step of process of change.

And that's where we sort of had got to before, before I come in. And I said, you know, like, I think after those all those initial first feelings, you know, getting them out there, obviously, wanting them to change, you know, is a big thing. And then there was like a next step, sort of, you know, setting your attention to where you want to be and where you want to go, you know, looking for, possibly looking for that help from others, friends, family, you know, to their for their input, if it's hopefully positive. Because you want positive input, if you're trying to make a change. And, you know, you don't want to be going back to your, whatever situation were you in, where you weren't getting the positive feedback from, obviously, your emotions. If they're trying to hold on to you, it's because you're having a good time.

**(Kingi, Interview, 16 July 2021)**

What I find in nomadic narratives of subjectivity, an *empowering* materiality of *becomings* that changes precipitating *conditions* of violence through a non-violencing pedagogy figuring a faculty for sustaining heterogeneous political space, is not a *ready-made* component for interventionist approaches to working with men. Materiality is not *always already* present, and instead, nomadic narratives give hints and suggestions of possible self-forming assemblages *given rise* with lines of flight that interconnect, modify, and transform understandings of a self. These constructions, to become viable, according to Braidotti (2017b), require a political activism effected with different understandings of memory and consciousness. Nomadic subjectivities are enabled with “theoretically based and politically infused cartographies...ethical connectors across multiple human and non-human actors...by definition not contained in the present conditions” (p. 303). The possibilities and opportunities of these material cartographies are not known in advance, and do not readily *fit* into problems and problem spaces. Cartographic construction of a Men’s Group is an iterative practice of bringing into being transformative practices that are otherwise affirmative experiments with its intensities. Transposing the limitations of identity, my narratives of change processes disperse subjective formation to produce multiple selves emerging with my involvement with the research project and Men’s Groups. This involvement, sharing with other men a *crafting* of narratives, of *bending*, are ways of making known processes of change in ways we *sense*, to create new capacities for and with other men. With hope yet without certainty, Jack’s disruptive tactics to experiences of being bullied at his workplaces for the last 40 years, challenges static presumptions about himself involving the potential and real harm that his relationships with his wife and children have wrought over the years, partially eroding ways he senses himself sedimented with the social isolation and exclusion he has experienced in the local communities in which he lives. Each of these are overlapping areas of interest to Jack, specific sites of transpositional, molecular, and affective re-imaginings of himself, undoing and unfixing previously taken for granted beliefs of himself, allowing himself (and others involved in his life) to become actively engaged in the politics of his present transformational processes of *becoming-nonviolent*.

These are not stories of transcendence. Jack is not relating the learning of new skills; he is not *getting over* trauma; he is not *moving past* experiences of the past in order to live the future. Nor are these narrative accounts of learning new knowledge, or of him putting to work knowledge, such as what one might learn about cycles of change gleaned from *interventionist approaches* of anger management classes. Narrating his many selves, this

is not that Jack “explains” things, or that Jack explains “things”. Instead, Jack begins in the middle, where he is *now*. There are only becomings, narratives of his becomings, created with nomadic subjectivities that roam amongst Jack’s self-narratives, many of which are iterative versions of stories he shares over and over, many, many times across his daily lives with others. Each time is different, though, his self-narratives a process of rolling the dice with non-normative subjectivities of affectivity, intensity, and difference, putting to work nomadic subjective self-formation as *experiments* affirming empowering productions of a self with the material and discursive possibilities of his daily life. Jack’s narratives embody, as relational forces, memories of the traumas of his past and the traumas of his violence, enacting politics privileging feminist and posthumanist ethics of movement questioning the boundaries between (him)self and other(s). Reworking nomadic memories of events, Jack actualises *the virtual* from specific socio-historical circumstances of his life to form situated, partial, contingent, and fleeting utterances of interconnectivity giving rise to possibilities of non-violencing.

Jack’s narratives produce points of departure from normative expectations of masculine heteronormative subjectivities, disrupting particular patterns of *thought*, such as thinking *how to be a man*, that sediments memories of experiences. These lines of flight become swarms of virtual cartographic figurations of different selves forming through minority storylines of events. That is, Jack’s nomadic thinking enables narratives rupturing, cracking, and dis-unifying static figurations of himself with alternative figures of self-formation that interconnect, modify, and transform himself with an enlargement of his capacity to experience new relationships with the human, non-human, and more-than-human worlds. Listening to Jack, across many different locations both in private and amongst crowds of others whom neither of us know, his nomadic subjects provide forms of embodiment as ethical compasses tracing the movement of matter. Jack *stories* movement of matter in narrative form, and rather than discursively repeating experiences of daily life, I understand his nomadic *retelling* of affective flows, empowers a capacity *both* for him and others to resist boundaries and contours of politics of locations we experience in daily life.

I differentiate *storying*, *repeating*, and *retelling* along coordinates of both negative affects (*potestas*) and positive affects (*potentia*) when *thinking with* Jack’s narratives, as different conditions sustaining *differences* in *capacities* which emerge *differently* amongst Men’s Groups. When we meet men at the whare, Jack’s narrative storying puts the *doing* before

the *doer* as well as the *deed* by imbuing subjectivities with politics privileging experiences of stuck-ness and movement, making possible a *motility* of thought that I sometimes experience as a *glow*. This *glow* is not *sensed* as much as *sustains* different capacities to *sense* change processes, that would otherwise be unrevealed with representational thought. Rather than *tiring* of Jack's narratives, which sometimes occurs when men such as myself have heard other men's *stories* dozens of times, different iterations of Men's Groups present different machinic assemblages of affective forces other men bring with them, which different glows help navigate *differently*.

Jack's narratives are an artful *crafting*, which help men connect with, and therefore navigate from, un-repeatable *differences* to how he experiences, acts on, and thinks about *non-violencing* as a concept of thought. Narratives craft subjectivities as *becomings* with his own affective navigation of *love* and *care* for his family, whilst *thinking nomadically* enables Jack to relate an *object of thought* is a constant bustling with elusive subjectivities of non-violencing. The potentia of Jack's nomadic figures, normalises experiences of *struggling* as unpredictable experimentation, which many men connect with. Different *struggles* occupy different cartographic co-ordinates of different subjective selves that Jack constructs with social forces he implicates in narrative form. Mapping the potentia of different figurations also affirms for men, a disempowering capacity of different figurations of social power relationships. A nomadic mode of thinking enables men to map Jack's narratives with coordinates of *struggle*, which, thinking of my experiences of glow, can be read as multiple ecologies of belonging, revealing unforeseen capacity for change rather than tracking *difference* as a site of *other-ness*. This opens up possibilities of moving with men, and men moving with me, through territories we occupy, enduring together through our *becomings*, our affective experiences sustaining figurations with new capacities of actions. Becomings account for *mobile connections* as we move through the spaces we occupy in our communities, shifting potentia in connection with theorising multiple interconnecting becomings, together.

Jack narratives are of becoming a father, of creating difference in his children's lives through an ethics of care supporting them to marry, safely raise their children in the home he shares with them, creating spaces for his family's diverse experiences of a life *inclusive* of their mental and physical health concerns, and supporting them in their daily lives so as to nurture their hopes and dreams whilst ameliorating their concerns and worries.

Jack does not so much *provide* for his family as that his *becomings* produce new capacities and possibilities with his loved ones, change processes Jack does not have control or authority over yet relishes sharing with others. Jack's narratives keep him in sight amongst the men, and his family, through challenging nomadic narratives of frustration, fear, pain, danger and isolation that are less overcome but rather emerge with transposed affirmations of what a body can do, what a body can sustain, how a body cracks—only to become otherwise, yet again.

Jack shares subjectivities of movement, giving hope to men who otherwise find little hope elsewhere. These narratives form *becomings* with nomadic *storying* enlisting different types of accountability, narratives which share changes to an ethics of oneself towards oneself, and others, creating accounts of Jack's humbling encounters with himself, or, rather, his encounters with *different* selves are possibilities created from, and with, new unforeseen productions of these *becomings*. The men with whom Jack is sharing narratives become enlivened, myself included, with the joy of nomadic figures creating totally new and unexpected productions of events in one's life through shared encounters with *difference* and *change*. These narrative *becomings*, entailing twelve men sharing a meal amongst relative strangers at a home for men in need of emergency accommodation and desiring social support, men who otherwise have nowhere else to go and no one else to share their lives with, are an acknowledgement of experiencing *difference* differently, of Jack putting into action changing understandings of *difference* as the *necessary premise* to change. Jack's fondness for minor accounts of his *becomings* as a father, grandfather, and husband unfold as cartographic accounts of himself, offering Jack an opportunity to share with men evidence of the emergence of an *increased capacity to experience* the human, non-human, and more-than-human worlds as bringing about change.

**(((Men's Group Narrative)))**

Jack arrives at his self-appointed time of 4:30 p.m., as he's told me numerous times, before other men arrive so that we have our usual time alone. Close behind him, though, Seve follows him inside. Jack's tradition of sharing his week with me before other men arrive, what I understand as a kind of *practice* session, is disrupted when Seve's excitement fills the room. I begin to wonder about his smile, which seems *on edge*, when Seve abruptly acknowledges he rushed back from counselling and other appointments today. He is looking forward to tonight, that having men in his life is helping him sustain a positive engagement with various *other* counselling services. He's lost custody of kids, and sees his kids supervised by a social worker, with the Court's mandating him to see a counsellor, to "better manage" his anger that his young son was sexually abused. Seve's PSO arose after threatening his older child, who he blames for not "looking after" his younger brother.

Seve hesitates...

*I want to thank you for your support last week, and inviting me to join the group the day after I arrived.*

Jack's beaming, with a big smile. He is thankful

*It's usually me who begins the Men's Group by sharing about my week.*

The three bags Jack is carrying contain dozens of DVD's and a DVD player. Passing the movies around for us to have a look at, Jack shares with Seve a similar appreciation for both men and the staff at the whare, as well as our Men's Group in particular, and wants to donate to the whare, in recognition of the care, support and compassion he experiences when he visits—here and no where else.

As Jack, one by one, shows Seve the films he's brought, he also shares a story of purchasing four DVD players, as the shop keepers said, apparently, these were the last four consoles they would likely ever sell. Seve and I share looks and raised eyebrows, a bit concerned, when Jack says he's got too many, he's never gonna watch all the movies he has collected.

I comment it feels like he's implying he will never watch all his movies "before he dies", but Jack dispels any such notion of this, telling us his involvement with the Men's Group, and connections he maintains with men and staff at the whare, support him by "reminding me what's important", and asks to donate the movies and a DVD player to the whare, as a sign of appreciation. He wants to help men,

who often arrive at the whare without any financial resources or belongings, as, Jack presumes, this means they also have limited capacity and opportunity to “enjoy” themselves whilst at the whare. Jack wants to donate something that is fruitful, that can move between men at the whare, belonging to no one yet everyone. The whare, he says, support a number of men far beyond his capacity to help each one “in person”. Without the care and support he has experienced, and continues experiencing, Jack says, he would be “miserable” and “mean”...and wants men at the whare to know *other* men care about them, *too*. Jack gets emotional, when explaining he feels this is the best way to acknowledge changes he experiences, that mere words would be insufficient.

Both Seve and I are quiet, and feeling quite touched with Jack’s outpouring of emotion, all I can do is, again, share looks, eyebrows, smiles with Seve...a bit *stunned*, I put my arm on Jack’s shoulders, thinking at least I can let him know I am *here*, with him.

Jack quickly comments that he is donating his movies *not* because he thinks of dying, or that his health is poor, or that he no longer wants to live...he no longer needs them because he is “busy” in ways that mean he will have far less time to watch far fewer movies than he might have in the past. He is no longer interested in collecting movies to “pass the time”, alone, as something to do whilst waiting to do other things. Jack says, instead, he is busying himself with activities and projects that only become possible when he considers the staff and other men he’s met at the whare, and hopes, by donating, he can honour the opportunities that have emerged for him, and his whānau, with the support Gandhi Nivas offers him. Rather than watching movies, Jack says he *now* spends much more time thinking about his family, and doing things that don’t necessarily help them, but that, he hopes, *cares* for them. Jack tells us he spent many years as a traditional “breadwinner”, where he demanded influence and say *over* decisions impacting his family’s daily life. He no longer wants to *call the shots*...

Jack’s often talked about this *identity*, as a man, is problematic, and as his thinking has changed about what he is capable of doing, what his capacities are as a father/husband, he now busies himself creating *conditions* that he hopes helps his family thrive. He now proffers his wife not *choices*, like about giving her options for a hot tub for the family home, but Jack is learning, he says, how to be supportive to *her* in terms of challenges she might face. Using the example of spending a large sum of money, as well as time, renovating much of his house so that his daughter can afford to get married, Jack acknowledges in the past he would have only thought as to whether or not he approves of his daughter’s marriage before undertaking any sort of financial and social support of her plans. Now, Jack says, he regularly shares how he maintains an active relationship with his daughter, where he helps create the *conditions* of her “hopes” and “dreams”, by welcoming her to share her ideas and

desires for how, where, and when she wants to get married. Jack wants to donate to the whare to acknowledge that, rather than fearing him, his family now seek out his help to meet the challenges of everyday life, to achieve their own hopes and dreams, which Jack explains has never occurred before. Jack says we are part of changes *his whānau* experiences.

Seve tells us that he appreciates Jack's stories and narratives, and although he is often overwhelmed with whānau-related custody issues, Seve shares that Jack's stories create hope for Seve, that he feels welcomed to share his own challenges the last few weeks, which gives him a lot to think about, including how he knows he needs to shift the notion that work is a burden...that work is something that takes time away from doing other, more interesting or more important things, or that work is a financial relationship involving compensation for his efforts. Seve wants to learn how to think about both his son's and step-son's safety and well-being, as things that do not take "work", even as he has to work at these things, but more that when he thinks of these things as *work*, he feels the implications of thinking "work" as things we would rather not be doing, or things he should be paid for. Instead, Seve wants to think about his children's well-being as something he works towards. He wants to *care* for them, differently.

I become distracted, as I remember Seve blames himself for his son being sexually assaulted, telling us the week before he feels he failed his children. His kids are hurt, experiencing not only the trauma of sexual assault, but he also became violent and aggressive towards them himself, further jeopardising their safety and well-being. Rather than guarding, maintaining, or controlling their safety and well-being, much like Jack's *breadwinner*, Seve says he wants his counselling to become about creating possibilities of difference for his sons, by becoming a dad that supports, and works towards, rather than controls, good outcomes for others.

Thinking how I have not spoken for many minutes, I wonder out loud how their stories conjure a sense of *mutuality*...both a mutual appreciation of each other's involvement in the group, but also how their involvement in the Men's Group *becomes* conditions of *change* for each other.

I wonder, out loud still...how both men *move* each other, and therefore become *movement* themselves.

A little later, the three of us leave the Ōtāhuhu whare, and I drive us the Papakura whare. For the entire 45 minutes, Jack sits in the front seat of the car with me, and facing forward the entire trip, also continues to share with Seve, who is sitting in the back seat. Although I occasionally contribute comments and thoughts whilst I navigate the motorway, I am not privy to what is transpiring between the men. Instead, **I feel** something transpiring between the men, a force empowering both men to

continue experimenting with each other, with different ways to thinking of themselves. It is startling intimate and I feel a sense of regret and disappointment that I cannot attend to them more. I feel I'm missing something of immense importance, not to record but to remember something...

Arriving on site, Jack leads Seve to the back of the whare, having become familiar with the layout of the house and property on previous visits. We sit at a picnic table, restfully enjoying our company together. I sense *today* doesn't fit an idea of "support" that offers empathy, recognition or familiarity of the challenges Seve is facing, or the 40 years of complex challenges Jack experiences in his marriage. We don't take responsibility by offering solutions, or telling each other it will all be okay. Support is no longer limited to recognising each other, and our troubles, in order to follow, contribute or participate in our conversations. Instead, in our coming together, in becoming accountable to each other with an ethics of reciprocity, we are not "giving" something of ourselves, but co-creating conditions of thinking, *differently*, together, *between us*. Rather than giving, as a gift, facets of ourselves that come already formed, identified and packaged, ready to be received or declined by others, taken up and put to use by others, Jack shows me giving our "selves" is also embracing unpredictability and welcoming chance to produce possibilities of change and difference, *for others*.

Our laughter becoming loud with humour, sadness, joy and despair, Rawiri Mohammed appears from several meters away, keeping a distance where he is able to hear our conversations without becoming involved in ways that would require him to contribute.

*He's peering at us.*

Rawiri Mohammed tells us it's difficult to figure out "what" we are doing together...

Jacks's laughter welcomes, *pulls in* Rawiri Mohammed to join us, and the three of us take turns inviting Rawiri Mohammed in whatever ways he feels possible. Asking Seve's permission before proceeding, I share with Rawiri Mohammed that Seve is sharing the challenges of figuring out how to work with various counselling services, due, in part, to a very traumatic situation within his whānau. There is nothing "easy" about this, nor is there anything "easy" for Jack and I in figuring out how to support Seve.

Jack, with impeccable timing, suggests to Rawiri Mohammed that we, as a Men's Group, engage the messiness together, that in our coming together we do this work together between us. And with that, Rawiri Mohammed moves a bit closer to the picnic table, and asks if he has to share his thoughts, about what we are discussing, if he, in turn, wants our input to his challenges.

It's only now, that I notice Rowan walking around us, glancing toward us...and we begin a similar "intake" process...albeit with a bit more volume and energy now that Rawiri's laughter has joined ours...and we welcome Rowan to join us.

**Men's Group: Jack, Seve**

**Men at the whare: Rawiri Mohammed. Rowan**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu to GN3-Papakura**

**3 Feb 2022**

There is a double edge to nomadic subjective formation, an *intersecting pattern of becomings* (Braidotti, 2017b) that of all us men can attend to, differently. My narratives show how we follow changes transposing the limits of our involvement with the research project and Men's Group, resisting naming practices concerned with *what* has changed in order to map a *dangerousness* of becoming nonviolent with affective flow. Social encounters with others become unpredictable, with taken for granted ways of navigating social encounters with others no longer producing the same outcomes and mutually understood memories of events. With nomadic narratives provide opportunities for lines of flight with an outward mapping of affective flow, producing uncharted territories, it is a dangerous of this work that keeps moving, and keeps us moving, as our narratives become a big deal for others.

Thinking of my career, now spanning three decades working with men and boys in the violence prevention sector, I am often bewildered with the creation and production of Men's Groups as affective encounters. Rather than a type of pastoral care, confessional opening up, or type of self-mastery and control of violence through formal interventions opining normative expectations of self-surveillance and self-discipline, different iterations of the Men's Group emerge with assemblages of interconnecting memories and experiences that defy previously taken for granted ways of knowing. As empirical processes, the Men's Groups are created as different iterations of otherwise un-reproducible, un-representable events. Although I am unsure how to articulate *what* occurred, for me and for others, celebrating my *becomings* with narratives of others, I *desire* the joy of entanglement with others, a joy we only experience with forming new connections with the many others of our lives—without the knowledge and precision of saying *what* will happen, *when* it will happen, *how* it will happen, and with *whom*.



## Chapter 6

**To extract the concepts which correspond to a multiplicity is to trace the lines of which it is made up, to determine the nature of these lines, to see how they become entangled, connect, bifurcate, avoid or fail to avoid the foci. (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007, p. viii)**

### **Becoming-research**

From 20 May 2021 through to the beginning of March 2023, the Men's Group met on no fewer than 69 separate occasions, with 18 men, in total, providing consent to include their participation in this research project. Thinking of Deleuze and *middles* once more, in connection with Valentin's (2006) elaboration of Deleuzian political philosophy as *uncontrollable creativeness*, I welcome opportunities to rethink the Men's Group, as a figure of thought, to open up space outside what is imaginable to me, to open up opportunities uncontrollable by me, and others. Thinking of experiences of *bending*, change processes not easily explained nor adequately accounted for through *particular* narratives, or groups of narratives, yet with *affective* memories connecting men's experiences of *bending*, I welcome opportunities to create both marked and unmarked space, leaving not only the examined and explained, but also the unexamined and unsaid, for others to break open, untangle, and unfold. This enables me to remember meeting with Jack in October of 2022. By then, Jack had participated in 50 of the 52 different occurrences of the Men's Group, and contributed two interviews for this research project, whilst the Men's Group, on this occasion, consisted of the two of us, alone, cooking a meal together, in part, because no other participants were available to join *us* at the whare. Inviting him to reflect on "the state" of the group, as (overly)familiar as I was with his stories, Jack's narratives of change not only traced experiences of the group and enabled us to make sense of life events, *together*, that evening, I remember experiencing Jack putting *him(self)* into *action*, helping me think, *differently*.

Remembering Jack's narratives as *empowering* difference, *difference* in my thinking and felt experiences, rather than representing a *product* of participating in a group or a clever idea or ploy to reinvigorate participant recruitment processes, I think of Jack's narratives as *gifts*, narrative gifts of materiality that are left for others to unpack and unwrap. Empowering creative, yet *critical*, (re)imaginings of Men's Groups, thinking *with* Jack's affective narratives of change produces an agential capacity of *mapping* new possibilities of future groups, *between us*. Thinking of our evening together through experiences of bending, the Men's Group *continues* emerging through the unfolding materiality of our experiences, *in connection* with others. This reminds me of Deleuze's relationship with

Felix Guattari. Speaking with Claire Parnet, Deleuze's frequent interlocutor, Deleuze describes understanding Guattari with the concept of *philosopher-becoming* (Deleuze & Parnet, 2007). Remembering their relationship not as a series or collection of events and experiences, Deleuze re-remembers Guattari *intensely*, reminiscing how he:

**...never stopped. Few people have given me the impression as he did of moving at each moment; not changing, but moving in his entirety with the aid of a gesture he was making, of a word which he was saying, of a vocal sound, like a kaleidoscope forming a new combination every time. (p. 16)**

Yet, Deleuze also remembers how their work was not of *one* or *the other*, nor was their work a form of collaboration. Indeed, Deleuze states:

**You know how we work - I repeat it because it seems to me to be important - we do not work together, we work between the two. (p. 17)**

Much like Deleuze's enunciation that Guattari was *not* a philosopher *by training*, Jack tells me he barely finished secondary schooling. He has neither received formal higher education, nor, for that matter, any *higher level* workplace training, either. Instead, until Jack's retirement in early 2020, his nearly fifty-year employment history consists of several long term jobs working as a manual labourer. Never unemployed but always *under-employed*, his main source of income for many years, until he was made redundant, was loading tubs of paint onto trolleys for a manufacturing company, which was complemented by numerous secondary jobs, albeit with lower pay and anti-social work hours, such as stacking shelves of bread at grocery stores in the late evenings, early mornings and weekends. In addition to primary and secondary jobs, Jack frequently also painted fences and did other landscaping work for friends, associates, and colleagues, for cash. Jack's narratives affectively *story* a "strict" upbringing, which, in his words, hinders what he calls "thriving". Whilst Jack reportedly was never taught *what* to think, *thinking* was neither expected of him nor condoned within his social milieu. But Jack's a *storyteller*, his nomadic narratives produce a palpable sense that *life* itself is a teacher of thinking, that a life itself is condition enough to give rise to thinking, *differently*. Jack stories help me think *life* as an open process of constant, perpetual bending, with a life a constant (re)figuring of ourselves, in response to questions such as how do we *hold/occupy space* in our social lives, and how do we *retreat, resist, and sustain* both gendered norms and gendering practices to exert power to control territory.

(((Men's Group Narrative)))

Arriving just after four p.m., Jack isn't here yet, which surprises me. Sahila says the two men at the whare are unlikely to join us, and with the third resident taken to the airport earlier this morning, to catch a bus home, any further "drop-ins" are unlikely to join us as well.

With no other previous participants attending tonight, it's gonna be a quiet evening. There's no point waiting; I begin cooking in the kitchen. When Jack arrives, he occupies a seat in the lounge, mindful his mobility issues mean he avoids getting "in the way". He will keep me company from afar, but never be more than an arms reach away.

Jack feels contemplative, which contrasts my feelings of boredom. Together, this *feels* like an opportunity to *kōrero* about the future of the Men's Group. I flit between him and the kitchen, and suspecting dinner will be tasteless without beans and mustard, I prepare a dinner of instant coffee, tasteless hot dogs sandwiched between bland rolls, and soggy oven chips.

Sitting together in the quietness of a rainy evening...feeling Jack is *here for company*, he's here *with* me, I feel an opportunity, to trust him. I stumble, mumble, and bumble my way towards explaining I want to invite him to reflect on the Men's group with me.

*of course. what...do you want to talk about*

We rehash conversations we have often had following many of the numerous Men's Groups he's attended, given Jack's often the first to arrive and last to leave. We continue to be surprised by our enjoyment of a group we struggle explaining to others. We don't know "what" we do together, or "how" such diverse groups of men find fellowship with each other; the *importance* of our participation both confounds and inspires us. Jack and I, we've spent over a hundred hours together, *thus far*...yet, no two experiences of a Men's Group have been alike.

If we somehow *become* a Men's Group...I ask Jack if we can think about what we might become as a group, for instance, as my time and focus changes over the research project.

I'm concerned we have fewer and fewer opportunities to become a group, when men, who we once spent hours with each week, no longer *join* us. And for all my time spent at the whare each week, I cant seem to get new men to join us, either.

I'm worried...

*what good is a group, if, like tonight, no one is here to join us...and it's only you and I?*

Jack welcomes my fears, my concerns, my worries, and my uncertainty about the future of the group...yet, he looks forward to, and welcomes, any opportunities his participation in the Men's Group produces—including, but also *particularly*, evenings like tonight, when just he and I meet.

*when I get here...I feel like I become something else, with you*

Jack explains that rather than the evening itself, what we are doing *now*, produces opportunities and changes in his capacity to be a better father, husband, and friend.

*this is what I come here for*

Jack remembers something I said about rolling the dice, he touches upon feelings he experiences *after* group, elsewhere and with other people...

*this helps me resist past ways of thinking, and talking about my life helps me remember what I share with them, and their experiences of their lives help me think differently about my own*

Jack welcomes the Men's Group, not as an entity, but we talk about David's concept of fruitfulness, that Jack's participation in Men's Groups produces differences in capacity, *elsewhere...*

*not only for me, but for my family*

We *become* different through our participation, not *because of* it, Jack says. He reminds me the group recharges him, helps sustain him, helping him *linger*, just a bit longer, with the complexities of his *life*. Relating stories of his wife, Jack's participation in the groups supports him when he falls asleep at the coffee shop in the mall whilst his family goes shopping. He no longer thinks of doing these things, alone...separately...but their lives *come together* differently. Jack now relishes taking his son to periodic psychiatric appointments around the city, the early mornings become bearable when he no longer is just transportation, but his son experiences *doing it together*, now.

*my participation helps me care for my family, differently.*

Jack's advice is that he does not know what we will become, nor does he come with expectations about our time together. Instead, Jack wants to roll the dice, with me, with the group, with a group of men.

Beginning to feel movement itself, I am speechless, I am moved...but don't know what to say. Tracing an image of myself with my own stories, I share how being deported from the UK as a young man, after falling in love with a British woman I met at a youth camp in Michigan and flying to England on a way one ticket, enables the man I have become. Jack already knows about my experiences Huntington's Disease and genetic testing, but I share feelings of loss when other genetic issues resulted in the loss of a pregnancy. Rolling the dice...is risky.

Jack shares his own high stakes gambits. He's sustained numerous physically and psychologically demanding, if not demeaning, jobs, with awful work hours and low wages, to pay for a house mortgage, utilities and food and clothing for his family. Whilst they have never *gone without*, Jack was also rarely home as he was constantly working. Trying to make enough money to provide for his family, coupled with the secrecy he maintained about the bullying and persecution he experienced at work, involved his family going without *him*.

Jack's gambit, I'm beginning to see, is that he affirms the unpredictable-ness of his life-and the absence of control we have over it. Rather than analytically thinking *what is the right thing to do*, *passively going along for the ride*, or worrying how close to the *right* choice or course of action his decision is, with Jack, we are both interested in how a life emerges with our experiences, not because of them. The work we do together, like tonight... has no end goal, no final solution that we are looking for...yet, the constant forces and flows of life we encounter *become* different through *storying* ourselves to others, in a Men's Group.

For over a year, much like tonight, Jack straddles different lines between consultant and advisor and participant, never only one...but always enduring as something else, if only for just a bit longer, until the next week's group. *How does he sustain this?*

Moving between the kitchen and lounge, I grow weary, nervous that between asking and welcoming Jack's insight into the Men's Group, I've asked too much.

This isn't friendship...the name brings too many expectations and assumptions, whilst not acknowledging the challenges of the social power relations that we occupy and traverse every time we come together. Instead, I sense, much like tonight...we untangle things from the middle each week... each week a different middle...extending new lines of thought, together, with some leading to words, here, on this paper, others...lost between mouthfuls of pork, bread, and copious amounts of coffee.

As I see Jack out after we finish cleaning up...I realise I am already awaiting what we might become, together.

**Men's Group: Jack**

**Staff: Sahila**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**1 October 2022**

I have used October 2022 to partially (de)mark, (de)limit, and (de)note a number of times the Men's Group has met within a period of time, in part, to provide a *figure*, that, I hope, meets institutional expectations in terms of accounting for research funding. This funding includes covering my travel costs to the whare, and the provision of snacks and beverages for men attending both interviews and Men's Groups, important institutional considerations, yet, for the purposes of this research project, a date does not account for a complexity of material forces, as *conditions*, with which to sense politics of our locations, or *changes* in political locations, from which different understandings of Men's Groups, as a research activity, emerge. My *resistance* to creating a date, as a naming event prefiguring a temporal place of departure from what has come before or a place to entry into something new, *does* help me remember material forces happening *between* Jack and I.

Extending this resistance further, prior to October 2022, *data collection* activities for Men's Groups involved recording information, such as the name of formal participants and men fleetingly "passing through" our weekly get togethers, on a spreadsheet. With Men's Groups held in public spaces at the whare, men often sit amongst us, or otherwise occupy the same space as us, when groups occur. I recorded first names, if I came across them, in the absence of any other personal details. Coupled with written notes of my experiences, forming memories of encountering affective forces and flows with groups of men in public and private settings, I remember a concern, though, that the spreadsheet had become a self-limiting, if familiar, *administrative practice tracing* the Men's Group. I think of tracing as a discursive practice suggesting our work is *always already* done, it's *been* done, with *data* on a spreadsheet prefiguring our participation in a Men's Group through our attendance—and excluding our participation through our absence. The Men's Groups were something we did, something we *had* done *together*, as individuals, with *others*. This notion of tracing centres the individual and associated institutional requirements and expectations about who attended and when, as privileged figures of thought. But there is more, always more, that exceeds the present frame.

A practice of tracing participation and, ostensibly, engagement in group interventions through our attendance does not account for our experiences of changes in directions, speeds, and intensities of the group, as a collective, nor does a spreadsheet record un-surveilled changes happening elsewhere, that arise as a result of men's participation in, and absence from, different groups. Spreadsheets do not bring to the fore experiences of

*difference*—which Jack and I shared yet I struggled to represent in my notes. In October 2022, I remember feeling my experiences were being *left off the page*.

**The constant bustle of countless afternoons and long evenings at the whare, listening to men’s experiences of violence and change whilst figuring a molecular ethics of care that welcomed them to join the Men’s Group...the startling suddenness of my disappointment and frustration when men failed to show up was not accounted for by names and dates on a spreadsheet.**

Prior to the October Men’s Group with Jack, with few exceptions, such as when we met outdoors in a local park or in the community at a local billiard club, away from the whare, in part, due to the elevated presence of Covid in the community and crowded indoor settings, each week the Men’s Group met at the Ōtāhuhu whare. As a group, we either walked to a local McDonalds, where we drank cups of coffee and milkshakes, or hung out at the whare itself, where I sometimes cooked food like hot dogs and soups for the men. I was no longer recruiting participants for interviews, and between Men’s Groups, I maintained contact with past and present participants, through phone calls, text messages, and emails. Throughout the first year of the Men’s Group, many men welcomed weekly contact, although they had not attended a group for several weeks, if not many months, I extended an invitation to join us each week. In the gaps between groups, I also continued visiting the whare, and discussing the politics of their locations in relation to experiences of change, I continued providing information to men about my research, and welcomed them to join the Men’s Group. Engaging in *kōrero* with Jack enabled me to discuss with men at the whare interested in the work we were doing, as well as Gandhi Nivas staff and my thesis supervisors, how to reconceptualise Men’s Work by *rethinking difference* as our emergent collective political agency. Rather than addressing the originating problem of how to get men together to discuss experiences of change processes, by figuring what I, and others, needed to do to (re)produce a group of men on a weekly basis, we began *thinking* Men’s Groups as *iterations of affective experiments* with the *material production of difference*, and wondering what a body can do, we began thinking Men’s Groups as opportunities for men to experience *multiple ecologies of belonging*, in *connection* with other men.

Together, putting *thought* into action, Jack and I began reimagining our generative capacities, as men, and rethinking of our participation with an affective practice of putting our(selves) into action, Men’s Groups became an opportunity to *act on* and *act out*

*difference* emerging with all the forces we experience, as a group. Thinking nomadically, this enfolding and unfolding of affectivity *empowers* new understandings of Men's Groups, centring, as a figure of thought, the creation of heterogeneous political space *emerging* with *different figurations* of participants attending each week. Men's Work, in this style of thinking, becomes an embodied process of *mapping* the material production of *difference* with other men, with different assemblages of men producing different political spaces of materiality. Linking to *non-violencing* as variations in arrangements of affective flow, this refigures the Men's Group with a heterogeneous capacity for the *machinic production* of affective materiality, where being *responsive* to the needs of men joining us each week becomes a process of *becoming accountable* to political spaces, created by and created with different assemblages of men, through an *ethics of care*. Less a matter of addressing the specific needs of specific men, or groups of men, the Men's Group, as a collective, takes on and embodies the politics of different groups, becoming a *multiplicity* that is not produced by as much as emerging from, and in connection with, the productive *desire* of participants attending each week. In this way, the Men's Group can *move*, can *bend*, can *crack* under the weight of extreme affective experiences. *Men's Work* becomes worthy of the present by bringing forth new possibilities of thought with un-actualised affective figurations able to tolerate different affective memories of experiences men bring to a group, traces of which men bring with them *out* into the community—and to others.

A Men's Group, in these terms, *operativises* desire as *affective difference*, providing complex understandings of heterogeneous material forces we experience, which become *conditions* with which to sense the politics of our locations. Putting *difference* into action, and beginning again, I re-imagine a Men's Group as collective experimentation with material conditions, enabling men to map affective flow, which becomes the terms of our effective political agency *in the present*, helping me to begin sensing the work *between* us, *differently*. Our work, as a multiplicity of men, puts *difference* to work. We disentangle ourselves, as figurations of thought, only to re-entangle ourselves with affective experiences of *bending*, enabling us to construct new, if fleeting and unstable, subjectivities empowering transformative change in connection with other men, the where, and myriad others we encounter as a collective group. We make sense of each other, and our work together, through a multiplicity of affective *becomings* occurring *between* us. With *becomings* of *difference* begetting the becomings of others, Men's

Work produces a *troubling dangerousness* to pre-individual figurations entangling affectivity in processes of non-normative subject formation (Deleuze, 1990/1969).

Thinking differently with Jack's participation in this research project helps me revisit how opening up new affective connections both increases our capacity to enter into new modes of relation with our partners, and other loved ones, as well as our cultures of origin, adopted communities, and social structures comprising our everyday life worlds, emplacing us within multiple ecologies of belonging. Linking *mana*, a Māori concept culturally-specific to New Zealand, with MacLure's (2010) concept of *glow*, molecular affective becomings empower ethical modes of transformation acknowledging how we carry *traces* of our selves, if inadvertently and unpredictably, towards *other becomings* unable to be *surveilled*, but, notable, felt and experienced by others. Although, in my experience, *mana* is used by Māori and non-Māori men in everyday social circumstances in ways related to a Western concept of *dignity*, Mataira (2008) helps disrupt a habit of thinking with static and specific definitions of *mana* by putting the concept into action, elaborating the *restoration* of men's *mana* as empowering "us to challenge and be challenged with respect and integrity" (p. 39). Thinking with Mataira, *mana* is revealed as conditioning embodied capacities and collective actions with affective forces men bring with them, with Men's Work a shared collective responsibility of restoring, maintaining and sustaining men's *mana*, keeping men's change processes in sight with the imaginative production of new capacities responsive to the experiences of men and their families.

Taking this further, (re)thinking a concept of *everyday life* as an assemblage of cultural social practices through which men enact a plurality of (Māori) masculinities, King and Robertson (2017) help enlarge the possibilities of men contributing to violence prevention practices, in particular inviting us to rethink the possibilities of the discipline:

**by considering those who contribute positively to their communities through enacting culturally informed everyday social practices, and how such everyday ways-of-being can be promoted as a preventative measure against the emergence of domestic violence. (p. 211)**

To me, then, *mana* is a concept of thought connecting subjectivity, social practices, and shared transformative change processes, which I am able to follow with a notion of *glow* the embodied *materialisation* of "what these men do right within these relationships and how they understand, negotiate, and enact the plurality of Māori masculinities in their

everyday lives” (p. 211). This becomes important when we think of carrying traces of ourselves, as participants in Men’s Groups, to the whare and other locations where we meet, as well as when we encounter others that become involved in our work, as, when we leave, we can begin thinking of the kind of traces we leave behind, creating unmarked space for others to break open, to follow, untangle, and follow further. Thinking mana as conditions enabling how a Men’s Group *moves*, subjective affective *movement* itself becomes *privileged*, enabling us, as a collective multiplicity, to embody *difference*, differently.

Looking out the window, I see Jack is waiting in his van. The light this time of the evening is dimming, rather than dark, and I cannot tell if he sees me from the driver's seat of his vehicle. Jack is unmistakeable, though I can only see his wispy hair and wiry moustache, his blonde hair gleaming into the dark through his front window. He's here, again, to spend time together. I wave to him from inside the house, he waves back, and I beckon him to join me. His wispy-ness and wiry-ness glows in the gloom, his becoming a bouncing movement of colour as he makes his way around the whare.

Within moments of coming inside, Jack begins. His stories never have a point. I'm beginning to understand. With his stories, the storying is the point. Jack is storying things, telling us, again, of shifts, moments of inflection, points of departure from what he knows and moments of emergence of what he hopes to learn. These events express experiences of bullying at work, a torment wrought by peers and his employer lasting many years. He's been a low-wage, manual labourer for his entire adult life, Jack says, he wants us to know his body and mind bears his age. Life's always been tough. But Jack's a story teller, his storytelling a way of asking for help in a language all his own, and offering help in languages others can sense.

He's telling us, again, he's been made redundant earlier this year, and with degenerative mobility issues arising from a rare neurological disorder, he's taken early retirement. Jack's buoyant, though. His house is fully paid off, and with a generous pension, Jack stories connect complexities of a life suddenly finding more than a year's wages in the bank, and with no other debt, the challenges of buying a 12 seater hot tub for his wife of over 40 years.

Jack is once more storying experiences of dangers and opportunities, not as moralising stories telling us what one should do, but the repetitiveness of the narratives are experiments storying shifts and changes in relationships with his employer, work colleagues, family and friends.

His stories ask:

*What you think?*

For two months now, we've reimagined experiences we struggle with making sense of alone. I wonder; what happens when we begin re-imagining struggles and struggling, violence and non-violencing, instead?

Doug arrives soon thereafter, apparently on his bike, which is surprising. As he begins disrobing coats and gloves, we continue sharing stories of urban bike riding. With thoughts on proper etiquette for taking bikes on public transport, Doug divulges he is unable to drive. Sweaters and hats accumulating on the ground, Doug explains he has epilepsy, a condition involving seizures of varying seriousness. Whatever the medical implications for him, his seizures, he says, almost always cause fear and alarm amongst those around him. Jack acknowledges his courage sharing this with us, men he has only known for a few short weeks, and offers Doug a handshake in greeting.

Doug thanks us in return, whispering;  
*my employer does not know about this*  
*I don't even share this with guys at work*  
*I rarely talk to my family about it.*

In response, more to himself, Doug admits he joins the Men's Group because he appreciates the Men's Group is a safe space to experiment with his thinking, of giving things a go, of trusting, sharing and learning.

The three of us, sitting in the lounge, share the warmth of an evening, together, as daylight fades through the windows. Reflecting on the intimacy emerging with my experiences at the Men's Group the week before, I remark on the three of us eating fish and chips together, three strangers looking at a portfolio of photos I brought to share. A composite of places, spaces and people I have visited around the world, these photos are more than the people, places, and things I find important.

*I want to thank you. I've been a bit unsettled this week. The memories became opportunities to break open my life experiences with you, which scares me. What I've feeling, though, also tells me it was welcomed...*

Unsure if anyone else will be arriving, I declare this week's Men's Group already a success, for me. Almost as soon as I say this, Talan walks into the room, having passed by the windows unnoticed, his presence hidden by the curtains keeping the dark at bay. Pleasantly surprised, I welcome him into the whare, and by way of introduction, explain;

*I met Talan at the Papakura whare, Doug at the Ōtāhuhu whare, and Jack at the Te Atatū whare. It's the first Men's Group when men from all three whare come together.*

We shake hands amongst ourselves once more and relax in the lounge, agreeing to wait 10 more minutes for other men to arrive. Our plan, I explain to Talan, was agreed the week before. I explain that after careful investigations, involving walking the streets on foot and a search of the internet, we'll be going to McDonald's in Ōtāhuhu, as there are no other local cafes or restaurants nearby where we can get coffee this late in the evening.

Jack and Doug inform Talan how we reached this plan, of wanting a place where we can story ourselves, weaving stories together like with the photos I shared with them the week before.

Talan's deep Indian accent joins both my American accent and Doug and Jack's Kiwi accents, our laughter reverberating around the room, welcoming us, to share:

*What do you think?*

**Men's Group: Jack, Doug, Talan**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**3 June 2021**

Nomadic thought, as a divergent practice, acknowledges and affirms the affective complexity of our political locations with social power relations present in our lives. This becomes a cartographic tool of Men's Work, enabling me to rethink the work between us, tracing the fruitfulness of material affective transpositions of thought as space where we produce movement of thought with remembered moments of resistance to a whole and remembered moments that connect. Bending together, we conceptualise difference, differently, putting difference into action to affirm, critique, sustain, challenge, resist and subvert enabling forces of disqualification and exclusion we share with affective memories of our lives. This allows me to re-remember Doug's participation, which had become somewhat irregular by March 2023. Already having attended 27 Men's Groups himself, Doug explained he prioritised the group, over other support groups he attended, when a top-up became immensely important to him. A top-up is how Doug explains his experiences of the Men's Group, meaning the group's importance is not contained as a result or product of attending, in the capacity of a regular feature of his life. Nor is the value of the group in feeling that we are "there" for him, as needed, when he needs us. Instead, Doug explains he experiences a fruitfulness with the Men's Group, whose effects only emerge afterwards. Doug's participation in change processes we experience as a group, acknowledging he began showing up less often in early 2023, not the result of his presence or absence a process of change for the Men's Group, then. Rather, his participation, his returning, as opposed to his continued presence, becomes a lingering fruitfulness that helps me navigate how participation creates new heterogeneous political space.

Sharing nomadic narratives of ourselves, we activate human, non-human, and more-than-human materiality we embody with paradoxical, heterogeneous, non-normative subjectivities. With Jack and Doug, I can make sense of Deleuze's elaboration of working between the two by introducing Jack's narrative storying of change processes and Doug's returning to Men's Groups, denoting not a subject, nor group of subjects, but, rather, privileging particular affective experiences of their participation to sense an emergent research assemblage. Crafting a research assemblage with experiences of affective materiality transposes the limits of familiar terms and boundaries of self-formation, refiguring affective flow to become a multiplicity of non-normative, yet agentic, heterogeneous selves existing between us. These materialist figurations signal affective space between us with a voice without organs. A voice without organs is an object of thought, Deleuze, elaborating to Parnet (2007), tells us, which brings into being

“something which was happening” (p. 16), that is, together, we become all the forces acting on and through us, giving agential voice to heterogeneous political space existing between us. Rather than a collaboration or composite of subjective selves, I experience the betweenness of Men’s Groups with fleeting experiences of becoming-machinic, which acknowledges “we” are not constituted by/with/through self-contained parts of different men, but the forces acting on/through us make up an unfinished and precarious assemblage.

A temporary “coming-together” of specific affective arrangements, an assemblage emerges as dynamically produced multiplicities with a fleeting and elusive appearance of permanence and stability. A machinic assemblage privileges an ethics of transformative inter-relationality and inter-connectivity, rather than the inter-operability of components, the former situating usefulness through capacities which enable, emit, block, prohibit, exclude, and empower affective becomings, with the later premising usefulness on the capability of internal essences, identities, or truths of constituent components (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). These becomings, themselves, become real with our emergent experiences of Men’s Groups, where our participation produces an agential force amongst men, a machinic voice that does not rely on either, both, some, parts, or all of us as a source of knowledge. A research assemblage produces voices without organs as a collective form of enunciation, enabling practices disavowing an over-reliance on centring ourselves, our being, or our words as objects of thought and sources of knowledge. Rethinking affective flow to produce machinic movement privileges research assemblages and voices without organs to open up transformative, affective becomings occurring between us, transposing affective connections to produce new, often unsettling connections with other bodies, machines, and assemblages. Entering into affective flow with other men, we can think of our participation in Men’s Groups as experimenting with a transformational affective process of becoming-research, where, between us, we create heterogeneous affective political space which men sense with new affective agential capacities, producing new affective capacities with others. This is Men’s Work.

### **Becoming-undutiful**

Men’s Groups evenings were not dependent on *being there*, with Jack and others, but more a matter of thinking;

### ***what flows do I encounter?***

***how do I know this materiality  
what is produced with these encounters?***

Thinking of visits to the whare between Men's Groups, I was learning engaging men is about following different flows, patterns, and routines than I expected. Taking courage from Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) final work together before Deleuze's untimely death, I connect a DeleuzoGuattarian approach of producing capacity for political action through the creation of concepts and materiality. Challenging notions of the primacy of the individual thinking subject and the subjective certainty of Descartes' Cogito, Deleuze and Guattari tell us of a different truth of concepts, in particular, elaborating a truth of a concept's usefulness is adhered "as a function of the conditions of its creation" (p. 27). This DeleuzoGuattarian process of creating concepts, with functions of usefulness, emerges with a *Nietzschean* understanding of the conditions of creation, that what is known has "an intuition specific to them: a field, a plane, and a ground that must not be confused with them but that shelters their seeds and the personae who cultivate them" (p. 7). Without *conditions* of existence, a pre-personal field/plane/ground of materiality, to criticise concepts "is only to establish that a concept vanishes when it is thrust into a new milieu, losing some of its components, or acquiring others that transform it" (p. 28). Following Deleuze and Guattari's argument, inserting concepts into new materialist milieux without an *intuition* specific to them, is to "defend the vanished concept without being able to give it the forces it needs to return to life" (p. 28), which positions argumentation about the superiority of specific concepts, specific ways of being, as *thinking* which turns discussion into a "pitiless monologue that eliminates the rivals one by one" (p. 29).

Rather than involving a process of *familiarisation* with already present, preformed, and recognisable thoughts, concepts, ideas and activities readily available to me, or other men, at the whare, which, Braidotti (2011b) reminds me, assumes a "masculine habit of taking for granted free access to and consumption of the bodies of others" (p. 81), participating in a Men's Group involves processes of *de-familiarisation* with our conditions of existence. A process of *de-familiarisation* creates a capacity for challenging taken for granted memories underpinning men's experiences of social support groups and violence prevention interventions, that men often think of as learning *from* one another, *about* one another, *with* one another. More an act of a *will to power*, as an evolutionary process, defamiliarisation begins with conditions empowering shared transformations, felt not just

in the confines of a group meeting at the whare, but with possibilities of embodied encounters with *difference*, shared *between* men participating in the research. Encountering difference, in the company of others, the Men's Group introduces novel and complex political materiality to the lives of men, in order to enable the creation of new concepts of thought producing an intuition specific to these events. Whereas a process of familiarisation is based on a sense of "supreme ontological entitlement" (p. 82) of the individual thinking subject *over* the other, Men's Groups, as encounters *between* us, are opportunities "to free the process of subject formation from the normative vision of the self" (p. 83), permitting men participating in this research to become present, *differently*, in ways not easily accounted for with representational thought. Forming possibilities we cannot imagine, or have yet to imagine, Men's Groups are informed with processes not yet complete, the work *between* us extending into futures yet to *unfold* as we carry traces of these encounters *towards* other becomings, for others to break open, to follow, untangle, and follow further.

*I am in the office as Josh arrives at the whare, unplanned and unannounced. Although he declines to answer my calls, Josh has kept in touch by text, sustaining an on-going conversation about his participation in the research project for over two months. His texts have become predictable, though, offering evasive explanations for why he is unable to meet in person. Surprised, I do not interrupt as the house coordinator asks that he sign the guest register. Josh, clearly uncomfortable, has walked into a staff meeting and unsure what to do with himself, which I take as a cue to get his attention and greet him from across the room. Reaching out to him, I offer a warm handshake and welcome him out of the office and into the lounge.*

*A little confused, I share I am quite delighted he has stopped in, and ask if he is joining the Men's Group. Josh, apologising for declining, rejecting, and avoiding getting together, appreciates I have kept in contact and not given up on his involvement in the research project. Although he respects me as a researcher and is particularly interested in the research project itself, Josh explains his decisions are often unpredictable as he struggles trusting others. Noncommittal, Josh did not know he would be joining the Men's Group until he arrived, and now here, asks if he can meet some of the other men before agreeing to stay. Welcoming him into the whare, and introducing him to a few men already arriving for the Men's Group, I leave Josh for a few minutes to rejoin the staff meeting in the other room. Unsure as to what brought Josh to the Men's Group tonight, I expect Josh to wander past and leave the whare.*

*As the meeting ends, other men are arriving and join Josh in the lounge. He is greeting the men, not waiting for introductions, so I take an opportunity to ask Josh to talk in private, where we can discuss consent, confidentiality and privacy declarations required to join the Men's Group. Alone, Josh becomes more relaxed, revisiting explanations he provided just minutes before. Josh shares a hope, that his involvement with the research project, participating in both an interview and the Men's Group, will support him with processes of change, although he is uncertain as to how. Josh becomes suspicious of uncertainty, he says, when things become unpredictable.*

*Encouraged by Josh to consider the Men's Group as space where he can experiment, I share with him that, as I understand the feedback provided by the men thus far, all of us participating in the Men's Group, me included, are experiencing processes of change differently. Yet, we also grapple with a*

suspiciousness of uncertainty, together, in ways respectful of our differences. Participants in the group become interconnected with experiences of suspiciousness, uncertainty, and trepidation about the unknown, rather than relying on a sameness, a feeling of being alike, that arises from our cultures, ages, and genders.

For me, I struggle how to trust the men in the group as a professional. The group, then, is a space where I can experiment with forming different understandings of relationships with men, relationships of interconnectedness rather than a relationship beholden to a privileged role or responsibility in the group. Learning how to trust and socialise with men who might otherwise be understood as clients is not something taught to professionals like me, particularly men with histories of violence towards others, and I too am struggling to learn how to engage, trust, and have confidence in the men.

Although I acknowledge possible differences in our understandings of safety, I share with Josh that being a professional, we are expected to impose boundaries and barriers with the people we work with. For my work, safety often means not sharing personal details and experiences, as information about myself can otherwise be used to take advantage of me—and possibly cause harm. Welcoming him once more, I relate to Josh that we emerge, as a collective, with a hope of becoming interconnected with others in ways we are unable to predict. Josh says he is slow to learn how to trust others, but is willing to take a risk with me and the research project, and signs the consent forms.

...

Later, after the group disbands for the night and the men head home, Josh and I meet once more. Sitting down in private, I begin unpacking research material from my backpack. Getting out binders containing paperwork and turning on the computer equipment, I remind Josh that we first met the night of our interview, at the whare in Papakura. Josh was introduced to the research project through a trusted staff member at Gandhi Nivas, and told me he talked about the possibilities of his participation for several weeks before deciding to initiate contact with me. At first, Josh was agreeable to a one to one interview, and requested to see a transcript of our interview prior to releasing the transcript for inclusion in the research project. Reminding Josh that, in fact, the two hours we spent together is the only time we have met, I ask him to consider how he has come to feel trust with me.

*Sharing with him that I used headphones in the transcription process, Josh laughs at my suggestion his voice has been in my head for hours and hours since we last met. Reflecting on the transcription process further, I explain I have spent over ten hours listening to Josh share stories explaining his understandings of change processes. Although careful to explain I have not processed or done an analysis of our interview, listening and thinking with Josh for several hours, I admit the familiarity of listening to his voice, of transcribing over ten thousand words between us, does not make sense when understood as meeting him one time. Although he met the men just a few hours earlier, I ask if this helps to make sense of his experiences tonight. After a momentary pause, Josh acknowledges that although he was sceptical at first, as he is unfamiliar with sharing stories of himself and rarely interested in the stories of others, Josh appreciates the group is an opportunity to connect with other men in a space of safety, where he can embrace possibilities of change and experience difference differently. I explain to Josh, each Men's Group has become something of the sort, but a different sort each time, to me as well. A different group of men comes together each week, every group forms new and different ways to understand how to support men's processes of change.*

*Including Josh, all five men attending group tonight are already involved with my work in some way. From Wiremu, recently emerging from a period of crisis involving being remanded in prison for a few nights, to Mattie, who joins the group in hope of staving off a crisis with his sister by seeking the care of other men, I offer an observation that our experiences of the group has little relation to what we are doing in the group. That is, the activities we do together do not offer interventions, strategies, or skills that help prevent violence. We are not practicing our social skills as a form of group therapy. Going to McDonalds with a group of five strange men, it is not the cups of coffee, hash browns, and ice cream cones that we come together for. As the organiser of the group, an academic doing research with men, I am unable to explain to potential participants what will become of their involvement in the group. We are not men learning how to be men, nor are we men learning how to be better men. We are wondering, what might become of men coming together to experiment supporting each other in our uncertainty and trepidation about change processes and the unknown, what possibilities are afoot?*

*For the next hour, as Josh becomes physically relaxed, I imagine him melting into his chair as we painstakingly discuss research processes for my PhD. He appears comfortable exploring concepts of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity at length, experimenting with understandings of these concepts as principles and processes. Commenting he initially declined to meet at the conclusion of the research project, an invitation open to all men participating in both interviews as well as the Men's Group, I thank Josh for his interest in my work and reiterate an offer to meet once all the interviews are completed and transcripts released. Although initially keen to take home a printed or digital copy, out of concern for what I presumed was the stories he shared with me, Josh announces he is happy to release the transcript. Rather than what he describes as talking with him in exchange for releasing the transcript, Josh appreciates me thoroughly explaining more than the interview process and wants thank me, and reflecting on what we talk about, he wants to put our thoughts into action.*

*Josh recalls several moments since we first met, remembering troublesome feelings of suspiciousness, nervousness, and unease that often arises with change. Rather than trust as something to have, give, or even earn, Josh offers an explanation of trust as something he produces with me, together, in moments of uncertainty. Quite breathtakingly embarrassed, I remain quiet as Josh traces experiences of suspiciousness and nervousness to also map memories of kindness, patience, and safety. Josh respects how I engage him, helping him to produce new ways to answer problems, which he understands as meaning he can trust me. As he signs the transcript release, Josh also welcomes his continued involvement in the research project, and wonders if we might have another interview someday.*

**Men's Group: Wiremu, Josh, Jack, Manu, Mattie, Doug**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**17 June 2021**

Situating the need to establish multiple *affirmative* processes of defamiliarisation, Braidotti (2011b) implores the value of *pain* in change processes by which the normative subject breaks from taken for granted anthropocentric habits of thought, and enters into relationships with a multiplicity of human, non-human, and more-than-human forces. Often a *pain-full* process, Braidotti also helps me remember familiar habits of thought sustain a “moral imperative to avoid pain or to view pain as the obstacle to moral behavior” (p. 289), which means men often struggle to sustain pain, or *wield* pain as an unwanted, internal, *private* experience that warrants compensation, retribution, and closure. Stretching the concept of multiplicity, Braidotti (2016) privileges processes of defamiliarisation, as space *between* men, where “knowing subjects evolve from the vision of the self they had become accustomed to” (p. 388), transposing affect, in the form of pain, to create a capacity to *rethink* ourselves with *different* ecologies of belonging. Thinking *difference* with embodied affect, we can rethink and imagine *ourselves*, remembering *transposing* pain, as affect, with the creation of heterogeneous political space *between* us, is how we become;

**a moveable and outwardbound assemblage within a common lifespace, which the subject never masters nor possesses but merely inhabits and crosses nomadically, always in a community, a pack, a group, or a cluster. (p. 387-388)**

Thinking nomadically, the Men’s Group is how we create ever more possibilities of voices with futures that do not answer to our names.

Often, our participation in a Men’s Group produces an immense range of emotions exceeding our capacity to tolerate affective experiences, producing troubling thoughts disrupting taken for granted self-beliefs of gendered identities. Out of necessity, habit, or choice, many men arriving at Gandhi Nivas find themselves alone for the first time, whilst encountering unfamiliar and terrifying social encounters taking place in the milieu of a peaceful welcome during chaotic uncertainty. Staying at Gandhi Nivas is both a traumatic reappraisal for men, as they find they do not possess a capacity, resources, or knowledge intuited through specific ecologies of belonging to look after themselves. Yet, for some men, experiencing intensive feelings of aloneness, as an affective encounter *between* men, opens up conditions for *hope* to emerge as well. Revisiting divergent understandings of *faciality* by Levinas and Deleuze, thinking with Rae (2016), I reposition a Men’s Group not where hope transcends or becomes privileged *over* pain, rather,

experiences of hope *between* men entails bringing to the fore the more-than and non-human materiality emanating with men's specific socio-political-cultural locations. Transposing affective experiences of pain and sorrow, anger and worry, confusion and hesitation, affective encounters *between* men enfolds affect into new and novel heterogeneous figurations of political space, becoming "a particular *social assemblage* [my italics] that requires a face to function", which "divides, insofar as it delineates who/what is acceptable to the regime and who/what is not...transmitting many meanings based on the needs of the political regime it is located within" (p. 293). Rae, putting to work a DeleuzoGuattarian understanding of *the face*, suggests *faciality* "is linked to the attempt to establish one system of signification over all others" (p. 295), providing a field of possibilities of what we are capable of doing, experiencing, and being. Thinking with Rae, acknowledging our thinking "over-codes and so distorts the body" (p. 290), men participating in Men's Groups become aware affective figurations, as political systems of signification, delimit possibilities of what a body can do. A question of difference(s), Men's Groups become liminal space where *what* we become is a matter of breaking upon waves of our movements, *together*.

Rae (2016) also helps me remember experiences of a face "point towards different expressions of the virtual realm" (p. 298), that is, in other words, affective figurations as social assemblages of relationality do not represent *the* world, but, rather, by creating *probe-heads*, we can "poke holes in its stratifications and significations to reveal and so express the virtual body without organs that 'lies beneath' the face" (p. 300). A body without organs, in this sense, delineates the *virtual* possibilities of a physical body, with the *virtual* all of the material possibilities of what a body can do, which *faciality* makes *actual*. A probe-head *plays* with affective materiality and temporality, creating new social assemblages of *invention* from *matter at hand*. This is an antithesis of austerity, where, rather than creating an emptiness, a hollowing out or removing interconnecting affective conditions, a probe-head, instead, offers the emergence of new possibilities with new *machinic* assemblages. A question of knowing what a body can do with probe-heads invokes uncomfortable phallic morphologies for me. Yet, it is the unknowable excess of affective connection which breaks open painful becomings outside of our discursive grasp. An unpredictable practice, probe-heads unfold our discursive capacities of affective flow with a range of discursive artefacts. Nomadic narratives, that is, sharing narratives of our past with men, become opportunities to practice *experimenting* with narratives, helping others understand their own possibilities and opportunities, leading to

ways we understand iterations of our becomings. Experiences of interviews as experiments with affective figurations, as machinic probe-heads, produces different experiences of safety, concern, calmness, frustration, correction, and empowerment. Men, then, thinking life in terms of homogeneous identities and a mastery of skills, can become enabled through the creation of new political space where we forget to remember systems of signification. Experimenting with men in the affective space of 1:1 interviews enables probe-heads to become a *machinic assemblage in connection with* men's virtual affective experiences, functioning to actualise *virtual* capacities, remembering that life, a life, that *difference* itself, is what a body can do.

Men's Work is to *think* what becomes possible with men, in our work with men. Rethinking my experiences of lockdowns throughout 2020 and 2021, an absence of *getting together with others* no longer simply hampered *certain* research processes, which I now experience as a lamenting rhetoric through narrative practices figuring myself as the centre of thought. The woe of feeling hampered is not simply ignored or replaced, but emerges as a single possibility of thought, one actual eventuality of all virtual possibilities emerging from these memories, one possibility of the single face of the unitary subject. I can refigure this thought, extending feelings of woe towards other affective possibilities, wondering how an involuntary absence of "event" like experiences at the whare with other men both *hampers* and *empowers* productive/imaginative research processes, and how an absence of in-person experiences for large swaths of time during lockdown in Auckland *differently* hampers and empowers possibilities of research, than, say, an overseas trip to my home state of Michigan. Affective transpositions provide a differential logic, which become conditions for new affective assemblages that *themselves* become difficult to maintain and sustain over time. This logic does not determine a hierarchical scale superiority or productivity of different assemblages, telling us which is the *right one*, differential logics become ethical *conditions of existence* we can trace through nomadic narratives of change, telling us how we become worthy of the present. My understanding here is that by becoming worthy of the present, we enter into what Braidotti (2019b) refers to as "an active mode" (p. 464) and "[b]eing of the here and now" (p. 466). Braidotti helps me think *becoming worthy* means to *become critical* of the *present*, a mode of being which emerges as "a way of operationalising the awareness that we are always ceasing to be and trying to become" (p. 467). By critiquing the negativity of our becomings when present conditions

do not allow us to act, we engender new possibilities of what we might become with the death of our selves, our ways of thinking and experiencing life.

Affectively *assembling* transpositions of thought with an ethics of self-creation poses some difficulty, though, in explaining how *becomings* with human organisms stand differently, than say, *becomings* walking *alone* in an urban park *amongst* trees and birds. Thinking of the ethnographic work of phone calls during lockdowns, a collective “now” of the group produces a collective voice of bodies now spread across different ecologies of belonging, which I was unable to present with an ethnographic practice of note taking. In the context of broader disruptions to meeting and engaging in person, this *becoming* travels alongside other *becomings*, including my attempts at maintaining affective relationships with a group of men by wondering what a body can do whilst also fearing what I was unable to do. Rethinking my experiences of October 2022, the political space *between* Jack, Doug, and myself became a productive assemblage, empowering understandings that affective flow do not quite happen the same way, *each* time nor *over* time, that different iterations of Men’s Group need not happen the same way, shifting our thinking from how to *maintain* the Men’s Group towards rethinking conditions of existence powering and empowering different iterations of Men’s Group. Thinking what a body can do, we began (re)introducing a notion of *becomings* to Men’s Groups, as a process we cannot control—but we can affectively follow, *together*.

Arriving around 330 or so, I begin boiling carcass, with Jack arriving soon thereafter. He hangs in the lounge, across the door from me...we talk, really talk, for 20 minutes whilst the meat gets going. I enlist Dayita to watch the stove as we go get bread. Jack feels attentive, patient, eager and open as we walk across the street. He shares his feelings about the group and the men...he does not have any friends, and certainly no one else comes close to his feelings for the men. He discusses his social isolation and bullying as usual...which we carefully entangle with his thoughts of the group. What exactly is his experience of the group? How does an openness he experiences with men become known?

*The men...are honest.*

Jack explains an unfettered-ness to their engagement, involvement, and emergence within the group. Messy and imperfect, patient and non-judgemental...men offer them-selves to Jack. Not parts or bits or aspects...but he says an openness that invokes a trust, as this offering is not inclusive of control and predictability. Jack says men don't seem to have expectations of each other. Men offer themselves without knowledge of what might become of this. Trust is believing in men...rather than trusting "what" is offered. Doug's offering was his vulnerability and desire of change and difference. Doug provided men the conditions, the means of change, with his self.

As we arrive back at the whare...I remind Jack that not only does he "get" from the group...love, passion, and comfort...but also he is part of these processes for the other men. He is part of their own change processes...and implore him to not lose sight of this, to remember this, to also carry this with him. Patting him on the shoulder...I recognise I am becoming more tactile, more affective with Jack as the weeks go by.

Back at the whare, Josh arrives. After some minor giggles, Jack is left in charge of mixing the stew as Josh and I go to another room to chat. Although my fear that he is leaving our group is short lived... Josh is leaving another men's group on Tuesdays. We spend considerable time talking of his thoughts and feelings regarding what his experiences have become. He is interested in learning of himself... learning of his self...selves. The more he talks, the more he becomes unwound...offering an opportunity for me to describe my masters/PhD work of "the self". We share interests, fascinations, hopes and imaginative possibilities. Josh desires something like meditation. I explain, although I am familiar with meditation, I am more aware and engage in reflexive mindfulness. We talk of these as processes, tactics and tools to become centred with our current version of our self. Cooking, cleaning, sleep-related practices...things that both expose ourselves to our selves as well as offer opportunities to learn of our selves, offering possibilities of change and new becomings.

*I want to learn what I'm interested in...rather than doing what I'm interested in.*

Josh is learning, he tells me, that “interest” need not be limited to materialistic objects and materialistic practices...things and stuff to have, get, or acquire. Interest is a practicing a healthy self... new possibilities emerging from encountering the world. I share my understandings and experiences of volunteerism...at a restaurant, ran by volunteers, where anybody can show up and eat a three course meal, free of charge. Working at the the world’s smallest cinema, many years ago now, in the UK, created opportunities to produce art and imagination in the world...by providing opportunities to become involved with movies, as an industry, in a cinema ran by volunteers. These are not strictly altruistic activities...or a matter of practicing the virtue of altruism. I get a lot from my involvement in the world. I learn both of my self, others, and the world. My involvement with the restaurant...we come together, strangers, much as the Men’s Group does...and create an assemblage of people, our messiness and imperfectness, with strangers, becomes conditions creating possibilities of feeding the community.

We go back to the group just as Doug arrives. He is looking well, relaxed and engaging both Jack and Josh...not so much taking turns with the men, but different parts of himself emerge and subside as he moves around. Manu emerges in the whare amongst this hoopla, with big smiles. Both Doug and Manu are inquisitive, interested in what is going on and being made in the kitchen. What they want to know is not “what” the soup is...but rather the sights and smells and tastes become subsumed with affectivity. They are both entangling themselves with forces of flows...excitement for instance... permeating the group. They are on the look out for excitement. This produces...rather than creates...a desire to eat dinner, together, the group coming together in anticipation. No one is asking, suggesting, or cajoling each other to eat...there is no motivation occurring. The food becomes part of our assembling, though...the tastes and sounds and smells of a homemade turkey soup, made from scratch with ingredients I brought from home, we gather to eat together, each moving, in different ways, so that I cant trace what is happening between us. Locating and keeping affective encounters in sight is messy, tumultuous, and unpredictable.

**Men’s Group: Jack, Josh, Doug, Manu, Talan**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**5 August 2021**

## Becoming-fruitful

Rethinking affective flow also informs how I make sense of compensation offered to men for their participation in interviews. In consultation with Gandhi Nivas staff, as well as men staying at the whare throughout my fieldwork, we arrived at a general consensus that offering men gift vouchers for petrol or food was unlikely to adequately meet the needs of men staying at the whare, let alone encourage their participation. Gift vouchers, according to the men willing to discuss their personal circumstances, were unlikely to be useful for men who otherwise were homeless, and therefore with limited cooking facilities and food storage opportunities, nor was petrol particularly useful for men without private transportation, which make up the vast majority of men staying at the whare. Informants suggested vouchers might eventually provide some value, given as gifts to family members, for instance. Others, still, advised vouchers might be useful to *other men staying at the whare*, enabling participants to exchange vouchers for other items of value. Rethinking compensation as an act of reciprocity, research funding was secured to purchase groceries, enabling me to experiment with offering men the opportunity to *cook for other men* at the *whare*, in acknowledgment of their participation in this research project. Men were offered my support in this, with no specific requirement or expectation that the men would themselves shop, cook, nor eat with the men at the whare. Of the twelve men participating in interviews, eleven men chose to conduct a single interview, ranging between 60 and 90 minutes, with Jack, in particular, participating in three interviews collectively spanning over four hours in total. Of the twelve participants, arrangements were made with four men to cook dinner at the whare as part of their participation in this research project. Spread out over several months, given interviews occurred across a span of eight months, the first participant to take up this opportunity emerged in August 2021, enabling me to bring him back to the whare, to re-encounter the *whare* as affective *space* in which change emerges *for* men, *with* other men, through an ethics of care. Of the four men who accepted compensation, three joined me in food shopping, food preparation, and cooking, and ate dinner with the men in the whare. The fourth participant “gave” the compensation to the men in the whare, choosing to help plan the evening but not to attend the dinner itself.

Envisaged with an ethics of reciprocity, cooking together with participants enables us to articulate compensation in a non-representative and iterative way. By cooking with men, I am able to (re)think practices of *engaging* men through an *ethics of care* which supports men’s accountability towards the whare, and the men living there. Rather than a cognitive

matter of motivation, intention, and purpose, of knowing *why* we are cooking, cooking *for* men *with* men, our understandings and experiences of reciprocity affirm the political locations we occupy—whilst also enabling change processes that are unable to be surveilled by others, but can be felt. This double affirmation, of who men are ceasing to be and have yet to become, becomes possible with ethical engagement practices through which men are welcomed and encouraged to (re)imagine *affective molecular flows* as connecting men living at the whare. I understand a morphology of reciprocity not only forms with traces of our selves we bring with us when we enter into the whare, as affective sites of learning, healing, respite, and care for one’s self; my concept of reciprocity also becomes *empowered* when men are encouraged to imagine how we carry these traces of our selves, other men, and the whare, *towards* other becomings when we *leave*. Cooking, as an act of compensation that enables men to think about the kind of traces we *leave behind*, enlivens opportunities for us to create unmarked space for others to break open, to follow, untangle, and follow further, by molecularising participants’ experiences of the care and support they encounter at the whare. Boundas (2007) helps situate my understanding of reciprocity as an affective neo-materialist act of both self-*preservation* and *creation*, creating new, unpredictable possibilities for the men, and the people they cook for, when “imagination is given the task of training sensibility, memory, and understanding...from the vantage point of a new life praxis” (p. 501). Cooking with men invokes an understanding of *kaikaranga*, a cultural concept, specific to New Zealand, which situates the making and sharing of food as a collective, relational activity, enabling us to respect familiar cultural practices in New Zealand whilst rethinking roles, practices, and norms of care based on one’s status and gender. This conceptualisation of reciprocity, then, enables men to become actively involved in uncertain self-becomings, by contributing to the *becomings* of other men, and the whare itself, through *life sustaining* practices of cooking.

An ethics of reciprocity also enables me to refigure a notion of what becomes possible for a Men’s Group when we carry affectivity out of a group into our daily lives, as well as carrying affectivity of our daily lives into a group, linking a fear I experience when thinking of becomings of a Men’s Group without Jack, the whare, and other men participating in this research. Fearing affective flows becoming stuck when I am alone, I use *desire* to theorise *experiences of becoming stuck*, which both *limits* and *empowers* specific subjective formations through recognition of the territorial character of affect to inscribe memories on my body. Transposing experiences of stuck-ness, with affect cohering

both subjective limits as well as empowering possibilities of escape routes from these limits towards other becomings, the work of nomadic writing is to enunciate an affective *undoing*, a disentangling of discursive inscription, making known that being stuck, and *becoming* unstuck, are co-existent existential activities of making our way in the world. No longer a matter of binary choices, of one (or many) choice(s) over other(s), transposing affective experiences, such as *kaikaranga* and cooking with men, creates different assemblages by way of transversal *cuts* along nomadic lines of thought, linking *nomadic* forms of thinking *resisting* the authority of *experience* to affirm *difference* in thought.

With a focus on affective logics both delimiting and empowering possibilities of thought with the creation of *difference*, I can shift thinking *thought* as the predictive production of the Men's Groups by refiguring *thinking* as a *nomadic* process of creating *concepts* of Men's Groups *immanent* with men's ecologies of belonging. By imagining Men's Groups with nomadic *affective* logics that men can *follow*, I surrender the need for leadership, power, and authority to maintain connectivity and reciprocity for men, with events and encounters we experience in groups becoming situated with affective forces produced with men *mapping* their experiences with *patterns* of *becomings*. Different iterations of the Men's Group emerge when we imagine reciprocity through groups of men cooking food for other men *newly arriving* at the whare, or when groups of men who have "passed through" the whare visit Ahimsa groups attended by men *currently residing* at the whare, and groups of men organise backyard barbecues for men of limited means staying at the whare during the long summer evenings they endure alone. With all of these activities, Men's Work is no longer a question of whether men visiting the whare are the same or different, how many might attend each week, or even a question of *what we did together*, rather, our work *between us* becomes an ethical responsibility to narrate and re-narrate our experiences of affective *desire re/producing* heterogenous political space emerging with every iteration of our assembling. Men's Work is creating emergent conditions of our becomings in the space *between* men, and embracing affective flow as conditioning encounters with a range of materially embodied forces, our work, although impossible to represent, becomes an ethical responsibility to narrate and re-narrate affective conditions *re/producing* our assembling. Thinking nomadically, we narrate our encounters with a range of materially embodied forces, forming new politics of locations which men map with fleeting, temporary, and partial connections with others.

The Men's Group, *becoming* undutiful to itself, is a concept of thought which acknowledges, and affirms, how affective flows disestablish, resist, sustain and empower patriarchal and masculinist norms, practices, and experiences. The *becomings* emerging with differing iterations of Men's Groups follow affective memories adhered with men's encounters with others in the whare (including my own), knowing we will not be able to revisit, reproduce, nor represent our experiences to others. As iterations of the Men's Groups are not a representation or imitation of something already established, but an effort at creating something *new*, given we are still beholden to representational logic when leaving a group, nomadically *following* different iterations *traces* how we *crack* under the extremes of affective experiences of events occurring *between* us.

Jack is the last man standing. Men have stopped responding to my attempts at maintaining contact; the few who have made contact inform me of the intention to stop attending the Men's Group. Some are happy to keep in touch through texting, so as to keep apprised of our activities as they navigate troubling times of a pandemic, whereas others are thankful for the support, but feel the Men's Group no longer has a role to play in their life and have said goodbye. Arriving at the house around 430 p.m., he is already there, ready to begin the evening with cups of coffee in the lounge. His eagerness to share news, that his daughter has become engaged to get married in May, cuts through to me. Does he notice, does he care I'm troubled? Men leaving the group has become more difficult, a problem with consequences that are not prone to fixing by simply recruiting more men.

Jack elaborates list of things to do and stuff to purchase, he is keen to host the wedding at the family home. His plans to prepare for the wedding, he tells me, include finishing renovation projects he took up from August to December 2021, during Auckland's 100+ days of stay at home orders and social distancing requirements, and starting new ones. The costs, he says, are high, but considerably less than if the wedding was held at a church and reception hall. Does he notice, does he care I'm bored?

Listening to Jack's exhaustive update of work he is already doing around the home, complete with pictures taken with his phone, the complications his increasingly problematic mobility issues pose to undertaking the work himself cuts through me. The degenerative neurological disorder affects his balance and muscle strength, yet Jack remains undeterred. Health is not what sustains him, when the pain and rigidity his body experiences, after a long day of labouring around the house, immobilises him, confining him to bedrest. He reminds me; our daily phone calls, when we were legally prohibited from being together in person, initially kept us in touch, helping us maintain contact and sustain a sense of momentum we were experiencing as a group, for what we hoped was a short, sharp lockdown. As Auckland began experiencing an outbreak of the Delta-variant in August last year, and with it, heightened social-distancing restrictions forcing the closure of many business and preventing us from leaving the city, Jack reminds me, that although uncertainty arose as to how long the social isolation would last, our phone calls continued, and continued sustaining him. I think he notices, I think he cares.

Rushing to agree, that the social support our phone calls provided us became opportunities to share our experience of daily life, Jack's memories, that our phone calls enabled a capacity to keep each other in sight during an interminable lockdown, cuts through me.

*It connects us to our past, whilst helping us think about the future, as we took up renovations inside and outside our houses, don't you remember?*

These phone calls, sometimes lasting hours, helped us make sense of daily routines that often troubled us, alleviating our boredom when confronting vast amounts of excess free time. Each week, we collectively reworked narratives of renovating our houses, together, over the phone, that is, we drew upon our diverging experiences of social isolation as conditions sustaining us during periods of social isolation, keeping ourselves and our loved ones safe in times of pandemic. No longer limited to activities we undertook to keep busy, Jack reminds me our renovation work began entangling aspects of our shared lives to revisit our understandings of change processes. Whereas the lockdown did not have an impact on his employment, given he took early retirement earlier in the year, Jack found new opportunities to make sense of a lifetime of manual labouring and decades of working long hours at multiple low-wage jobs.

*All that pain and suffering I experienced, it's not gone away, I realise, but enables me to pay for the entirety of my daughter's wedding.*

During our weekly phone calls, Jack began entangling his financial circumstances with change processes informing his understandings of non-violence. Sharing a carefully choreographed understanding of his history of violence, Jack's relationship with his body cuts through me. Jack's body is not only breaking down, in his words, but invokes a belief that his family had come to fear him, but almost exclusively relied on his income to support the family. His wife and son, as well as his daughter, her husband, and their two children, reside together in the the family home, and whilst the four other adults were in receipt of a benefit, Jack's wages serviced the mortgage, paid utilities, and met their dailies needs in terms of food and transportation costs.

His body also affords his family ongoing possibilities of change. Warmly appreciative that his family are indeed learning new ways of encountering him, Jack is keen to explore differences in how he no longer self-identifies as a quintessential Kiwi bloke who is the bread-winner for the family. Encouraged with his participation in the Men's Group, Jack reminds me cooking food for men residing at the houses helps sustain differences in how he understands caring for his family as no longer limited to a question of how many hours he worked, how much money he earns, or if his wages will cover all the bills. Jack shares, rather, an understanding, that becoming non-violent is a shift in how he understands his capacity to contribute to his family's lives. Despite being on a fixed income from a pension, non-violence is the presence of new possibilities that money was never going to be able to provide.

Jack's penchant for narratives cuts through me, the diverse and seemingly endless accounts spanning many years trace connections with a raft of neighbours, co-workers, a few associates and even fewer friends. Reflecting on this over cups of coffee we never got around to drinking, I share with him, nervously, that tonight, our habits of repeatedly reflecting on negative, painful, and debilitating stories have become disrupted. No longer limited to stories of dehumanising tragedies, of what he has endured at the hands (and mouths) of others at work and in the community...

*You're helping me re-remember our experiences are no more prescriptive, or certain of, what is to come, as they are of what has been before.*

I immediately grow quiet with a sudden shame.

*I didn't wish you a happy birthday last week. Before we carry on, with much of the same routine from the last six months, before we go to McDonalds and eat terrible ice cream and drink scalding hot coffee together...*

...I notice Jack pauses. He is neither silent, nor still, though. Becoming uncomfortable, retreat is not possible. My body is ready to tell him...even when I'm not.

*The last few weeks, I'm sure you've noticed the Men's Group is faltering. You're alone in a Men's Group, tonight...how do I account for a Men's Group when there are no other men? How useful is a man's group gonna be...for one man?*

Looking out from under his dishevelled hair and over his faded antique rugby jersey, Jack finds me wincing, but relieved, with the sudden expression of my concerns.

Pausing again, Jack speaks...

*The hours of 1:1 time we have spent together the last few weeks is...what I think you call a welcomed privilege. I only wish other men in need of support had access to the same relationship; it's not lacking in any way. I never keep count of how many men attend.*

*Cooking dinner together was a welcomed gift, an opportunity to contribute to creating new possibilities and opportunities in the lives of men. That's not something I have done before, or, at least not something I have knowingly done. I'm happy to contribute to the Men's Group becoming something else, if it helps support others...helps men benefit from a social group. I've been fortunate, I want other men to experience this fortune. I'm glad we're helping the Men's Group become something else, again.*

Jack moves towards the door, ready to go get our coffee and ice cream, and I follow him. I bring up that I'm needing to renegotiate my time at the houses, and rather than focussing on spending time at the houses with the hope of recruiting individual men to join the group, I wonder.

*Are you interested in attending anger management groups...and bringing the Men's Group to men?*

**Men's Group: Jack**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**13 January 2022**

## Becoming-undone

Writing nomadically, narratives included in this writing figure the role of power to affirm subjectivities of power relations, not to fault or criticise men, but to signal moments of resistance to men's narratives by crafting memories elaborating a need for different subjectivities to emerge. Men's statements do not disappear, the embarrassment and un-comfortability of holding onto forces and flows does not dissipate for me. Nomadic narratives, though, (re)produce multiple processes that enable different arrivals of different possibilities of becomings, opening up men's political agency through pluralistic practices such as becoming an affective scribe and bearing witness to change processes, marking not only on the bodies of men—but of those of us bearing witness to these process as well.

Affective flow both affirms as well as resists and disrupts socio-cultural upheaval men experience, enabling nomadic practices which welcome men to share *affective* narratives of political locations giving rise to a plurality of conditions of change. My interviews with men help me experience how participants “choose” empowering assemblages of affective connections, with differing assemblages creating different agential possibilities of action and ways of being, which I attempt to follow. By bearing witness to men's empowering assemblages, I also sense embodied connections emerging with these assemblages, which creates opportunities to map a subjective mind with an assemblage of affective flows experienced *between us*, producing a cartographic figuration of myself, as a thinking subject, with affective residue providing guidance with possibilities of following moments of resistance and remembered moments that connect. Nomadic modes of remembering not only *affirm* affective space embodying affective forces and molecular flows, but also enable me to enliven *undifferentiated* affective flows through a nomadic capacity to both revisit sedimented memories, as well as normative expectations *sedimenting* affective experiences, when narratives of my self need not fit into tight little boxes.

Engaging men in *kōrero* is a process of engaging the affective flows that one might be experiencing, and keeping men in sight both *through* and *with* these experiences. *Kōrero*, to my understanding, enables me to deal with affective self-reflexive *encounters* with both normative and non-normative processes of subject formation, whereas normative forms of engagement, such as *motivational interviewing*, are *self-reflective* processes of learning to do something *better* with knowledge of ourselves—at the *exclusion* of non-normative

experiences and self-understandings. Motivational interviewing, in other words, is a familiar professional praxis which relies on *pre-figuring* understandings of what Braidotti (2011b) terms the *knowing subject*, limiting knowledge production to the *accrual* of knowledge with the specific subjective coordinates of “rationality, consciousness, moral and cognitive universalism” (p. 212). These coordinates inform the many taken-for-granted professional practices that make up my professional training, and constitute the bulk of the engagement practices I have trained others with, as a taken for granted method of facilitating processes of change for men and boys in the United States, England, and New Zealand. I have introduced the previous narrative to (re)produce a tension, which helps me remember a reliance on motivational interviewing delimits possibilities of thought by constituting, sanctioning, and authorising specific knowledge production practices and *ways of being*. This is done by *excluding*, as undesirable, subjectivities which do not abide by, appropriate, or take up characteristics and traits deemed as desirable to the majoritarian normative (Western) ideal. Aspects of *the other* are also included within this process of subject formation, through negation and exclusion of the *lacking subject* as one that does not possess the requisite skills, attributes, and capabilities of the knowing subject. Power differentials, embodied with a subject *compliant with normative expectations* as compared to non-normative, non-conforming subjectivities, further entrenches subjective formations as predicated on choice, control, and agency. This creates a *binary* logic where *being an other, an excluded other, is a moral failure*, which affords specific individuals, as well as the *natural world*, with different imperatives, duties, and obligations.

Braidotti (2019c) argues normative subjectivity institutes and regulates specific geopolitical power relations and concerns, with practices of exclusion and discrimination constituting and privileging masculinist, able-bodied *heteronormative* figures as the “pinnacle of a hierarchical scale” which rewards “zero-degree of difference” (p. 28) from normative values and expectations. The restrictive (*potestas*) and productive (*potentia*) forces of normative subjectivity condone and restrict particular political and social modes of action and representation, with specific rights and responsibilities granted to the dominant *masculine* normative subject reifying “normality, normalcy, and normativity...by transposing a specific mode of being human into a generalised standard” (p. 26) from which all can be measured. Defined by a neo-liberal individualistic notion of personhood, the unified *masculine heteronormative male figure* is expected to become realised through decisions and actions focused on *doing*. This puts value on personal attributes and skills

required to traverse the hierarchical scale, whilst the *other-ed* subject is expected to strive, to labour, to *desire* the acquisition of what it does not (yet) possess. This figuration of a *masculine heteronormative male figure* puts to work a life hell-bent on achieving maximum autonomy, privileging skills in terms of assessing *cost/benefit, loss/gain, and capacity/incapacity*, obtaining security through comfort and the pacification of pleasure. The binary generative limit of knowledge production which pits a normative figure against non-normative *others*, privileges identifying, navigating, and negotiating a linear representation of knowledge, gained rationally through experience, incrementally and progressively over time.

Kōrero shakes up a process of “how” knowledge is created, with nomadic subjectivities more than *binary alternatives* to *oneself* or, simply, a more *inclusive* approach affording *different* opportunities to the knowledge production practices of a universal, unitary subject. Thinking nomadically, for me, there is a recurring *resonating* of *experience*, or, to put it differently, a *periodicism* to resonating *subjective lines of thought* which produces unpredictable and artful effects, which I contrast with the normative subject as the *repeating* resonance of *self-reflective points* in time. Nomadically following events is not just talking about and assessing consequences of memories, but, more, nomadic thought is to imagine effects and possibilities that emerge with non-repeatable and unrepresentable processes. Acknowledging I might *prefer* certain possibilities over others, which normative thinking links with predictive actions and choices, with nomadic *thought* I *trace* and *map* consequences and possibilities that I *sense* as *difference*. As a style of thinking, nomadically *following* differences in agential *possibilities* becomes an embodied *glow*, rather than a cognitive agency denoting *opportunities* with a choice between *what* is *right* or *what* is *wrong*.

Nomadically *remembering*, we sense something of “the most right” or “more right” when more than one thing, or way of remembering, can be right. I also want to acknowledge *right*, as a concept of thought, can mean many *different* things when producing different *effects*, only some of which I might sense, feel, or know. Embracing Braidotti’s (2011b) use of Deleuze’s concept of *difference* to conceptualise both *most* right and *more* right as *multiplicities*, thinking nomadically enables me to *differentiate* possibilities with an ethical sense of what *feels* most and more *right* a matter of what is *possible* to sustain. Rather than a wilful consideration of *differences* a *choice* between *one* or *the other*, Braidotti’s nomadic ethics enables new possibilities of thought by “reset[ting] the concept of

difference in the direction of a nomadic, nonhierarchical, multidirectional social and discursive practice” (p. 17). This produces nomadic subjectivities capable of *thinking* transpositions of social power relations with unpredictable practices discursively *unfolding* affective experiences of social relationships. Whilst nomadic subjectivities become more and more difficult to sustain when the turbulence of narratives limits non-discursive capacities to sustain different kinds of subjectivities, the undifferentiated generative force of *life*, as *Zoe*, also affirms and empowers *virtual* possibilities of *new* subjectivities.

Starting again, thinking *nomadically*, the subjective *I* is not looking for logical pathways but embraces processual, yet unnameable, figurations of a self which *unfold* affect to embody *difference* produced from, and emerging with, experiencing of the neo-vitalist immanence of life. This enables me to *iteratively* notice affective flows by *repeatedly* encountering events with a multiplicity of *literal*, materialist approaches elaborating both *real* and *virtual concepts* of *self*, creating opportunities to know problems, *differently*, that arise by sensing *difference* that enables, and is enabled with, *affective connections* telling a *story*. Nomadic thinking and writing, as discursive practices, produces a *storying* which tells paradoxical, divergent, heterogeneous, and non-normative experiences of terrible events. A nomadic mode of thinking not only situates the *I* doing the *storying* in often unrecognisable locations, but also, situating the *story* and *storying* as occurring *between* us, enables a machinic capacity of nomadic memory to become *fruitful* with the production of *movement* with new possibilities of remembered moments of resistance to a whole and remembered moments that connect *us*. This both disentangles selves, as figurations of thought, that get caught up with a stuck-edness in the turbulence of affective memory, with nomadic subjectivities also a tactic of making up unfinished and precarious assemblages *mapping* affective possibilities by re-entangling ourselves with *different* experiences of forces acting on and through us.

Much like how pre-interview contacts with men create affective opportunities for keeping me in sight, by enabling permission structures for men to participate in this research with different subjective possibilities transposing boundaries of system/friend/tribal/family subjectivities, I have also come to understand formal 1:1 interviews with men produce *educating* experiences for me, *between* us. Informing understandings of subjectivities as a multiplicity of *processual* practices, my *education* produces becomings with *both* a *defamiliarisation* with reproducible (stable) essentialist notions (of logic and reasoning) *and*

a *familiarisation* with (unrepresentable and un-reproducible) affective flows *conditions* supporting the creation of new (unpredictable and fleeting) subjectivities. Whereas experimenting with subjectivities enables men to provide for their families, make their way in the world, and experience new opportunities that otherwise are not opened to men with histories of violence, experimenting with affective flows enables events where I learn with men *learning* to experience events, with specific narrative tracts gleaned from transcribed interviews enabling me to emplace, cultivate, and propagate nomadic memories of our encounters, as non-narrative notes, into self-written and self-writing texts. Offering affective possibilities creates opportunities to resist/disrupt neoliberal and other normativising practices of self figuration, by affirming an affective flowing *guiding* me around. Rather than explaining or determining *factual* understandings of events, interviews, in other words, are discursive utterances of *material-semiotic* experiences of change processes, *purposefully* constructed to (re)produce *becomings* emerging *between* us with remembered moments of resistance to a whole and remembered moments that connect.

(M) If I'm thinking of alcohol and issues at home, you're threading possibilities around yourself, that's how I see it. How do you connect to those possibilities, how do you extend...to those things that you sense going around you.

(S) I'd say that's a choice you make, which is not for fully logical—you cannot define it. Because you don't know what's the possibility of the future is. It's up to you what kind of risk you are willing to take. To make every decision has a risk, every decision has a consequence.

(M) Hmm. But you don't know the consequences until after they occur

(S) You don't know the consequences...yeah, it might be positive it may be negative. You have to think in both those ways, right? I mean, if I'm driving a car, I can reach faster than a person but I can crash. If I'm sat inside a bus I am safe, but I have to wait for the bus. It's always every decision cannot have just one possibility, or one consequence. You always have to choose, or not choose, you have to understand that there is a possibility that you'll, whatever you're thinking, the consequence may not happen. And after that, are you willing to do it.

(M) And are you still willing to stand by

(S) Stand by

(M) That you've done it

(S) That you've done it. My father could have said no I still want to go. My brother could have said he still wanted to go. I said I wanted to go, I did it.

(M) That reminds me of what you're saying about holding onto and letting go.

(S) At the same time.

(M) So that's a very...rather than seeing it physically like this acted out, it feels very physical.

(S) It feels physical, it is, if the, I mean, if, the thing is that you have to do it the same time. It's not that I am holding it right now and letting it go. You have to do it at the same time, you have to hold on to what you believe.

(M) Without knowing where it's going to take you.

(S) Without knowing. So it's that, thing is, I mean, yes, there's a bit of instability out there, I mean, you don't know but you have to keep on working towards it. I mean, to quote Gita, which is one of religious texts in Hinduism, in Sanskrit it goes, Sanskrit is a very ancient language, it goes (speaking in another language). Basically, dharma is what you got to do, your duty.

(M) Say the word again?

(S) Dharma, Dharma is a duty, which is kind of confused like, in religion Indian religion, but dharma is not religion dharma is your duty. You have to do your duty as the person you are. What comes out of it, the result, may not be according to what you wanted.

(M) Okay.

(S) So basically let's say, if I'm a farmer, it's not telling me that, yeah, you plant rice seeds and you want an apple tree to grow out. No. Your duty, yeah

(M) (Laughter) I will have to remember that. (Laughter).

(S) That's not what it's saying.

(M) You planted rice seeds and you want an apple tree (laughter).

(S) Yeah. That that's not what it is. Your duty is to plant the seeds on time, to do go through all the process as a farmer that you know. It's the basic scientific way or whatever, you do it. Now, whether you have a good crop or not, doesn't actually depend on you. What if the rain doesn't come? What if there's there's a flood tomorrow?

**(Sunil, Interview, 29 May 2021)**

Subjective experiences of disruption, resistance, and connection, as conditions of nomadic becomings, also *acknowledge* other, *virtual* lines of becomings, enabling me to become a figure of thought with multiple ecologies of belonging, by withdrawing and redrawing (un)certain subjective experiences and possibilities that have emerged and arisen. Nomadic subjectivities produce becomings *enlivened* with the *holding onto* and *letting go* Sunil shares with me, helping me understand that when I am seen as an expert by Gandhi Nivas staff, an expert, for instance, in the affective engagement of men producing *safety* for men and their families, if, becoming an expert, as an assemblage of affective experiences, is trackable, observable, and monitorable to staff, then it is also so for the men, which means we can create *affective assemblages as counter-identities* actualising new possibilities of *hope, with* for men. The chaos of the whare, in this sense, becomes *Foucauldian capillaries* which affect *flows* and passes through, circulating amongst those of us present, coalescing and adhering together in different forms, only to disperse again when we leave.

Thinking nomadically, figuring ourselves with nomadic affective experiences of change processes, we can trace affective flow in this chaos, but only so far. Our subjective selves, limited by the material and affective assemblages we are able to create, sustain, and experience, are the result of affective flow creating different opportunities with machinic assemblages of material forces and flows producing agential possibilities of thought and action, with certain mechanic assemblages creating material possibilities of non-violence whilst others create conditions of an emergent violence, with power relations both reducing and empowering possibilities afforded these selves. Supporting men in the fleeting creation of subjective selves, that is, experimenting with *thinking* ourselves as figures of thought, keeping men in sight with an ethics of care creates possibilities of subjective selves *enduring only as long as needed*, before *cracking* and *becoming-otherwise*, when subjectivities of non-violencing become shared work *between us*.



## Chapter 7

## Nomadic Becomings

This collaborative, community-oriented research project invokes socio-politico-cultural milieux of urban environments specific to Auckland, enabling a violence prevention pedagogy made possible with the ontological diversity of cultural, religious, and socio-political backdrops of men's local communities. The urban milieux we share enables violence prevention to *affirm* community resources of stakeholder complexity unlikely to take the same form elsewhere in New Zealand. The spaces *I* occupy within the organisation of Gandhi Nivas are oftentimes ambiguous, fleetingly uncertain, and changeable, and *become present* when I am able to draw upon *multiple ecologies* of belonging to *rethink myself with embodied affect*, rather than the reproducible *penetration* of political space. Thinking of *involvement* as an inherited privilege of *being called upon* to participate in initiatives, meetings, and hui fostering a collective capacity for community action, rather than a privileging position of a role(s), I experience my involvement with a multiplicity of affective *postpersonal* political locations emerging along differential axis of advocacy, critique, and support for knowledge practices produced between Gandhi Nivas, men and their whānau, and our local communities. An *affective* political location empowers relationships with a group of men who *themselves* have *become* participants, by affirming collective assemblages of relational affective forces and flows we share together, enabling me to become figures of thought by withdrawing and redrawing (un)certain subjective experiences and possibilities that have emerged. The affective transposition of affective experiences makes possible shared commitments to developing ethical modes of engagement supporting men, their families and whānau.

Nomadic moments of connection, with both men and organisations within the violence prevention sector, also enable me to remember resistance to a whole, for instance, by challenging relational practices where a researcher familiarises one's self with communities, cultures, participants, and community organisations from afar, if only, in part, to become immersed within processes of subjective formation relative to the research project. This ethnographic "encountering" of *others* uses a geometric analytical arrangement situating the individual researcher as a *conduit*, centring *the* researcher as a location where institutional ethics and professional practices create order within the messy webs of relations and connections in the community. Thinking with Braidotti's nomadic ethics also enables me to *rework* moments of resistance when the (re)production of social norms, social power relationships, institutional expectations, and legal obligations arouse feelings of dangerousness, by enabling processes of subject formation

emerging with *disidentifying* with taken for granted understandings of myself. Nomadically inhabiting affective space means *I* become an *outwardbound* figure of thought, existing as Braidotti (2016) puts it, as a community, a pack, a group, or a cluster of relational forces and flows within a common lifespace.

Rethinking a self as an assemblage of forces and flows *puts to work* nomadic subjectivities with figurations able to occupy space where affect *flows*, enabling me to occupy a multiplicity of postpersonal *political* locations in our communities. Bianco (2018) helps me extend this line of thought further with his critique of normative figurations of a researcher. The normativising potential of a researcher is situated with the *ordering* of an arrangement of unruly forces that are brought to bear with a research assemblage. The prefiguring of an academic researcher with a Kantian philosophical capacity to order forces, according to Bianco, limits “the possibilities of thought by a diplomatic operation aiming at reinforcing the established norms and divisions of cognitive labour” (p. 26). This division of labour maintains and sustains subjective (re)arrangements of unruly forces distinguishing researchers and participants, and although these subject positions have a *shared understandings* of a problem, the researcher is privileged as an expert or knowledge producer, through a form of *masculine identification* of *knowing the problem* (Deleuze, 1994/1968). Bianco helps me open up a tension I experience with sector-wide goals and objectives, thinking with Tocci and Moon (2020), which situates the *prevention of violence* as making violence less possible, reduced, and mitigated. Nomadic memory helps me (re)figure affect as conditions for subjectivities able to *rethink* goals and objectives shared by the diversity of stakeholders within the sector, producing a *reverberating glow* I remember with felt experiences, embodied affect, and bodily sensations. Glow helps evoke the *presence of data* as remembered moments that connect and moments of resistance to a whole, which become *patterns of interconnectedness* with stakeholders and participants. Glow, in this sense, is a *becoming of changing affective flows*, and rather than discursively spelling out, defining, or listing the locations or outcomes of movement, glow invests nomadic narratives with *potentia* by empowering a *multiplicity* of virtual cartographic *becomings* of non-violence always immediately outside of our discursive grasp.

Nomadic subjectivity, in connection with community action and empowerment, also invokes a political imperative of supporting community organisations with change processes afoot within the violence prevention sector, by storying, scribing, and reporting,

that is, *bearing witness* to the “things” that “bend” professional practices, individual organisations, and webs of relationships within the sector. By affectively storying heterogeneous milieus informing, developing, critiquing and supporting different subjective possibilities for community organisations, I attend to *molecular tactics* (Garo, 2008) to empower community practices, not as a methodology of producing, repeating, and sustaining specific organisational developments or pathways leading to successful interventions and practices producing non-violencing, but to map affective flows dispersing unstable and continuous variations of organisational subjectivities keeping men in sight.

Thinking, again, with concepts of *becomings* and processes of *defamiliarisation*, this project engages Deleuzian philosophy and Braidotti’s nomadic theory (2011b) to create newly-empowering affirmative processes of transformative experimentation. With an *ethics* enabling multiplicities of subjectivities embodying intensive difference with the eruption of and interruption to organisational power relations, working *with* non-normative subjects and subjectivities, nomadic subjectivities empower change processes by *embodying* troubling figurations of subjectivities, *artfully* (re)creating *new affective connections* by *both* disentangling specific *majoritarian* specific lines of thought and attending to how *different* experiences of forces act on and through us. This breaks the continuities of narrative stories and deterministic histories, opening up nomadic subjectivity as a form of mapping *affirmative* sensorial and cognitive data where men become *stuck* in change processes. Nomadic narratives of myself, as a researcher with multiple ecologies of belonging, produce utterances able to enunciate troubling figurations as *un-bounding* conditions of subject formation, *increasing* my ability to enter into modes of relation with multiple others as an existential activity of making my way in the world.

Becoming accountability to Gandhi Nivas, then, as a researcher, is a matter of (re)producing *conditions* of thought *enabling* witness-able accounts *empowering* otherwise *un-seen* processes of change for men under the organisation’s care. Non-normative cartographies of *affective* experiences, as *creative spaces* tracing *processes* of *transformation*, brings forth “becoming-subjects” of non-violence unable to be represented with normative masculinities and hegemonic notions of violence and non-violence. Engaging with perpetrators of violence, and an organisation which celebrates *difference* within ethical frameworks of care informing a diversity of professional practices

and experiences, this research also attends to the construction of identities and subjectivities producing experiences of marginalisation and other-ing. Our work *between us* supports the synthesis and mobilisation of collaborative sector-wide tactics *suspending* practices of judgement cohering with the *pathologisation of difference*, which men experience with *regulating* and *normativising* processes of identity-driven subjectivities. Men's Work is about upholding the dignity of men, and their family and whānau, whilst contributing to the development of ethical practices of transformation by acknowledging the complexity of social power relations enabling violence in the home, and the implications for *non-violencing* as unfamiliar, if sometimes uncomfortable, open-ended change processes. Through 1:1 interviews and Men's Groups, and informed with molecular experiences of fieldwork, this research project provides opportunities to engage with a wide range of discursive artefacts, including fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, supervision records, and other assemblages of affectivity and intensive difference traced through emails and text chats to my friends and whānau. This enables me to trace *newly* empowering possibilities of thought with iterative *autoethnographic* analyses of my experiences of change processes, suggesting, as experiments with multiple ecologies of belonging, with what infinite possibilities of thought will this work have made an affirmative difference in the world.

Situating myself within the research project as a man, or a researcher, *I* is neither a beginning nor an entry point to understand men's accounts of change processes. Thinking with Braidotti's (2011a) nomadic image of a thinking subject, rather than a representative figure of *topos* with a *faciality* of the male sexed body, the subjective "I", as a concept of thought, is transposed, becoming a multiplicity of figures pointing, moving, and bending in a multiplicity of paradoxical and contradictory directions. Thinking *I* as a multiplicity of figures, then, I am able to revisit memories of chance encounters, planned interviews, and informal men's groups, acknowledging the inherent vulnerability of posthumanist processes of self formation to remember events, *differently*, to *unfold* possibilities of autoethnographic narratives to (re)produce politics of locations. Nomadic subjectivity enables me to reconfigure compositions of an interconnected self with fleeting moments of connection with vulnerabilities, sensed as disruptions produced with feelings of resistance and discontent arising with changes to my selves as objects of thought. Rather than critiquing a nomadic subjectivity of self-formation, with a Kantian humanist ethics judging what is gained or lost, instead, rethinking a question of representation with a Deleuzian concept of immanence, I envisage nomadic subjectivity

with possibilities of invoking interconnectivity and relationality as conditions both sustaining and limiting possibilities of experiencing change processes. With the emergence of affective difference, as coordinates producing new politics of locations and new knowledge practices, I begin, again, to remember, excitedly, of Jack transposing experiences as a way of putting concepts of himself *into action*.

By introducing *vulnerabilities* to conceptualise difference *differently*, to rethink our selves *differently* in terms of connections with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities, forces and flows, our hope as men, as participants, a hope *between us* is that our work producing *interruptions* to a sense of self welcomes other men to experiment with the unpredictability of imagination to create possibilities of change. Thinking with Braidotti and Pisters' (2012) introduction of Bogue's (2012) Deleuzoguattarian concept of *Chaosmopolitanism*, in my own words, I hope the research project produces a call to others for *collective* political and philosophical action embracing the possibilities of disrupting and transforming social and community practices of gendered individualism with an ethics of interconnectivity and collaboration. Following Deleuze (1985), my hope is that this research project, by crafting subjectivities with an assemblage of micropolitical actions and molecular processes, imbues cartographic figures of subjects with capacities to "hijack speech...to create vacuoles of non communication, circuit breakers" (p. 175). Our work, following Braidotti (2009) and a multiplicity of others (see Boundas, 2009), acknowledges a hope, that by embodying *difference* produced from, constituted by, and emerging with our experiences of participating in the research, that *something* of our experiences *travels*, and, as a product of our relationship with Gandhi Nivas, the work *between us* creates new opportunities for the audience to *learn* and *think*, differently, as the future unfolds.

Boundas (2006) tells me that nomadic subjectivity, as a figure of thought, supplements an ethics of experimentation with "powerful politico-philosophical imperatives and tactics" (p. 19), and with thoughts of Deleuze's philosophy of *becoming worthy*, we hope our participation enables, affirms, and puts to work Gandhi Nivas' culturally responsive engagement practices within the violence prevention sector. By creating conditions where *difference* is no longer a pejorative, we propose a desire to work critically *from within* formations of self-hood, social power relationships, and identity to enable unforeseen processes of men *becoming* non-violent through moments where we connect, and moments we resist, becoming part of a whole. Men's memories, *our* memories, produce

possibilities of non-violencing by drawing on material potentialities of *embodying difference*, as a power/conatus flowing through us, to produce conditions of new political space, as stepping stones, towards more sustainable connections with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities, forces and flows. This is *our Men's Work*.

The litter on the ground is all that is left of people passing through the parking lot. The men do not take notice of the piles of waste strewn about, yet, blown by the wind, garbage piles up against buildings, accumulates in the bushes, and collects in the gutters. It's a rough place, dirty and uncompromising. I wonder how comfortable we will be cooking food and eating together; it's as uninviting as I feared. The old pieces of cloth and plastic straws I push to the side remain a problem for another day, yet, a small patch of grass, now free of trash, opens up to become the spot we'll put the BBQ. Doug and Jack settle themselves at either side of me, talking over the flames I am lighting. As I make ready the chicken wings and lamb chops, the men reveal a patience and calm, their conversation welcomes others out of the house. Tentative at first, John and Sete stay at the edges of our group, close enough to share jokes and discuss politics, but far enough away that leaving the group becomes easy. Everyone notices, yet no one mentions, another figure walking amongst and through us, his thin stature and intense gaze propelling him forward, slipping between us. The invitation I call out, an offer for him to join us for some kai, never quite reaches him. Yet, as he continues walking around the house his pace slows...

Turning to no one in particular, I sense danger with the fleeting smile that emerges from his lips and eyes and skin, waning in a matter of moments to become a grimace of pain. I hold up a lamb chop I am turning over, saluting him with food, to welcome, invite, and encourage him to join us.

Jack and Doug are pals, a relationship that I am part of, but not privy to, curious about, but not jealous of. Minding the BBQ, I notice they're hard at it. I am warmed by their humour, patience, and compassion for each other, which passes the blue flames and meaty smoke in front of me, becoming part of a welcome offering, to Sete, John, and the mysterious figure. Sete quietly kicks a few cans away as he sidles next to Jack on the cement curb, whilst John rests comfortably atop the still air-conditioning unit in front of Doug, both occupying space, I begin to notice, that I would have taken up if I hadn't been tending the BBQ. Jack, talking to Sete, has brought a photo album that he shares. Cooking the chicken legs and lamb chops on the BBQ, I notice Sete is listening to Jack as he reworks each of the dozens of photos to make sense of who he has become—and continues becoming. Jack periodically motions in a sweeping gesture, his arms wide to encompass not only those of us present but those no longer with us, expressing appreciation that previous iterations of the Men's Group are to thank for this. Doug's attention is on John, a Māori man, and together they share common experiences of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, with Doug weaving together feelings of hope created in the midst of a life rife with the traumas of violence and alcohol use.

Jack and Doug, I notice, are communicating with each other amidst the complexities of these risky encounters, not through words or body language, but eruptions of affectivity which map the unfolding affective encounters they are sharing with others. I am there, collaborating in the creation of political space without participating in the production of particular political locations, dutifully bearing witness Jack and Doug support John and Sete with stories of creativity, difference, and change. I am part of but not privy to these becomings, I'm curious about but not jealous of the connections between Jack and Doug that produce capacities to bring hope to men residing in emergency accommodation. Watching them create a welcoming therapeutic space together, I am privileged with an opportunity to bear witness to relationships creating new possibilities of life, relationships of fleeting complexity that make sense only for as long as is needed. Together, cooking kai together as an expression of the Men's Group, as the mysterious figure introduces himself as Parker, we are finding out what a body can do.

**Men's Group: Jack, Doug, Sete, John, Parker**

**GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

**26 February 2023**

## **Becoming-woman**

*or*

### ***how I learned to cook with men***

Retracing memories of evenings cooking kai with men, enables me to revisit what becomes of connecting a machinic assemblage of men (Jack, Doug, and myself) with men (Sete, John, and Parker) experiencing the Gandhi Nivas whare. This helps me figure narratives with what comes along with me, what is experienced as problematic, what is needed to sustain these connections between us. Whilst my own assembling of risk and danger remain important, Jack is the best key witness to processes and spaces our collaboration produces, yet I wonder of introducing Jack as an authoritative contributor helping to organise what is brought into play. Cixous (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981) helps me understand the dangers of this as the masculine return of a masculine economy, suggesting my politics and Jack's politics are representative, interchangeable, and replaceable. Rethinking Jack as a participant-informant helps me revisit an understanding of his contributions not as a beginning, or a different manner of beginning with a different middle, but by writing on all sides, time after time, and starting again, Jack's involvement enables narratives to form not what men are saying or doing, but, still following Cixous, to enter into a relationship with writing that accesses processes of becoming-woman. A process of becoming-woman accounts for issues of penetration and full presence that men write from, ushering in a discursive fullness that is not incompatible with fleeting presences, unpredictable encounters, and the affirmation of difference. Eschewing theatrical definitions of roles and masculine notions of authority and truthfulness, the inclusion of Jack as a principal witness to political space-times we bring into being cooking kai with men, is not a production of being, nor the production of a being. Rather, narratives create space of a group by centring Jack as partially occupying space between us.

Connecting Jack's privileged position of principle witness with my experiences of academic lecturing throughout this research project, creating and occupying space of a lecturer is the forming of institutional connections with students, which are brought to bear with community-oriented academic research practices and political narratives of national and international significance pertaining to violence prevention, with which I make sense of academic expectations and course material. My storying of experiencing tensions of masculinity work within the violence prevention sector within an academic setting connects with Jack's involvement as principle witness, as both become a co-

constructed production of subjective capacities and opportunities available through narrative storying. This enables me to craft narratives, with some moderations and changes to formatting, without a subject/object in mind, helping me resist putting Jack's narratives into action in a rush to application by instilling specific values and worths to Jack's experiences of change processes. Interviewing Jack, on four separate occasions, creates opportunities for a multiplicity of contributions, not just those limited to his "participation" in specific Men's Groups or discursive fragments gleaned from interview transcripts, to be shared with Gandhi Nivas and other men, as well as audiences following his narratives elsewhere, enabling us to narrate stories *between us* about what it has been like to participate in this research project. Jack's narratives, as the storying of pre-personal becomings with the emergence of postpersonal political locations, are not necessarily emerging in a geometrical relationship *alongside me*; our interviews are discursive utterances of becomings, *together, between us*, (re)producing Jack, as a figure of thought written *on all sides*, with subjectivities able to be (re)written again, time after time.

Jack's privileged contribution unfolds as attempts at uttering ineffable experiences of *encountering* something that is befalling and bending us, privileging experiences not as truths, but conditions with which a sense of *glow(ing)* emerges. Tracing Jack's contributions as nomadic utterances enables me to attempt to embody forces and flows with an empirical practice of tracing processes of affective change otherwise off limits to normative subjectivity, creating knowledge of what a body can do, and creating knowledge of what a body can do in connection with others. Crafting experiences by *sensing* different connections, my attempts at discursive enunciations and stutterings enable me to ask *different* questions, *differently*, by privileging an ethics of movement where thought *glows* textual selections of events in the middle of things, bringing to bear experiences of *bending* empowering embodied subjectivities unimaginable to me alone. By also bringing to bear experiences of *bending together*, as experiences occurring *between us*, the co-creation of embodied affectivity tracing change processes helps me make sense of Cixous's (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981) critique of *masculine* forms of narrative writing, where she implores us to remember;

**The question a woman's text asks is the question of giving-  
"What does this writing give?"  
"How does it give?"**

**And talking about nonorigin and beginnings, you might say it "gives a send-off" (p. 53)**

Thinking with Jack, the notion of a send-off helps shift tensions I experience when crafting writing that provides the affective situated-ness of preparing meals with participants as compensation for contributing interviews. The messy situated-ness of cooking for men with men staying in emergency accommodation and when, as a participant in a Men's Group, we visit unknown others at the Gandhi Nivas whare, becomes an embodied glow which helps me trace, rather than map, what Cixous (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981) conceptualises as "a particular relationship between two economies" (p. 42). These events are not easily resolvable, that is, in a masculine sense, moveable to other circumstances, environments, and places we might experience in our immediate environs. For me, I remember struggling with a challenge of these experiences as non-finishing, non-productive, non-concluding work I do with other men. The presence of absence, of something not being done, achieved, or obtained, is misdirection wrought by familiarity with institutional and sector-wide expectations of masculine productiveness, which forces me to re-work my way back into capillaries of space, where becomings, as a researcher, enfold what we "got" in the molecular magic-ing of these events in a feminine economy.

Mixtures of loss, grief, and the creation of new embodiment through assemblages of men eating dinners of food cooked with other men, are strange encounters where creating new possibilities of experiencing affective flow with men becomes possible. Every iteration of a Men's Group, and every encounter between groups of men cooking food at the whare, present different challenges when our experiences are no longer governed, as Cixous (Cixous & Kuhn, 1981) puts it, by rules determining "exactly as it should be" (p. 42). The feminisation of disorder is a familiar affective space for men accessing violence prevention services with Gandhi Nivas, but rather than experiencing a backlash from men, who might otherwise approach messiness with disdain, and, in other circumstances, might engage in violence as a gendered response to experiencing affective messiness, a stickiness of fleshy connections becomes meaningful for us when rethinking experiences of social power relationships, academic/professional practices, and everyday life events. Fleshy connections condition the emergence of political space between us, disrupting the possibilities of conflict arising with what Cixous calls couple-ing, a form of territorializing affective space which brings to bear binary and hierarchical oppositions with masculine

interrogations of the distribution of matters of sign(ificance) and sign(ification). Affective disarray presents opportunities to resist taken for granted expectations that, becoming a group of men, together, requires a “transformation in the relation of one to the other” (p. 44). The material-semiotic violence that becomes conditioned when we are required to relate to the other also produces escape routes for men where violence is less possible, reduced, and mitigated. A political space of fleshy connections affirms different experiences of dangerous for men and does not require the Kantian notion of transcending the other, that, for instance, violence prevention interventions premised on developing shared notions of empathy assume. The outward-bound affective mapping of affective experiences between us, reveals and affirms difference, not through an expectation of recognition representing the static sameness of being ascribing normative identity formation, where difference delimits the presence of excluded other, but by putting to work the virtual possibilities of difference to enliven pre-personal experiences of movement as postpersonal political locations men can experiment with, in their own terms, with their own experiences of daily life. Becoming a group, together, conditioned with the affective space between us, is a matter of compossibility (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), with the spaces we occupy a series of differential affective relations men bring to bear with the affective conditions from which they emerge.

Our conversations, which become problematic for men when we do not have familiar knowledges to talk about the gendering of affect, messiness, and order, become transposed when our *kōrero* produces embodied affective memories as part of a material-semiotic knot of un-surveilled becomings. A glow we experience produces new capacities from forgotten, erased, and eradicated possibilities of thought, to sense the becomings of our becomings in messy capillaries of spaces we share. In these spaces between us, we are able to explore, map, and experiment with figures of thought forming along an axis of retreat and resistance to subjective figurations that otherwise conflict with masculine norms and self-understandings men bring with them to the whare. Our *kōrero*, which many men understand through cultural understandings of ethics that help them resist moral imperatives imported from normative, that is, western cultures, also helps craft non-normative subjectivities capable cracking under the strain of the extremes of affect from which these experiences emerge. Embodying extremes of affect, for me, connects with Flood’s (2019) imperative that the violence prevention sector both must appeal to and intensify reconstructed, emancipatory, and anti-patriarchal interests. The embodiment of affect, in safe spaces where men’s encountering of messy affective flow

produces new opportunities to transpose relationships pre-figured along gendered lines, becomes meaningful when this helps us keep each other in sight with our diverse understandings, and experiences, of everyday life events, particularly when unfamiliarity can also arouse feelings of dangerousness. When fleshy connections help counter-actualise events we barely have words to describe, the narratives we produce become meaningful as minority storylines articulating new starting points which send us off towards new understandings of what a body can do.

Jack calls me early. He is caught up with domestic errands...picking up chairs for his daughter's wedding, he is unable to meet until 4 p.m. We are cooking dinner for men residing at the whare tonight, part of Jack's compensation for participating in the research project. Jack explains, again, a nervousness. His experience of making a meal is limited to food he can heat up on the stove, in the oven, or with the microwave. He doesn't exactly cook, he says. Jack is surprised when I share with him...we're creating an event, a social encounter, cooking for other men, whom we've never met. I'm not sure how many will be at the whare; how many will be around; how many will want to join us. If Jack is nervous because he does not know how to cook, I am also nervous I don't know how to cook for these men, either.

*This is a big deal for us.*

Hanging up with Jack, I reach out to the whare, for the third time, whilst roaming the supermarket. Adbul eats halal; he is Muslim. Countdown does not carry halal products. None of the fresh chicken, beef or lamb will suffice; I leave the store empty handed, and wonder;

*Have I left Jack empty handed, sharing my nervousness with him?*

*Have I asked too much of us?*

Contemplating options, I worry. And worry. And worry. I've come to understand eating is often one of the few ways to break up the day, for men staying at the whare. Many show up at the whare with no possessions, but for the clothing they're wearing; eating, together or alone, is something men can do for themselves, and, often, others, in challenging circumstances. A cup of instant noodles can both affirm the precarity of their living circumstances, and bring momentary thanks and appreciation for what little they have, helping men remember not what they've lost, but what they're working towards.

*How will men, who are expecting dinner, respond, if our meal does not suffice?*

I park the car in a hurry as I get to the whare, the forgotten halal butcher across the street suddenly remembered. I get to the shop breathlessly wondering of the panic subsuming me. With my minimal knowledge of halal food, the clerks in the shop look at me with a patient interest, their muted questions and smiles breaking a tension arising with the unfamiliar discomfort of roaming around a halal butchery. I share with them;

*This is a big deal for us.*

At the whare...in between unpacking the food, pots, and crockery, I tidy up the dining area and discuss with house staff, that two men residing at the whare will join us, including Aotea. Pacing the house from room to room whilst on an electronically monitored curfew, he joins us, and offers to serve as temporary and intermittent moral support whilst I furiously chop copious amounts of vegetables and await Jack's arrival.

We still don't know how many men from Papakura will be coming when Jack arrives. Before I can ask him about how he's doing, he asks if I can stop for a second; he wants to share something with me. Jack has given it a lot of thought, he wants me to know he welcomes the challenge of creating a meal more complicated than anything he has ever cooked. He is nervous about the unfamiliar food; he's worried about not knowing how to cook; he's scared he won't like the food. He's afraid of ruining it for other men. Yet...he knows he also feels excitement; to be cooking for a large group of men, several house staff, for he and I. He wants today to be a celebration...

*It feels strange, and I don't really know what it means, but I think I'm feeling...privileged, to become part of men's change processes. This is a big deal for me.*

We set out vegetables for Jack to chop...he is gracefully methodological in following the examples of cut vegetables I set out on the table. Cutting carrots and beans, potatoes and kumara, we continue talking openly about the degeneration and debilitation of Jack's body...the result of a congenital disease implicating his nervous system. Every day Jack must reassess and familiarise himself with changes to his ability to balance, his legs increasingly less responsive to the demands of everyday life. Walking involves careful consideration of the journey and terrain ahead of him, identifying spaces of safety, to rest and linger.

Sitting still and sitting down are just as problematic, as his legs often do have the strength to lift himself up and remain standing. The Men's Group helps him to remember, helps him not to forget that, in retirement, new opportunities have emerged for his family. Jack shares of becoming emotionally supportive of his daughter's wish, to get married to her partner of over 20 years, how this has become possible through his involvement with the Men's Group. Finishing the vegetables, Jack's participation is influenced by a need to sit, stand, and walk around the room on a regular basis. Movement becomes a strategy, helping to minimise the debilitating acute pain always on the verge of shutting down a capacity to sit, stand and walk around. Jack, unhampered by the blunt knife he uses, sings to me;

*...each cut of a vegetable is a chance to cut anew, one more opportunity to see what a body can do...*

Jack's knife thuds, time and time again, with sounds of "chop chop chop" against the board...each cut creating a loud and profound (if slightly unnerving) kathunk. As the knife, carrot, and cutting board blur into a single motion of movement...I wonder;

*What is Jack doing?*

As I await the oven to heat up...I wonder what unfamiliar possibilities emerge when we no longer want to remember abilities and intentions, causation and effect. I want to welcome memories of touch, feel, and duration...but I pause...

*How will I remember this?*

The men from Papakura arrive. Pita, the other resident at the whare, helps me gather the men before they disperse around whare. Greeting the men, he is also listening, I notice, attending to the men moving around us;

*He's wading in...*

Positioned in the kitchen to welcome the bustling forces of ten strangers coming together, I marvel to Jack;

*There's a lot of us here...and no one person knows the name of everyone present.*

Rather than introducing ourselves, the men, us, we...congregate together near the food Jack and I are preparing. Unnamed men's inquisitiveness reaches us across languages and cultures. As we become unbounded by the things that set us apart, I am not sure what emerges.

*How will I remember this?*

As Jack and I finish cooking...something is happening...the three women staff do not sit aside. Although this is a Men's Group, the women transported the men here, are here with us **now**... collaborating yet not participating, they both stand amongst us and between us, but not apart from us, their presence, they say, is only to bear witness to our get together tonight. They're interested in how men become otherwise.

The table is set, the food is ready, the men are all present...and suddenly I'm aware of a kerfuffle. Pita has waded in again, and mentioning the presence of Christian and Muslim and Hindu men amongst us, he asks for us to bless the food. Jack says he's not particularly religious yet wants to respect the men present. He offers a short prayer, before pausing a moment, and begins again;

*...thanks for the opportunities of participating in the Men's Group, thanks for understandings and knowledges of change processes, and thanks for the chance to cook good food...*

Opening his arms wide, his voice filling the room with grace and humbleness, Jack thanks me, for these possibilities, and closes by acknowledging the men, who, if like him, are nervously joining him in sharing food. In unison, I am asked by all six men to go first...tearfully, I stumble...unable to speak and move, I motion...

...towards Jack, who, in turn, defers...

...to the men.

The men are laughing as they plate their food, whilst Jack and I sit quietly together, attending to a shared tiredness arising from our efforts. The men often and frequently become excitable...they are enjoying the food by being, together, with other men. We eat, joke, and banter, experimenting with the unfamiliar social interactions between men. No-longer amongst strangers, yet lost amidst a journeying together, Jack and I almost forget to eat, ourselves.

Two hours later, thinking how to "end" the night, as I contemplate how to "close" a get-together that is neither "my" dinner nor at "my" house...I think about Pita as I notice Jack, amidst the men, becoming imperceptible.

*He's wading in.*

*This is a big deal for us.*

As the men and women leave the whare, startled and bewildered, I ask Jack.

*What have we become?*

**Men's Group: Jack  
Pita, Aotea (Ōtāhuhu)  
Tim, Sayam, Abdul (Papakura)  
Ōtāhuhu and Papakura Staff  
GN1-Ōtāhuhu**

## Becoming-molecular

I purposefully situate narratives of fieldwork experiences, selection of interview transcripts, and narratives of men's groups *out of order*, putting to work pieces of writing to disrupt ways of remembering affective experiences, unlocking the sedimenting patterns of actualised forces. An iterative process, this creates possibilities of transposing affective conditions making the subject and objects of the writing known to me, helping me (re)encounter strange, bewildering, and often disconcerting affective traces of long forgotten experiences with men (and women). Nomadically re-remembering an actualisation of forces sustaining specific cartographic figurations of the nomadic self creates opportunities, to remember *anew* affective conditions of actualising patterns of forces making the subject known. No longer a container to be managed, *nomadic* time flows in eddies, not lines, and with nomadic modes of remembering becoming unevenly tumultuous, I no longer need to recall events in ways governed by reason. Instead, remembering a life is overtaken by overflowing memories, both old and not yet formed, enabling conversations with myself of how life is lived and how life might be lived differently. Remembering a life in a nomadic mode deterritorializes the individual neoliberal management strategies of my self, my body's capabilities, and my life experiences, enabling new forms of embodiment with reterritorializing processes of affective change. Colebrook (2002), reminding me affect becomes unrecognisable to the normative subject without a linear container of time, suggests time understood through *difference* is to envisage affect with experiences of *bending* and *glow*. In other words, remembering affect, we remember processes of becoming *otherwise*. My figuration of nomadic subjectivity helps me think in locations forming *between* temporal locations, with specific nomadic figures a *continuum* of thought activating *stable* identities in order to deterritorialize affective conditions in a process of producing *fleetingly uncertain* figures of thought.

Braidotti (2011b) helps me figure a nomadic subject with modes of remembering producing a "collectively assembled, externally-related and multilayered subject" (p. 210). This *outward-bound* relationality maps complex interconnections with affective forces and flows, sustaining specific nomadic subjects with a cartography of memories capable of providing a materialist account of the politics of a location I draw upon *between* different figurations of a self unable to be represented with linear, chronologically differing subjects. No longer beholden to immobile cuts of time, Bogue (2006) helps me write with *events* from "a time set free from the narrative causality of history and undetermined in its

relation to the future” (p. 219). Affectivity becomes an *ethical activator* of the past, mobilising resources with untimely visions of limits to a nomadic subject’s radically immanent flesh. Thinking nomadically, as an artful and imaginative *unbounding* of limits, nomadic subjectivity enables me to introduce differences of affective flow as probe-heads, creating possible lines of flights from taken for granted understandings of the world by introducing affectivity as conditions giving rise to alternative social relations making possible alternatively possible worlds.

Thinking, again, with probe-heads, enables me to revisit experiences of 1:1 interviews with men as experiments with the *virtual realm* (Rae, 2016). Iteratively reading transcripts of our interviews, I can rethink memories of affective traces where men’s figurations of social power relations, gendered power dynamics, and patriarchal interests become present. Rethinking these experiences, I can bring to bear tensions I continue experiencing when re-reading transcripts, in order to re-imagine feelings of discomfort and danger when I ignore, avoid, or attempt to move past men’s political locations I disagree with. A probe-head *plays* with affective materiality and temporality as I continue following along with men’s narrative storying, enabling me to embody new forms of resistance by creating new social assemblages of *invention* from *matter at hand*. Probe-heads become a capacity for thinking the emergence of new possibilities of connections with others, helping us understand possibilities and opportunities of a life with the affirmation of *differences*, rather than the authority of experience, a component of new *machinic* affective assemblages occurring *between us*. Probe-heads become conditions for forgetting to remember systems of signification, representation, and the gendering of affect, and, instead, experiment with the creation of new political space, as heterogenous stepping stones, towards more sustainable connections of fleshy connections not afforded constituency with taken for granted politics of locations men bring with them into the whare. Probe-heads allow me to become actively engaged with the *politics of the present* in the violence prevention sector by following men’s *different* arrivals, occupations, and departures from affective space; this is *our Men’s Work*.

Thinking of probe-heads as an engagement practice, I am able to re-remember tensions I continue experiencing as dwelling along an axis of retreat and resistance to subjective figurations men produce through their participation in this research project. Re-encountering affective memories of men’s narratives of change, narrative subjective figurations we produce between us no longer need to maintain particular normativising

political locations I might share as a profeminist man, but, instead, nomadic memory sustains figurations of a self capable of *cracking* under the extreme strain of remembering affective flow. Thinking probe-heads a tactic of thought I embody with a nomadic subject, I privilege probe-heads as *loci of* micropolitical acts capable of tracing *stepping stones* of change and difference. Probe-heads enable a *praxis of thinking* thought with *concepts*, putting concepts to work from the *middle* to disrupt *logics* of thought that sustain and maintain the gendering of affect, the gendering of social norms, and the gendering of social power relations. A concept of probe-heads enables me to embody a nomadic image of subjectivity which is always already in a process of being *newly produced* as it is explained.

With an image of subjectivity a machinic assemblage of affective forces and flows we bring to the whare, Braidotti's nomadic ethics (2011b) help me figure subjectivities capable of creating knowledge *anew* by *rethinking* affect as specific conditions of existence. Probe-heads, then, become a *profeminist* praxis neither requiring me to empower *men* nor necessitating men become *empowered* with specific affective figurations of probe-heads occurring between us. Probe-heads contribute to and *intensify* men's self-figurations with the possibility of reconstructed, emancipatory, or anti-patriarchal interests arising with affective differences. An *emergent* practice, probe-heads produce *becomings* affirming change processes, and extending this further, my experience with probe-heads becomes a practice of experimenting with a multiplicity of affective *postpersonal* political locations emerging along differential axis of advocacy, critique, and support for men's knowledge practices. Occupying affective space figured with probe-heads as molecular conditions of existence, the figures I trace with affective memories of our encounters become enabled by withdrawing and redrawing (un)certain subjective experiences and possibilities I narratively transpose, making possible shared commitments to developing ethical modes of engagement supporting men, their families and whānau. Probe-heads are risky struggles, of struggling with a praxis of always rethinking how one embodies a *busy-ness* of a self by drawing upon remembered encounters with a variety of human, non-human, and more-than-human forces and flows. Men's Work, in this fashion, becomes a process of rethinking encounters *between* us as opportunities to enter into, occupy, and depart affective space we share with men.

By co-producing experiences of bending with conditions of narrative flows that glow different *hesitations* and *pauses*, engaging men in the violence prevention sector

becomes enabled with active disengagements with existing political operations that have passed, whilst also enabling us to trace future possibilities without clear outcomes. It is within an intersection of entangled affective lines that a knowledge of risk, deviance, and difference becomes an integral part of academic, professional and personal subjectivities. The *becomings* emerging with differing probe-heads, traced with nomadic narratives following affective memories adhered with our encounters in the whare, help me figure subjective experiences with what comes along with me, what is experienced as problematic, what is needed to sustain men's becomings of non-violencing. Probe-heads help me re-figure nomadic encounters as *processes* where we *re-work experiences of and knowledge about* risk, deviance, and difference, helping men, including myself, dwell on gendered *pattern-ings* of thinking, felt experiences, and behaviours producing a dangerousness to others. Thinking with a nomadic subject enables men to share affective experiences, enlivening *becomings* as open-ended processes capable of transposing dangerous self-thinking habits, helping us wonder what a body can do.

(K) And, you know, you don't want to be going back to your, whatever situation you were in, where you weren't getting the positive feedback from, obviously, your emotions. If they're trying to hold on to you, it's because you're having a good time.

(M) To a certain extent, that wasn't working.

(K) That wasn't working, that's right. That's sort of why you're wanting to change, eh? Yeah, but yeah, that how we talked about that space in between, what happens in process changes. It's, yeah, it'd be like, yeah, just trying to figure that all out. I don't think there's a formula to it, that would be great if it was!

(M) If you find it let me know!

(K) Yeah, that's right. Like, you know, like, are we trying to find a formula? You know, we're, like I said, like, you know, we said our goal was...

(M) What was that conversation like for you guys? How was that talking of that, that sort of vagueness. You know, the in between bits. Because, often we think of change as in I want this or I want that. I want to become that person. I want to become this. Good on you for having hopes and aspirations, but we're not talking about that here, are we? We were talking about things that we're not necessarily in control of.

(K) Yeah that's right.

(M) Is that a conversation that you guys have had before?

(K) Yes

(M) yeah?

(K) Yup, we have had it, a conversation about this before. Just on behaviours and how we deal with our emotions and stuff like that. Wanting to change a few things that we had done, or we didn't like. You know, we were thinking as, like, processes of change, but it was change from something that we had been used to doing. So it was process of change looking back on it.

(M) It's important to recognise that I think.

(K) Yeah. Definitely definitely. We had good conversations about a few other topics that we had, where we had, you know, just coming up. That one partner wasn't happy about me doing or I wasn't happy about her doing. Not big things, but when you've been together with your partner for quite a long time, it's surprising how little and dumb you guys are arguing about. Sometimes if you're, you know, are you looking for an argument? Looking for an argument, like, that wasn't even worth bringing up sort of thing, but yeah, we've sort of pushed our way through and, you know, made a conscious effort, you know. Was only trying, I was only, I'd only ever bring something up where I really had a problem with it, like, you know. It's, but looking back, it wasn't a big problem, you know, it's something small that she did. I felt like it was intentional to have her to push my buttons, but we worked on that, so that was process of change, and we did manage to change a few things. Not, ah, it's quite hard to break habits, eh, you know? Especially if you've been living with her for a long time.

(M) Just to clarify in my head then, are you bringing up different things or are you bringing things up differently? You use that, you know, using that example of what you just said, you felt you brought something up, because at the time it felt like you may have had your buttons pushed, for instance. So how was that different to maybe how you might bring that up, say, this evening, for instance?

(K) So no, it's like, I'm, it was like a, just like a, it was like behavioural, or not behavioural things, it was ummm...so I'll give you an example. So the kids have a morning routine for getting ready for school. I felt like I had an easier way of getting them ready and through this whole morning ordeal, but she was stuck into what she knew, and in what worked for her, and didn't. So, I was talking to her about, you know, what about this way and that way, and this way. It's makes sense to me, does it make sense to you? It's so much more easier, but ahhh I've done it this way forever, just let me do it my way! So, bringing that up before got into an argument, because we knew we had to identify how, you know, like, instead of burying issues, it was what we do, it's not, you know, it's sounds so much small, but I will just bury it. I won't bring this up too, because I don't want it to turn into another argument. But then after, you know, six years, six months, you'd think, you know just pushing it down as all men do, just hide their emotions and stuff, and it ends up coming back. Like...

(M) It doesn't go away?

(K) No it doesn't go away. Just you know, you have a point where you explode and you think it was something that she did that day, that to make you explode or whatever. But it was just built up little things you had pushed away. So we sort of identified that and, you know, told each other, if it's something you really want to get off your chest, just say it, you know, we will, I will, I won't get, you know, upset, on you bringing it up for a start, and we're working on things like that way.

(M) Because that's an important, for me, that's a very big difference. So when you're saying I wanna do it this way, she says I'm wanna do it that way, it's almost like whose logic is better?

(K) Better? Yeah.

(M) But when you say if it's important, something you want to share, it's something else entirely different. There's sharing involved.

(K) Yeah.

(M) And that's the important bit isn't it.

(K) Yeah that's right. Yeah so like she my partner is very stubborn. Like even if there's an easier way to do a task, and she's been doing it, she's still not willing to change. She'd rather do it her own way. But because we had talked to each other about, you know, let's bring it up, you know, and talk about this, just trying, you know, get through this like adults, it gave me the ability to bring stuff up that I want, that, you know, she in the past she wasn't willing to change. But now I was bringing it up in the setting, she had to make a conscious effort on, you know, acknowledging what I was saying. Ummm yeah.

(M) What was that like for you...to be to be seen differently than...

(K) It was...it was different. A lot of it was her ideas so I was just going by, you know, she wanted to set the sort of the situation up. So I was just giving her feedback. Sort of not feedback, but yeah, she had sort of brought the idea up and because I was used to talking about my emotions were there, and she wanted to talk about everything, and that sort of gave her a platform to be able to ask me questions, and for me to open up to her about the certain things. I was just, I was not using it to my advantage or anything like that, I was just, you know. If it was there, and she could use it, I was going to use it back, you know, use it, too. Just sort of made us open up. Yeah yeah. Getting back to your question.

(M) I think you did a much better job answering than I...

(K) Veered off got a little bit lost in my own in answering that question.

(M) That's why I record these interviews.

**(Kingi, Interview, 16 July 2021)**



## Prologue Reprised

### *A Praxis of Becomings: An Ethics of Self-care*

At the end of this thesis, narratives in Men's Work that return me to a praxis are threads that are *left hanging*, textual selections of affective connections that are not (yet) possible. As acts of creation which eschew normative knowledge production practices of description, representation, and reproduction, *something* is befalling me when I (re)encounter these threads, a sense of *glowing* signalling the possible emergence of *political sensibilities*, otherwise off-limits, *for now*. Men's Work, in this sense, is an ongoing, collaborative effort between men, where, even in our absence, we continue creating conditions empowering change processes by precipitating new *ways of thinking* and *new modes of experience*, for ourselves *and* others. For me, my work with participants, many of whom I have not met, spoken to, or corresponded with for many years, continues ushering in uncomfortable change processes when I revisit threads populating this thesis. Remembering this helps me rethink the *concept of probe-heads* as a *monstrous* problematic of thought presenting particular problems.

I return to Derrida (1989) and Laurie (2015) to remind me, that probe-heads present dangers; I worry my conceptualisations of probe-heads adhere feelings the concept reproduces a *phallic* return of masculine possibilities. The concept of probe-heads presents problems within the current frame because of my engagement at this place, at this time; probe-heads *become* phallic when limited to a relational process of *collecting* possibilities, by penetrating men's affective space to elucidate *what lies beneath* thoughts and beliefs. This return of an *oedipal* social relationship becomes dangerous, for me and others, when *reproducing* the masculine penetration of political space as an engagement tactic, particularly when entrenched as a surveillance technique inherent to risk assessment protocols and risk mitigation techniques intended to *manage* men's risky bodies. The work undertaken with this thesis is to explicate understandings of change giving rise to a practice of probe heads, rather than a descriptive exposition enabling others to reproduce an engagement tactic. Probe heads *become* a practice *produced* through elucidating change processes with affective engagement, helping me sustain a shift in thinking from *the man* (or *men*) to *encountering* men, by attending to the oedipal social relationships disciplining our interactions.

This tension serves as a discursive, textual, affective *window*, opening up a way of making sense of my continuing work with Gandhi Nivas. Probe-heads help me resist a practice of repeating what (I think) works (or doing what *has* worked), in order to create a praxis of thinking through an ethics of care. A praxis of care acknowledges new problems deserve new solutions, and with probe-heads creating new textual and affective threads, only some of which will be woven into new figures of thought with men, a praxis of care, for me, invokes a mangled practice through which affective space I share with men becomes a new problem giving me *pause* to question the political conditions of self-formation. In part, the possibility of a masculine return of spatial penetration as a way of *collecting* possibilities of change is a dangerous thread to leave hanging, potentially producing social power relationships with serious consequences for me, the men I work with, and the services supporting these men. Put succinctly, probe-heads can be experienced as a practice of working *on* men, rather than *with* them, with a sense of psychologically commodifying their engagement with me. Probe heads help me identify possible sites resistance and strategies to reconfigure the political space defining men's experiences of subjectivity, a process less began by but more initiated with my own experiences encountering men in the whare.

Tracing mangled processes offers insights into the textual, discursive, and affective possibilities of, as well as limits to, the un-representability of embodied knowledge production practices I am barely aware of, a form of critical self-affirmation that becomes useful when working with men. With normative knowledge practices a matter of *reproduction* which privileges subjectivities *putting method before thought*, an ontological position of thinking with probe-heads is a molecular *neo-materialist* process enabling me to reflexively analyse what experiences follow men's narratives during our *kōrero* and (re)produced textual accounts of our encounters. In other words, rather than the reproduction of a specific engagement tactic, I put the *concept* of probe-heads to work by creating affective opportunities to keep men's change processes in sight, with enabling permission structures men determine themselves. As *educating* experiences where we share our *whakapapa*, a cultural concept specific to New Zealand, *kōrero* is a familiar practice for men where we emplace ourselves in a wider context with links to how we came to arrive at the house, by linking ourselves to communities, cultures, and socio-economic experiences, giving a sense of where we have arrived from.

Kōrero enables men to trace changing social power relations, socio-political debates, and gendered and sexual politics of the day within their cultural contexts. This affirms men's mental and socio-cultural habits informing their political locations, and acknowledges our diverse socio-cultural-economic histories and the communities in which we live. Kōrero empowers us to explore non-normative subjective boundaries that arise with changes in social circumstances and relationships. Our kōrero is itself not a probe head, rather, kōrero becomes a kind of affective ethical terrain where we articulate what troubles us, helping analyse what is enlivened, what is empowered, and what opportunities are afforded, and precluded, to different discursive figurations that emerge. A concept of probe-heads, as an *iterative* autoethnographic strategy, becomes a methodology of revisiting what I am in the middle of with men, creating threads with men by reworking partial and incomplete affective memories of our lives into cartographic maps of the politics of the present.

With a selection of fleeting, temporary, and partial connections that otherwise become distracting, dangerous, and destabilising to our subjective experiences, a problematic of probe-heads helps me resist a totalising notion of men's violence as a trait, set of behaviours, or specific ways of being. Kōrero is an invitation, a welcome, and a call out to men to join me, as well as an offer to join men, to talk *about things* that matter to us, *in ways* that matter to us. Resisting spatial penetration helps me affirm the non-representability of *the moment*, and return to affective space—and a praxis constructed with the politics of *working with* other men. Yet, instead of discursively illuminating shared gendered, socio-political, cultural, and age-related locations *where* I connect, or do not connect, with other men, about our understandings of violence and non-violence, about legislation and women's rights, or social power relationships and men's rights, through kōrero I re-work my way into *capillaries* of affective space. The messy *situated-ness* of Men's Work, with a praxis of threads, middles, and probe-heads, helps me think with *fleetingly uncertain* figures of thought—enabling me to embody new forms of resistance by creating new social assemblages of *invention*, with other men, from *matter at hand*. Probe-heads, then, are not an already-made affective construct, but a posthumanist tactic enabling a subjective praxis of *offering, welcoming, and entrusting men* to join the creative production of embodied materiality—whilst caring for our differing experiences and political locations.

This conceptualisation of probe-heads presents a double affirmation; Men's Work is empowered by creating and sustaining new possibilities of selfhood with *both* moments

of resistance to *and* connections with men in the family violence sector. The Gandhi Nivas whare have become, and continue becoming, sites of daily living tying men together with possibilities of remembered moments of resistance to a whole and remembered moments that connect *us*. This is challenging work. Probe-heads help me sustain resistance to socio-culturally privileged *masculine* political locations men bring to the whare, through remembered moments of connection with the Women's Movement as terrain where I resist a stuck-edness of family violence as wicked problems. This also applies to men whom I work with, in terms of resisting the political locations I bring with me to the whare, as well. Thinking affectively with probe-heads, my conceptualisation of Men's Work is a crafting, tracing, sculpting, layering, and weaving of affective embodiment suspending the binary opposition of subject formation and self-critique, of absence and presence, of men and *other* men. Probe-heads enable me to resist a notion that working with men *effectively* is a matter of thinking perspicacity is a skill, percipience is an objective, and sagacity is an ability. By bringing the affirmation of *difference* to my work, *kōrero* empowers a multiplicity of *political space-times* that I share with men. Men's Work, then, is an unfolding of the ineffable experiences of *encountering* something that is befalling and bending us, by privileging a sense of *glow(ing)* that we can follow through shared practices of *kōrero*. Remembering *how* I experience events enables me to *bear witness* to men's resistance to, retreat from, and disruption of social processes, including the disruption men experience when encountering me, helping resonate hidden affective complexities of our experiences to empower becomings of non-violence.

I conceptualise probe-heads, paradoxically, to empower processes of *becoming-woman*. A discursively *inconsistent* process neither entailing the production of *being* nor the production of *a* being, probe-heads disrupt masculine notions of *authority* and *truthfulness*, creating space *between* us through *shared relational milieus* of *affective embodiment*. Supported by the shared *ethical* terrain of *kōrero*, affective embodiment enables men to actualise *new* capacities, that is, to become *actively engaged* in the *politics of change processes* by *rethinking* collaboration as *bearing witness* to men entangled with violence and other criminal activity. Probe-heads, a *shared* assemblage of *affective* material-propositional happenings *between us*, are where we bear witness to men's affective relationships with their partners and *whānau*, for instance. Probe-heads, though, not only affirm engagement practices of bearing witness to change process producing new *social relations* predicated on an ethics of *care* and *concern* for others, but also affirm material-semiotic knots of ontogenetic affective positions able to bring into

being events of *violence* in the home. Thinking what a body can do is also remembering that men's bodies can bring violence to others, presenting challenges for many of us in the sector who bear witness to this.

Probe-heads, then, help keep men's change processes in sight with *both* affective understandings of everyday life events that arouse feelings of dangerousness *as well as* fleshy connections able to create, sustain, and experience *new* agential possibilities of thought and action. Probe-heads enable me to map *community-oriented* approaches to violence prevention, such as Gandhi Nivas, which support men with practices premised on affective engagement. Probe-heads illuminate a *fruitfulness to an ethics of care for* men's change processes *that I can follow*. By *linking* embodied experiences that support, condone, and perpetuate the politics men bring to the whare as well as men's *becomings* of non-violence, a nomadic subjectivity using probe-heads as a tactic of engagement enables me to theoretically *trace* processes of transformation linking embodied experiences with *other* bodies, machines, and assemblages. Bringing into being networks of fleshy connections, probe-heads help *begin* conversations when we do not have knowledges to talk about our experiences, helping men construct storylines ushering in *different* starting points to our experiences.

Concluding this project, my work with probe-heads enables me to continue working with Gandhi Nivas supporting men in precarious circumstances, by producing new windows of thought with the threads left hanging. The multiple webs of interaction enabling me to *follow* change processes with *maps* of affective flow, by narratively *purposing* selections of events as cartographic points that glow, produce felt experiences where I become stuck with institutional, professional, cultural, and gendering norms, and possibilities of resistance to, and retreat from, social processes disciplining how we connect through norms. With nomadic narratives I am able to reveal both potentials and limits of what becomes possible with *affirmative* sensorial and cognitive data of *affective connections*, putting into action self-reflexive experiences marking different understandings of violence and violence prevention practices. Thinking with probe-heads, then, creates milieus of materiality that empower, block, and resist different figurations of social power relationships, not through normativity and processes of exclusion, but by ushering in unforeseen possibilities of moving through spaces and territories we occupy, together.

Occurring *between us*, a concept of thinking where neither our individual participation nor presence is necessary, probe-heads become an ethical responsibility to narrate and re-narrate our experiences within the whare, creating conditions of our becomings with materially embodied subjective forces that are otherwise unavailable to us alone. Men's Work, then, is *both* a matter of *disentangling* ourselves as affective figures of thought *and* re-entangling ourselves with *different* experiences of forces acting on and through us, with the work *between* us the embodiment of affective traces which men bring with them *out* into the community—and to others. Remembering this helps keep me safe in unpredictable processes of change where I encounter a multiplicity of *unfamiliar* affective connections forming with *other* bodies, machines, and assemblages, with an ethics of *self-care* a discursive yet embodied *outward-bound* habit of (re)creating *empowering* affective conditions of self-formation and social relationships. Safety is neither a matter of maintaining who I am nor conserving who I was, but a way of remembering who I am yet to become.

A form of ethical relationality, an ethics of self-care affirms *both* the empowering potentia and disempowering capacity of affect, with the restrictive (potestas) and productive (potentia) possibilities of affect revealing unforeseen and unpredictable political and social modes of action, interaction, and representation. A subjective *malleability* of affect can be strange and alluring, yet very discomfiting for men, with concepts such as nomadic subjectivity and affective flow enabling me to address a question of *how* men engage when they come to Gandhi Nivas, providing a theoretical basis to my understandings of how these services work so as to inform my engagement with men accessing these services. An ethics of self-care has become an ethnographic strategy of reflexively questioning what *we* are in the middle of, and *what* is being done, in this sense helping me write narratives of my experiences with posthumanist *becomings* by returning me to a praxis of wondering about threads left hanging, in particular places and at particular times, which become *conditions* of other becomings themselves.

A concern, at this point and at this place in time, is how to articulate an ethics of self-care that brings into being my accountability to participants that have left the project, participants I will leave at the conclusion of my research, and men at the whare I have yet to meet. Putting to work a notion of probe-heads, I wonder, what threads might become the conditions for a new ethics of care in response to men moving *together*, thinking of Braidotti (2016), as a cluster, a pack, a group...in other words, a body without organs

within a common lifespace of affective territories we occupy, together? Rethinking an ethics of self-care, as the creation of affective forces empowering future selves, these threads are not ready-made but emerge, for me, as *stepping stones* towards new problems of how I engage with men's violence, my own experiences of violence, and the violence prevention sector. With an ethics of self-care how I empower self-styling change processes with utterances able to enunciate ineffable conditions we experience in the whare as sites of respite, learning, healing, and caring for ourselves and others, nomadic subjectivity is a process of mapping *mobile affective connections with men*, as we move through our lives, giving insight into the social forces *increasing* (but also decreasing) our ability to enter into new modes of relation premised on the care and wellbeing of others. This conceptualisation of threads opens up another problem, though, of how to form situated, partial, contingent, and fleeting utterances of interconnectivity with the men whom I have been privileged to work with. What utterances are able to enunciate a troubling affective *un-bounding* of creative excess I experience with participants, and the paralleling experiences of normative re-binding I experience with other social processes we experience together? How do I acknowledge the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization introducing new modes of relation that participants introduce to Men's Work, *increasing* my ability to share affective territories with men at the whare? What utterances acknowledge the men with whom I have spent years with, helping me with an existential activity of making my way in the world? How do I say *thank you*?

Threads left hanging, at this place and point in time, create assemblages of affective experiences that bear witness to change occurring for me. Here, at the end of a large body of research with men experiencing change, leaving this writing, and the men I have encountered, is a particularly challenging problem of thought. Acknowledging men's partial presence throughout this research, leaving becomes problematic as this requires new figures of thought affirming my own partial presence as well. Yet, self-care becomes relevant as practices bringing into being networks of fleshy connections with threads that empower future becomings whilst signalling I do not have the discursive knowledge to talk about my experiences, for now. Neither a *driver* of my actions nor a *state* of being, affective experiences are a starting point to express possibilities of a life, and the routines, habits, and traditions, formed over several years, that propagate new ways of making my way in the world. A combination of eagerness, an eagerness to move on, to entangle myself all over again with various threads and the possibilities of new middles, becomes conjoined with a fear, that I will one day enter the whare without the support of these

men. My work with men at the whare shows me this a common experience for many of us, binding me to men in ways that are both unforeseen and unfamiliar. The strangeness of this *with-ness*, our shared affective experiences of the whare connecting me with other men through new experiences of mutual inter-relationality, also produces moments of resistance to a whole.

I surely did not expect to become *one of the men* Gandhi Nivas supported. But do any of us?

To empower the possible emergence of *political sensibilities* otherwise off-limits for now, with Men's Work, in this sense, an ongoing, collaborative effort of precipitating new *ways of thinking* and *new modes of experience*, I want to create a praxis of self-care that acknowledges new ways of thinking produce new problems deserving new solutions. To resist, in part, *collecting* possibilities of change with the creation of or changes to specific social relationships with men and Gandhi Nivas, I want to put to work and reflexively offer what experiences follow *me*. What threads might help keep my changes processes in sight for men who happen to come across my experiences working with them?

Privileging changing social power relations, I want to affirm political locations that continue troubling me, helping men analyse what is enlivened, what is empowered, and what opportunities their participation has afforded me with the politics of the present. Of the eleven participants who have provided 1:1 interviews, and the dozens of men who have joined a Men's Group, I have only been able to maintain contact, through phone calls, texts, and encounters at the whare, with two men. Beyond an agreement to provide a technical report to Gandhi Nivas, and offering the two participants I maintain contact with an opportunity to discuss *how* I engage when I come to Gandhi Nivas, and my understandings of how these services work, the non-representability of *this moment* offers a creative possibility of caring for our experiences to help resonate complexities of my experiences and understandings of non-violence. What selection of memories and experiences might become stepping stones towards new ways of making my way in the world, helping men follow my change processes? If I was to create space *between* us that provides an *immanent* accumulation of our shared existence together, to extract from them all the possibilities that they carry, I wonder of the capacity of narratives to map the *affective connections* with men I have encountered as I moved through their lives, and

they mine? What narratives can trace the spaces I have moved through, how I occupy and hold these spaces, so as to inform my engagement with men accessing these services?

To empower the possible emergence of *political sensibilities* otherwise off-limits for now, with Men's Work, in this sense, an ongoing, collaborative effort of precipitating new *ways of thinking* and *new modes of experience*, I want to create a praxis of self-care that acknowledges new ways of thinking produce new problems deserving new solutions. To resist, in part, *collecting* possibilities of change with the creation of, or changes to, specific social relationships with men and Gandhi Nivas reinforcing the disciplining power of social forces we experience, I want to put to work and reflexively offer what experiences follow *me*, helping keep my change processes in sight for men who happen to come across my experiences working with them. Privileging my capacity to enter into *changing* social power relations that I encounter with Gandhi Nivas, I want to affirm political locations that continue troubling me, helping men analyse what is enlivened, what is empowered, and what opportunities our encounters afford me with the politics of the present.

Of the eleven participants who have provided 1:1 interviews, and the dozens of men who have joined a Men's Group, I have been able to maintain contact, through phone calls, texts, and encounters at the where, with two men. Changes in personal circumstances need not involve incarceration to explain men's desire to desist from having contact with me; men's participation was predicated on the politics of the present, and need only to involve the messy situated-ness of the present to make sense of their departure from this project. Many men are likely continuing to experience unexpected, unfamiliar, and unpredictable social circumstances, taking them in different directions that do not include maintaining contact with me let alone their continued involvement in this project. Beyond an agreement to provide a technical report to Gandhi Nivas after submission of this thesis, which will be delivered to staff as well as the governing board of directors for the organisation, this project concludes with an offer to the two participants with whom I maintain contact. This offer is to discuss my understandings of *how* these services work and *how* I engage when I come to Gandhi Nivas. The non-representability of my experiences, I am learning, whilst limiting, also brings forth creative possibilities of resonating complexities of my experiences. With understandings of non-violence(ing) as variations in arrangements of social forces and connections of thought, changes in the

material-semiotic conditions of our existence produce escape routes for men, increasing our capacity to care for others with modes of existence where violence is less possible, reduced, and mitigated. An iterative process, involving narrative accounts retelling a multiplicity of my experiences with men, in the flux of uncontrollable change processes, thinking of the creative political space produced with affective memory, the findings I share are the *becomings* of Men's Work as an unfolding series of *hesitations, pauses, and interruptions* of social forces conditioning how we experience the world. My experiences of becoming non-violent with men, is about wondering, together, what a body can do.

Drawing this thesis to a close with neither an ending nor a conclusion, a story of new possibilities, maybe, a chance to say thank you, perhaps, I do not know if this will reach the men whom I have the fortune of working with. To do so, this writing must endure the tumultuous passage of time, and reaching unfamiliar locations with words that are no longer mine alone, greet men I barely know. The unknowability of our common ground, though, never a matter of celebrating our agreement or lauding our diversity, is the work between us. Together, our *kōrero*, makes possible a world of difference.

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*Appendix 1*  
**Low Risk Ethics Notification**



**MASSEY UNIVERSITY**  
**TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA**  
**UNIVERSITY OF NEW ZEALAND**

## **Ethics Application**

Application ID : 4000022892

Application Title : Men's Work: Nomadic narratives and Deleuzian processes of becoming-nonviolent.

Date of Submission : 23/06/2020

Primary Investigator : Matthew Kean (Applicant)

Other Personnel :

## 1. Risk Assessment

### Project Detail

#### Human Ethics Application Risk Assessment Form

Does your research fall within the scope of the Code? The scope includes:

- a. All research involving either the participation of human or where the research impacts on individuals, groups or communities. This includes consultancies, contract research, staff research and supervised student research.
  - b. Any teaching which involves the participation of students for the demonstration of procedures or phenomena that have a potential for harm.
  - c. Any evaluation of university services, organisational practices or teaching programmes where information of a personal nature may be collected, where participants may be identified, or where the performance of staff may be commented on. This does not include routine organisational quality improvement activities, e.g. academic programme evaluations or service delivery projects but does include activities which have a research component and may lead to publications.
- **NB: Where research involves a Massey staff researcher using their own students as participants please refer to the [Decision Chart](#) in Section 2 of the Code.**

Note: This process will send an email to your peer reviewer which contains a pdf of the application.  
The peer reviewer comments by email outside of the RIMS process.  
This **IS NOT** part of the approval process.  
Following comment (if any) from your peer reviewer, you must **STILL** submit the final application through the action tab.

1. **Project Title**

Please limit this to a maximum of 25 words\*

Men's Work: Nomadic narratives and Deleuzian processes of becoming-nonviolent.

2. **Recruitment / Data collection start date.**

This date must be in the future.

Data collection /recruitment cannot begin until notification of submission has been received.\*

26/06/2020

3. **Projected end of project date.\***

25/06/2021

4. **Project Type \***

- Academic Staff Research
- General Staff Research
- Postgraduate Student Research
- Undergraduate Student Research
- Evaluation
- Teaching
- Other

5. **Project Summary**

Please outline in no more than 2000 characters in lay language\*

New Zealand is recognised as having one of the highest rates of family violence in the OECD. Police Safety Orders (PSOs) are a tool for law enforcement, to provide short term protection for those at risk of violence. PSOs remove the perpetrator from the scene whilst also prohibiting their return, with Gandhi Nivas was established as an emergency housing provider where accommodation and early intervention services are available for men bound by PSOs. The project is the first stage of a longer term study that involves collaborating with a community-based organisation, Sahaayta, who provide therapeutic support to men residing at the Gandhi Nivas houses. The aim of the project is to collaborate with Sahaayta staff on developing the goals and activities for future studies and document the residential context in which services are delivered.

This project involves negotiated access to the houses and contact with men supported by the service providers, as well as programme staff and associated professionals. Data collection will be limited to field notes compiled by the applicant interacting within the therapeutic environments, including agreements reached with Sahaayta staff about the goals, activities and ethical protocols for subsequent studies in the wider research project. Sahaayta will receive a report on the collaborative outcomes of this study and be invited to give feedback to the applicant and his supervisors throughout the research process.

6. **Describe the peer review process that has been used to discuss and analyse the ethical issues present in this project.**  
(maximum of 4000 characters)\*

The ethical issues identified in this project have been discussed in detail with Professor Mandy Morgan, Dr Leigh Coombes, and Dr Ann Rogerson from the Massey School of Psychology. All three are co-researchers in both past and present research projects involving Gandhi Nivas and Sahaayta. The responsible parties for Sahaayta (Sucharita Varma) and Gandhi Nivas (Ranjna Patel) have both granted permission for this specific proposal to go ahead.

Initial introductory meetings have been held with the service providers as part of on-going research programmes involving Sahaayta and Gandhi Nivas staff. Potential ethical issues present in this project have been discussed, helping to formulate an ethics application process ensuring adherence to the Code of Ethics For Psychologists Working in Aotearoa/New Zealand throughout the present research project. At this time, due to the proposed project involving direct interaction with men accessing these services, it was deemed important to undertake some engagement with the human ethics committee and obtain a low risk notification, despite there being no data collection of personal information with this stage of project.

7. **List the ethical issues considered and explain how each has been addressed**  
(maximum of 2000 characters)\*

As no persons will be interviewed, this research will not gather or record personal information, and any form of harm or negative impact upon any individual or organisation is not anticipated. Field notes will be securely held on private computer equipment with data encryption, and made available only to supervisors and programme staff. The applicant is an academic researcher with no direct involvement with service users, service practitioners, or organisations in this study, with no conflict of interest identified. Regular monthly professional and academic supervision will be provided for the applicant by Sahaayta and the supervision panel, or more frequently as required, whilst Sahaayta will also provide cultural supervision throughout the project.

All activities will involve supervision of staff, and any off-site activities will be discussed before-hand with the supervision panel and programme staff. Although it is unlikely the project will bring harm to the applicant, health and safety protocols and procedures already in place to ensure programme staff safety will be adopted, as well as close liaison with the supervision team to mitigate any issues as they arise.

It is unlikely the research results will bring about harm to the community. It is noted Sahaayta is a 'mainstream' service provider, and this research project does not incorporate a kaupapa Maori research approach. As service users are men from diverse communities within New Zealand Society, any aspect of this project involving potential cultural experiences of being 'over-researched' or 'under-represented' in research objectives are ongoing topics of conversation. Issues of cultural sensitivity, including the embrace of cultural concepts and values, will be managed in consultation with local kaitiaki working with Sahaayta, and cultural advisors within Massey University.

8. **With whom did you peer review your research?**  
(maximum of 2000 characters)\*

Professor Mandy Morgan  
Dr Leigh Coombes  
Dr Ann Rogerson

**Applicant**

1. Applicant Department\*

050 - Not Specified CoS

2. Ethics Category Hidden\*

Human

**Campus of Chief Applicant**

(or Campus of Supervisor for Student)\*

- Manawatu
- Wellington
- Albany

3. Personnel

You can add any additional team members here. Click on 'More criteria' below to access the advanced search function.

1	Surname	Kean
	Given Name	Matthew
	Full Name	Matthew Kean

Position	Applicant
Primary?	Yes
Work Number	
Email Address	Matthew.Kean.1@uni.massey.ac.nz
Department	050 - Not Specified CoS
College	College of Sciences

Please add name of co researchers if unable to locate above

---

This question is not answered.

### Risk Assessment

1 **Is Health and Disability Ethics Committee review required for this study?\***

- No  
 Yes

[Link to Standard Operating Procedures for HDECs](#)

[Link to HDEC scope of review form](#)

2 **Does your research include:**

a. **Situations where the researcher may be at risk of harm\***

- No  
 Yes

b. **Use of a questionnaire or interview, whether or not it is anonymous, which might reasonably be expected to cause discomfort, embarrassment or psychological or spiritual harm to the participants. \***

- No  
 Yes

c. **Processes that are potentially disadvantageous to a person or group, such as the collection of information which may expose a person / group to discrimination.\***

- No  
 Yes

d. **Collection of information of illegal behavior(s) gained during the research which could place the participants at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to their financial standing, employability, professional or personal relationships.\***

- No  
 Yes

e. **Collection of blood, body fluid, tissue samples or other samples.\***

- No  
 Yes

f. **Any form of exercise regime, or deprivation. (e.g. sleep or dietary)\***

- No  
 Yes

g. **Any form of physical examination (e.g. physical, radiation, ultrasound).\***

- No  
 Yes

h. **The administration of any form of drug, medicine (other than in the course of standard medical procedure), or placebo. \***

- 

-

No  
Yes

i. **Physical pain, beyond mild discomfort.\***

No  
Yes

j. **Any Massey University teaching which involves the participation of Massey University students for a demonstration of procedures or phenomena which have potential for harm.\***

No  
 Yes

k. **Participants whose identities are known to the researcher giving oral consent rather than written consent, other than for cultural reasons.\***

No  
 Yes

l. **Participants who are unable to give informed consent.\***

No  
 Yes

m. **Research on your own students / pupils. For Massey Staff - refer to the Decision Chart in section 2 of the Code.**

[Code of Ethical Conduct - Decision Chart\\*](#)

No  
 Yes

n. **The participation of children (seven (7) years old or younger).\***

No  
 Yes

o. **The participation of children under sixteen (16) years old where active parental consent is not being sought.\***

No  
 Yes

p. **Participants who are in a dependant situation, such as nursing home or prison, or patients highly dependent on medical care.\***

No  
 Yes

q. **Participants who are vulnerable.\***

No  
 Yes

r. **The use of previously collected identifiable personal information or research data for which there was no explicit consent for this research.\***

No  
 Yes

s. **The use of previously collected biological samples for which there was no explicit consent for this research.\***

No  
 Yes

t. **Any evaluation of organisational services or practices where information of a personal nature may be collected and where participants or the organisation may be identified.\***

No  
 Yes

u. **Deception of the participants, including concealment or covert observations.\***

No  
 Yes

v. **Conflict of interest situation for the researcher.**

[Code of Ethical Conduct- Special Relationships](#)

e.g. Is the project funded or supported in any way that might result in a conflict of interest, do any of the researchers have a financial interest in the outcome, or is there a professional or other relationship between the researcher and the participants? \*

No  
Yes

- 
- 

w. **Payments or other financial inducements (other than reasonable reimbursement of travel expenses or time) to participants.\***

- No
- Yes

x. **A requirement by an outside organisation (e.g. a funding organisation or a journal in which you wish to publish) for Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval.\***

- No
- Yes

y. **I wish to submit a full application for Training / Education purposes\***

- -
- No  
Yes

## 2. Sign off

### Applicant Sign Off

action.

As Chief Applicant;

- I have read the Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluation involving Human Participants.
- I understand my obligations and the rights of the participants.
- My Head of Unit knows that I am undertaking this research. (for academic staff research)
- I understand that Low Risk Notifications are audited by the Ethics Office and that breaches in complying with Low Risk conditions will be followed up. I agree to undertake the research as set out in the Code.

- 
- Yes

**Are there any co-researchers?\***

The information in this application is to the very best of my knowledge accurate and not misleading.

- 

I have read and understood the above statements



*Appendix 2*  
**Human Ethics Approval**

Date: 21 January 2021

Dear Matthew Kean

Re: Ethics Notification - **NOR 20/69 - Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**

Thank you for the above application that was considered by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: **Human Ethics Northern Committee** at their meeting held on **Thursday, 21 January.**

Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Professor Craig Johnson  
Chair, Human Ethics Chairs' Committee and Director (Research Ethics)

*Appendix 3*  
**Participant Information Sheet (Main)**



**Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**  
**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM**

**Researcher:**

Kia Ora. My name is Matthew Kean. I am conducting research as part of my PhD programme, under the supervision of Professor Mandy Morgan, Dr Leigh Coombes and Dr Ann Rogerson from School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North. Please feel free to contact either myself or Mandy by phone or email if you have any questions:

**Matthew Kean:** [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

**Mandy Morgan:** (06) 356-9099, ext. 85085, [c.a.morgan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:c.a.morgan@massey.ac.nz)

Massey University Manawatū (Turitea)  
Tennent Drive  
Palmerston North 4474  
New Zealand

**Research project:**

This research aims to better understand how men in Aotearoa New Zealand understand and talk about their processes of change. I have a particular interest in men's engagement with community organisations supporting them through the challenges of family violence. This research will contribute to broader discussions on engaging men in the context of their relationships, families, communities and cultures, supporting them to address harmful behaviours whilst holding them to account. It will also contribute to a report that I write for Sahaayta and Gandhi Nivas, providing feedback on participants' experiences of engaging with their services.

Men are invited to contribute their experiences and understandings of responses to family violence, for the purposes of creating more inclusive opportunities for change with community-oriented, and culturally responsive, holistic approaches to working with them and their families. In addition to the time I'm spending at Gandhi Nivas, this research project will involve research project will involve **one-to-one interviews** and a **men's group**.

*Participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate in the interviews to join the men's group, and you do not have to join the men's group to participate in interviews. If you would like to participate in either activity, please contact me (Matthew) directly to arrange further information or a meeting.*

**Other Contact Details:**

Dr. Leigh Coombes:  
(06) 356-9099, ext. 85075,  
[l.coombes@massey.ac.nz](mailto:l.coombes@massey.ac.nz)

Dr. Ann Rogerson:  
(06) 356 9099, ext. 85052,  
[A.L.Rogerson@massey.ac.nz](mailto:A.L.Rogerson@massey.ac.nz)

Gandhi Nivas (24 hours a day):  
0800 GANDHI (0800 426 344),  
[info@gandhinivas.nz](mailto:info@gandhinivas.nz)

**Participants' Rights:**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in an interview. If you decide to participate in an interview, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study at any time (up until your transcript has been finalised and analysis of the transcript has commenced);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

You are also under no obligation to accept this invitation to join a men's group. If you decide to join and participate in a men's group, you have the right to:

- decline engaging in any particular activity or answer any particular question, and completely withdraw from the group at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- sign a confidentiality agreement, expecting all other participants have done so as well, outlining expectations about privacy and confidentiality.

**Limits to privacy and confidentiality:**

Should you appear to be emotionally distressed during interviews or men's groups, or disclose past experiences of relationship abuse or violence towards others, you will be encouraged to seek support from Sahaayta staff, who will be present on site and available to offer support. This will include 1:1 support for you, family counselling, and 1:1 support available to other family members, provided by Sahaayta staff, in relation to any distress arising from our interactions. Alcohol and drug counselling, and accommodation and employment related supports, are also available. Details of other counselling services offering similar services, should you prefer, are also available. I will then follow up with Sahaayta staff, and will advise you of such, ensuring your wellbeing is actively supported throughout the research project whilst maintaining your privacy. Should you disclose active planning for violence, or present an imminent danger to yourself and/or others, immediate action will be taken. Both Sahaayta staff and the local police will be informed of all relevant information, including your personal details and of any others involved.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application NOR 20/53. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Fiona Te Momo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800, x 43347, email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)



*Appendix 4*  
**Participant Information Sheet (Interview)**



**Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM: INTERVIEWS**

**Participant Interviews:**

I am recruiting men, 17 years old or over, with current or recent involvement with Gandhi Nivas or Sahaayta. Participants do *not* need to have previously been arrested or convicted of family violence, nor disclose illegal behaviour, to take part in this research. This research focuses on processes of change, and not experiences of interventions within the criminal justice system. You will have received this information sheet from someone at Gandhi Nivas, a staff member or another resident, or directly from me. You do not need to tell them whether you are interested in the research, if you choose not to. If you tell me that you'd like to participate, I will not tell anyone else. Although it is likely that Sahaayta staff will know that you participate, they will not tell anyone else either since they always keep your information confidential. Support services provided by Sahaayta will be available throughout the research process because they are already available to you.

**What Interviews will involve:**

Interviews will be semi-structured and conversational. I may begin by asking you some basic questions about your experiences, with your insights and responses directing the interview. You are welcomed to bring to the interview photos and other objects which you consider important to sharing your experiences. Taking place at a Gandhi Nivas house of your choosing (Ōtāhuhu, Te Atatū, or Papakura), refreshments will be provided with breaks taken as required. Each interview will take between one and two hours. At the conclusion of the interview, you will be offered an opportunity for me to 'follow-up' with you at a later date, as well as encouraged to contact me directly should you choose to. I recognise diversity and open-endedness to processes of change, so you might want to update me about what is happening for you, later.

**Research procedures:**

All participants must understand and sign informed consent forms before being interviewed. Interviews will be digitally recorded and transcribed by me. Should you wish for the interview to not be recorded, I will ask your permission to take written notes instead. You will be offered a copy of your interview transcript or notes, to read and request changes before analysis. A trusted Sahaayta staff member is available to read this with you, or you can seek the assistance of a support person if you wish. To protect your privacy, all names will be changed to pseudonyms during transcription, with transcripts stored in a password-protected location and audio recordings destroyed at the conclusion of the transcription process. Consent will be sought to include photos, and photos of objects, which will not include identifying details or information and will be stored in a password-protected location. Interviews will be analysed with a focus on men's experiences of relationships, families, communities and cultures to produce understandings of processes of change. When the research is finished, men who have participated in interviews will be provided with a summary of the results and an opportunity to discuss the research.

**Participants' Rights:**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to participate in an interview. If you decide to participate in an interview, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- withdraw from the study at any time (up until your transcript has been finalised and analysis of the transcript has commenced);
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

**Limits to privacy and confidentiality:**

Should you appear to be emotionally distressed during interviews or men's groups, or disclose past experiences of relationship abuse or violence towards others, you will be encouraged to seek support from Sahaayta staff, who will be present on site and available to offer support. This will include 1:1 support for you, family counselling, and 1:1 support available to other family members, provided by Sahaayta staff, in relation to any distress arising from our interactions. Alcohol and drug counselling, and accommodation and employment related supports, are also available. Details of other counselling services offering similar services, should you prefer, are also available. I will then follow up with Sahaayta staff, and will advise you of such, ensuring your wellbeing is actively supported throughout the research project whilst maintaining your privacy. Should you disclose active planning for violence, or present an imminent danger to yourself and/or others, immediate action will be taken. Both Sahaayta staff and the local police will be informed of all relevant information, including your personal details and of any others involved.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application NOR 20/53. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Fiona Te Momo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800, x 43347, email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)



*Appendix 5*  
**Participant Information Sheet (Men's Groups)**

**Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**  
**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM: MEN'S GROUPS**

**Men's Group:**

I am recruiting men, 17 years old or over, with current or recent involvement with Gandhi Nivas or Sahaayta. Participants do *not* need to have previously been arrested or convicted of family violence, nor disclose illegal behaviour to take part in this research. This research focuses on processes of change, and not experiences of interventions within the criminal justice system. You will have received this information sheet from someone at Gandhi Nivas, a staff member or another resident, or from me directly. You do not need to tell anyone whether you are interested in the research, if you choose not to. If you tell me that you'd like to participate, I will not tell anyone else. Although it is likely that Sahaayta staff will know that you participate, they will not tell anyone else either since they always keep your information confidential. Support services provided by Sahaayta will be available throughout the research process because they are already available to you.

**What a men's group will involve:**

Although there are no restrictions on the total number of participants of a men's group, men will be organized into smaller groups and the group that you join will be limited to 10 men. One group will be organized each week, with opportunities for you to take part even if you are no longer staying at Gandhi Nivas when the group activity takes place. You are invited to join as frequently as you choose. Activities will include a coffee club at Gandhi Nivas houses, social outings to local cafés, recreational activities in local parks, and other cultural organisations in the local community. Should you decide to join, you are welcomed to contribute to this research by nominating social activities, although you will be under no obligation to do so.

**Research procedures:**

All participants must understand and sign informed consent forms before joining a men's group. All men who take part in a group will sign a confidentiality agreement so that everyone knows they should not share information about each other, outside their group. If you choose to take part in a men's group, you will be involved with activities we do together, but I will not be recording any of our discussions. I will only keep notes on our activities, and I will not identify anyone who takes part when I write my reports on the research. Records of the men's group activities will be limited to notes recording my experiences and reflections, and will not contain any identifiable information about participants. Consent will be sought to include photos, and photos of objects, should these be provided by men for the purposes of inclusion in the research. No photos will include identifying details or information, and will similarly be stored in a password-protected location.

**Participants' Rights:**

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation to join a men's group. If you decide to join and participate in a men's group, you have the right to:

- decline engaging in any particular activity or answer any particular question, and completely withdraw from the group at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.
- sign a confidentiality agreement, expecting all other participants have done so as well, outlining expectations about privacy and confidentiality.

**Limits to privacy and confidentiality:**

Should you appear to be emotionally distressed during interviews or men's groups, or disclose past experiences of relationship abuse or violence towards others, you will be encouraged to seek support from Sahaayta staff, who will be present on site and available to offer support. This will include 1:1 support for you, family counselling, and 1:1 support available to other family members, provided by Sahaayta staff, in relation to any distress arising from our interactions. Alcohol and drug counselling, and accommodation and employment related supports, are also available. Details of other counselling services offering similar services, should you prefer, are also available. I will then follow up with Sahaayta staff, and will advise you of such, ensuring your wellbeing is actively supported throughout the research project whilst maintaining your privacy. Should you disclose active planning for violence, or present an imminent danger to yourself and/or others, immediate action will be taken. Both Sahaayta staff and the local police will be informed of all relevant information, including your personal details and of any others involved.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, Application NOR 20/53. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Fiona Te Momo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Northern, telephone 09 414 0800, x 43347, email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz)



*Appendix 6*  
**Participant Consent Form (Interview)**

**Men's Work: Nomadic Narratives and Deleuzian Processes of Becoming-nonviolent.**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL**

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and understand the information provided about the research. I have had the details of the study explained to me, any questions I had have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study, and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded.
  - a. If consent has not been given to sound recording, I agree/do not agree to the researcher taking notes during the interview.
2. I wish/do not wish to have my transcripts returned to me.
3. I agree/do not agree that the researchers may use brief direct quotations from the interview(s) in their reports of the study provided these do not identify me in any way
4. I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Declaration by Participant:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print full name)  
hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix 7*  
**Participant Consent Form (Men's Groups)**



**Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**

**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - GROUP**

I have read, or have had read to me in my first language, and understand the information provided about the research. I have had the details of the study explained to me, my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I have been given sufficient time to consider whether to participate in this study, and I understand participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

1. I understand that I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by not disclosing any personal information that they share during our discussion.
2. I understand that all the information I provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law, and the names of all people in the study will be kept confidential by the researcher.
3. I understand that other participants in the group activities will have signed a confidentiality agreement, and that the agreement is based on trust.
4. I agree to participate in the men's group under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Note: Although I will do everything I can to ensure that you can speak openly with me, in confidence, there are limits on confidentiality and risks in taking part in group research. It is impossible to guarantee that no-one will find out that you took part in this research, or that other group participants will not disclose their experiences of the group activities. There are no formal sanctions on other group participants from disclosing your involvement, identity or what you say to others in the group. Please take account of this before you decide whether or not you would like to participate under these conditions.

**Declaration by Participant:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print full name)  
hereby consent to take part in this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix 8*  
**Interview and Men's Group Schedules**



**Men's Work: Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.**

**INTERVIEW and MEN'S GROUP SCHEDULES**

***Introduction***

Kia ora and hello. Thank you for taking part in my research and giving your time to be interviewed today. It is much appreciated. I want you to feel comfortable, so I welcome you to open this meeting in a way that is significant for you.

**(a prepared whakataukī and karakia in case I am invited to open instead)**

To begin a conversation, I will ask you some open-ended questions regarding your experiences of family violence. There are no right or wrong answers, and I welcome you to share your thoughts, feelings, and perspectives with me. The main purpose of the interview is for you to tell your own story, and for me to listen.

If you at any time would like to take a break, or ask additional questions about the research, please feel free to do so. Do you have any other questions or concerns to discuss, before we begin?

***Interview questions***

1. To start with, would you mind telling me a little bit about yourself?
  - a. Where are you from; where do you live now?
  - b. Do you have whānau, family, or other loved ones in your life?
2. What services provided by Gandhi Nivas and Sahaayta do you have experience with?
  - a. How did you find out about them?
  - b. What sorts of things do you work on with them?
3. Has anyone expressed concern to you about your use of violence?
  - a. Has your whānau, family, or friends ever mentioned concerns for their safety, or the safety of others?
  - b. What can you tell me about their concerns, what is it they were concerned about?
4. Can you think of any expectations whānau, family and friends have about you?
  - a. If you are in a relationship now, what do you expect from yourself and your partner in your relationship?

- b. What expectations might you have of others with whom you are in a relationship (such as parents, partner and children, and other whānau)?
    - c. What does it mean to be in a relationship with someone else?
  5. Do you talk with your family, friends, or partner(s) about relationships?
    - a. What kind of things do you talk about?
    - b. Who else might you talk to about such things?
  4. Can you describe a safe relationship with a partner?
    - a. Can you describe a safe relationship with whānau or family?
    - b. What does it mean for your whānau and family to be safe?
    - c. What sorts of things might you need help with in your relationships?
  5. Are there any other thoughts or stories which you would like to share?
- 

### ***Possible Men's Group Activities***

1. Coffee Group at Gandhi Nivas houses and local cafes
  2. Bush Walks at local nature reserves
  3. Creative arts (including activities such as ceramics, pottery, and photography)
  4. Cooking groups preparing food for the men
  5. Cultural and social activities at local community services
- ....and other activities as agreed with Sahaayta staff and participating men.



*Appendix 9*  
**Confidentiality Agreement-Group**



Massey University Manawatū (Turitea)  
Tennent Drive  
Palmerston North 4474  
New Zealand

**Men's Work:** Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.

**CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT-GROUP**

I understand I have an obligation to respect the privacy of the other members of the group by:

1. Not retaining, copying, or sharing any project information involving the Men's Group with others outside of the research project.
2. Not disclosing to others outside of the research project any personal information shared during the Men's Groups that identifies participants.
3. Although no formal sanctions will be taken pertaining to participants disclosing identifying and personal information to others outside the group, I understand I will no longer be able to participate in the Men's Group should I fail to respect the privacy of others participating in the Men's Group.
4. I understand these obligations in no way restrict my ability to share with other services and social supports, such as counselling and my whānau, my involvement and experiences of the Men's Group.

**Declaration by Participant:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print full name)  
agree to keep confidential all information shared in the Men's Group concerning this study.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix 10*  
***Authority for the Release of Transcripts***



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Massey University Manawatū (Turitea)  
Tennent Drive  
Palmerston North 4474  
New Zealand

**Men's Work:** Narratives of engaging with change and becoming non-violent.

**AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS**

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview(s) conducted with me. This includes a translated version or by having a transcript read to me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (print full name)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Appendix 11*  
**Whare Poster**



MASSEY UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES  
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

# Do you want to share your experiences of change?

Kia Ora. My name is Matthew Kean, you might have seen me around the house.

I am conducting research as part of my PhD programme, under the supervision of Professor Mandy Morgan, Dr Leigh Coombes and Dr Ann Rogerson from School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North.



This research aims to better understand how men in Aotearoa New Zealand understand and talk about their processes of change. I have a particular interest in men's engagement with community organisations supporting them through the challenges of family violence.

*Participation is voluntary. If you would like to participate, please feel free to contact Gandhi Nivas staff or contact me (Matthew) directly for further information, and feel free to contact either myself or Mandy by phone or email if you have any questions about the research project.*

Matthew Kean: [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

Mandy Morgan: (06) 356-9099, ext. 85085, [c.a.morgan@massey.ac.nz](mailto:c.a.morgan@massey.ac.nz)