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‘Just a life’: A feminist posthuman reading, thinking and hearing practice with displaced women’s struggles and transformation

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts in Psychology

At Massey University, Manawatū, New Zealand

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

2025

Abstract

The lived stories of displaced English-language schoolmate peers inspired me to read and interrogate the literature on trauma, particularly in relation to trauma-informed mental health disorders and interventions. Through a critical, posthumanist feminist approach, I explored how the process of knowledge production in relation to social power relations and responsibility is conceptualised. I found that the current ontological-epistemological process reflects a dominant, dualistic, Eurocentric approach with universal pretensions that circumscribes the meaningful figuration of subject, trauma and transformation. This problem of framing prompted my initial research question: *What women's struggle and transformation assemblages might exist in relation to women's situated-embodied-embedded experiences and contexts?* I conversed with five displaced women, also sharing photos and recollections. A posthuman relational ethics was enacted including a reflexive hearing practice to advance understandings of subject, trauma, and transformation. This practice, including Braidotti's (2010) 'by heart and by memory', and continued engagement with literature and theory, evolved throughout the research process, shifting my research question to: *How do displaced women experience and transform their situated struggles through both relational disruptions and capacities and what relational contexts are involved?* In effect, I was enabled to hear displaced women's stories differently, as we made meaning together. Hearing their stories encouraged me to shift away from normative-stereotypical understanding towards multiple-dynamic ways of knowing through the process of becoming. Through our discussion and my analysis, we co-created knowledge that shifted us from 'assumed' trauma associated with victimised subjects to engagement with the Deleuzian (1997) concept of 'just a life'. The displaced women affirmed that they were positioned as less than human at times throughout their journeys, within the complexities of their multi-constituent lived experiences associated with gender, history, religion, culture, context, their categorisation and subsequent treatment as 'refugees'. Their gifted stories challenged the normalisation of trauma discourse and suggested that as subjects, they were multiple, relational and embraced change through more than human, interdependent relations, involving everyday negotiation and resistance. Their ongoing lived stories and experiences present different ontologies, knowledges and practices which substantively, ethically and politically confront and potentially help address imbalance in social power and justice.

Acknowledgements

"Wishing"

"I wish I could throw back

So I could redo all of my mistakes

I wish I could fly

I wish I was in heaven

I wish I could fly

I wish I was at my future already

I wish I didn't wish

So instead of wishing

I will achieve things by myself"

— Da meh, Fuatino Sofara, San Penitito and Seng Hprew *(Meh et al., 2018, p. 87)*

My deep gratitude goes to displaced women who inspired and shared your stories with me. Your stories have moved me and the world around me.

My profound appreciation goes to Dr Ann Rogerson for your constructive advice, supportive guidance, powerful hearing practice and compassion.

Thanks especially to the HEARTH teaching and research team who create critical feminist courses where I learned and extended my knowledge around how to work with and for those whom we are accountable to.

My sincere debt of gratitude goes to my mother, sisters, brother and husband; together with those excluded and marginalised others who encouraged me to trace their embodiment, rooted in gender inequalities, stereotypes and assumptions.

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Chapter 1: Research cartography and the problem of refugee women's trauma

My research interest with refugee communities began when I met displaced peers at an English teaching college in 2019. We, a group that was comprised of both general migrants and migrants experiencing displacement (usually termed 'refugees'[1]), were required to study English as part of resettlement. At that time, my ideas about working with refugee communities were rather superficial and related to assumed 'others': a group of people that needed help and I wanted to help them. Their subjectivities, in my perspective, were based on an assumption of what 'others' were, characterised by a problematic western orientalism (Abu-Lughod, 2015; Said, 1994; Said, 2003). Through such an assumption, 'others' are people who are at the margins, who need help and their diversity, complexity and uniqueness can be overlooked (Abu-Lughod, 2015). 'Others', from a western perspective, have become framed through orientalism as those who can be controlled, regulated and managed through a hegemony of power relations (Said, 1994; Said, 2003).

Facing these contradictions, I began a process of framing and re-framing my research interest in a more philosophical and material way (Haraway, 2016). I changed my approach to university learning helped by prior learning in an Advanced Psychology of Women paper. Yet, I have entered in and out, and in between, in a process described as "a zigzagging pattern of dissonant nomadic subjects" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 28). In my case, engagement with the process instigated an understanding and a tracing of how I had been trapped within dualistic modes of representation that are entrenched in the dominant knowledge system. The engagement helped me question how dominant knowledge is produced and reproduced, and how such (re) production can marginalise, discriminate and stigmatise 'others'. The (re) production of dualistic modes is embedded within psychology and that has influenced how I

[1] In this thesis, I will primarily use displaced women (or people) rather than refugee women (or people) so as to dis-identify assumed knowledge through categorisation. The term refugee has been constructed through institutional forces involving not only research studies conducted by conventional approaches and institutions but also through international organisations and regulations including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the 1951 United Nations Convention (Theisen-Womersley, 2021). In some parts of this thesis, especially where literal context matters, the term refugee is used in accordance with the institutional conceptualisation.

framed and categorised displaced communities and their members. Another consequence is that it affects how the displaced communities were prescribed to be treated.

Academic work deepened my research interest, and challenged my assumed, universal way of thinking and knowing. My research is now grounded through the process of working with others "by heart" and by "working from memory" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414), as part of posthuman relational ethics, together with a critical-reflexive approach, as part of critical psychology. These approaches allowed me to connect with several 'silent moments' I experienced. These momentous experiences came while hearing and *withnessing*[2] painful stories from those who are 'others', especially from displaced women: these moments became spaces through which to challenge the extant literature in mental health areas associated with displaced communities.

To resist and avoid romanticising, or appropriating the assumed others as the exotic ones[3] , as described by Braidotti (2011a), I utilised a posthumanistic, relational, ethical process of working with others. This involves a series of embodied narrative practices that are intersected. These practices relate to both my situated knowledge and politics of location and my displaced peers' situated knowledges and their politics of location (Haraway, 1988). In New Zealand, generally, I am the 'other' by virtue of appearance and language. At language school, my displaced peers and I talked and learned English together; we helped each other find a job; and we started our friendships. Most importantly, we related to each other through marginalisation, pain, and social isolation as part of our struggle with the conditions of migrants and displaced people's lives (Murray et al., 2019; Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Thiruselvam, 2019).

While we shared our pain and struggles, our embodied narratives were different, multiple and inter-related (Braidotti, 2019a). Most importantly, in relation to the politics of location, while I consider myself as 'the other', I am not considered as one of Braidotti's missing people who

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[2] The word '*withness*' has been created to replace 'witness' because it is associated with observation and objectivity. *Withness* is specifically used to emphasise the importance of thinking with and being affected by displaced women's stories, as essential parts of the posthuman relational ethics enacted with a critical-reflexive approach.

[3] The exotic ones are those that are associated with orientalism in the postcolonial field (e.g., 'refugee' women, blacks, natives, animals, plants) (Braidotti, 2011a)

are: "those who never managed to gain powers of discursive representation" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414). The missing people are "central to the radical ethics and politics of philosophical nomadism" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414) which advance alternative and multiple ways of coming to know engaged in dynamic power relations. Yet, for myself, I still manage "to gain powers of discursive representation" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414) through my privileged location in psychology. I am attached to and intersect with multiple social locations: the other (a migrant), a woman, a peer of missing peoples, and a feminist researcher. I am also a part of becoming a "we" (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 37): Braidotti's concept of being-becoming is embedded and embodied in a web of relations that are linked with missing people (Braidotti, 2019b). In relation to these associations, I have started to acknowledge the importance of refiguring subjects interwoven with ethical responsibility (Haraway, 2016).

The ethical responsibilities emerging from my studies and friendships with my displaced peers became all the more present through tragedy. A particularly wretched event happened on the 15th March 2019, the day of the Christchurch mosque shootings. I have never forgotten several silent moments that occurred as a consequence of the event. Our local and national communities in New Zealand gathered together to pay respect to those who lost their lives and their families. In Palmerston North, we (many of my displaced peers, our English teachers, myself and other residents in Palmerston North) walked to the mosque at Cook Street. While we were walking, one of my peers said that she remembered a day like this in Afghanistan after someone died from attacks. While I was shocked and fearful, my peers held my hand and said that we should not show our fear. My peers said to me: "we must stay strong; otherwise, we would have been a victim".

After the event and after hearing my peers' stories, I was drawn into research with displaced people. I wrote several essays on topics involving displaced people during my English language study at language school and university studies at Massey. Conversely, the more their particular and painful stories about life's struggles emerged in relation to their situated knowledge, the more I became perplexed about how researchers and practitioners ground their experiences into one single reality, conceptualised as 'trauma'. This procedural conceptualisation of trauma undermines their complex singularities (Braidotti, 2019b). The constricted reality surrounding 'trauma' may lead to idiosyncratic psychological treatments influenced by the privileged western location of the 'helping' professionals with their supposedly value-neutral ethos. The discordance among these discourses and among

available choices led me to inquire into“in-depth transformation” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 229). The inquiry involves power relations and responsibility that might better suit the complex situatedness of their struggles and the need to have their stories heard relationally.

Discourses of trauma, power relations and responsibility

One day, I visited my peer, a displaced woman, at home, and I noticed she had shaved her hair. Her husband had abused her financially adding to the complexities and pains that she was experiencing. According to research, domestic violence is underreported and understudied among displaced women (Mezzatesta Gava et al., 2022; Park et al., 2021), as are the complexities and intersections through which the women’s lived experiences uniquely emerge.

My peer told me that she had a lot of pains and wanted to get rid of them. She did not know what to do and started shaving her hair. I was worried and I contacted Refugees as Survivors New Zealand (RASNZ). Their staff asked me to contact the mobile team. I rang the mobile team number and a nurse picked up the phone. He told me that the mobile team only deal with people at high risk including those with certain mental health problems such as schizophrenia. I asked him about trauma and post-traumatic stress symptoms (PTSD). He said that the mobile team did not deal with trauma and PTSD because they are not at the high end of psychological problems and there was an issue with limited resources. Instead, he suggested that my peer contact the Women’s Refuge organisation regarding domestic violence. This incident reminded me of how displaced women are ‘assumed’ to be victims facing domestic violence and treated accordingly when health issues are raised (Adams, 2001; Critelli & Yalim, 2021; Friedman, 2013; Mengo et al., 2024). My peer never did contact Women’s Refuge.

The above embodied narrative indicates a discourse that reflects unequal power relations and a prescribed norm of individual responsibility. Through this situation, displaced women are not given the respect of being considered as knowers of their own experiences, reflecting how displaced women suffer through an imbalance in power relations. In the meantime, they are advised to make their own choices and assume responsibility for their problems. This discourse is embedded throughout ‘current’ perspectives in psychology: responsibility is placed on individual persons (Brownell, 1991; Friesen, 2018; Klein, 2014; Martin, 2001) without recourse to socio-historical, gender or cultural-political realities. The discourse of

individual responsibility is interwoven with complex and dissymmetrical power relations (Braidotti, 2011b). Not only is a discourse of power (re) producing the dismissal of displaced women's concerns, but also complex-dynamic power relations are taken for granted. In this project, I aim to move forward with the experiences and situated knowledges I have shared with my peers, through our experiences together, and take these into my critical journey through the literature. To do this I draw on discourses of trauma, power relations, and responsibility that are central when questioning how the notion of our subject is framed. The current psychological literature that involves displaced women frames the subject as a unitary, rational and normal subject (Henriques et al., 1998). This notion of the subject has been repeatedly conceptualised and problematised throughout the late 20th and early 21st century in the social sciences and psychology (Henriques et al., 1998).

To challenge the dominant understandings, I draw on posthumanist feminist theory to critique available literature to better understand how these theories of trauma amongst displaced women have been produced and continue to be reproduced through psychological research.

Theoretical rationales: Process ontology and intersectionality

One of the reasons for (re) producing a unitary, rational and normal subject is the dominance of postpositivist assumptions (Eagly & Riger, 2014) which are embedded within psychology through earlier Eurocentric and colonial influences and continue to be reproduced. In effect, the experiences of subjects have been constructed as universal and their complex-multiple realties are either ignored or have been taken for granted. As a consequence, the problem of conceptualising and transforming subjects' negative experiences has been reduced to certain mandated treatments (Buhmann, 2014; Lever et al., 2019; Mathis et al., 2024; McFarlane & Kaplan, 2012).

One such mandated treatment is Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), together with 'cultural adaptation'. It is commonly used among health professionals for treating trauma-related mental health distress (Eskici et al., 2023; Kananian et al., 2021) and is underpinned with western cultural values (Hays & Iwamasa, 2006; Naeem et al., 2019; Stone et al., 2018). CBT is predominantly used with white, middle-class, well-educated clients of European-American heritage and is used to explore and modify core beliefs and promote changes in behaviour and cognition (Suinn, 2003). However, given that displaced people are not just facing an issue of simple cultural adaption, but can carry a wide range of historical, political

and social issues in addition to their personal issues, it is possible that the broad scope and the intersection of these issues may be overlooked, and their multiple, complex and unique experiences of struggle be undermined. Their experiences of struggle not only risk being misinterpreted, but may potentially be stripped of their situatedness within issues of race, gender, inequality, power imbalance and responsibility. Such disregard and undercutting can potentially lead to not only limitations in understanding and exploration of what in-depth interventions or transformation might be in relation to displaced women's struggles, but also lead to ongoing problems associated with unequal power relations and responsibility.

The consequence is that health professionals have become the 'knowers' who use CBT with cultural adaptation in an attempt to resolve displaced people's struggles, where such struggles are reduced to particular categories of mental health distress. In the meantime, responsibility is left to the individual displaced person, who in reality shares responsibility with others in a net or assemblage that is far more diffuse. This suggests that we need an alternative way of dealing with unequal power relations and responsibility, such as alternative notions of refiguring the subject. Refiguring the subject differently will, in effect, refigure the notion of trauma and in-depth transformation when working with displaced women.

To refigure subject, trauma and transformation, I adopt a process ontology and a theory of intersectionality together with a stance based on critical-reflexive positioning. This approach encompasses posthuman ethics to critique and interrogate the extant literature; to develop my research questions; and to enable creative and transformative methodological ways of doing research ethically and politically, linking ontological-epistemological stances to methodology and method. This pathway opens possibilities for creative theoretical-methodological approaches that allow us to hear and enable transformations within psychological practice and the everyday lived experiences of displaced women.

The process ontology of the research is associated with Braidotti's (2011b) nomadic theory and nomadic subjects, centred on posthuman relational ethics. Process ontology is grounded upon the notion of relationality in a set of relations including interdependency and partiality that are congruent with the following theoretical rationales.

The figuration of the subject in a dynamic way as an ethical, theoretical and political assemblage (Braidotti, 2010) and termed relationally as a "transversal subject assemblage" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 54), underpins this thesis. This notion of subject is used in critical

posthuman philosophy to blur the boundaries of dualistic ways of thoughts and category-formation that beset psychology (e.g., the mind vs body dichotomy) (Braidotti, 2011b). This revised notion of subject emphasises the dynamic form of nomadic theory spaces, framing through perceptions, concepts and imaginations that are unable to be reduced to human and rational consciousness (Braidotti, 2011b).

Throughout my work, I apply intersectional theories (Warner et al., 2016) to probe for different realities and relations when conducting research projects with refugee women. Related theories include situated knowledges, the politics of location (Haraway, 1988), women's standpoint theory (Harding, 1992), mana wahine standpoint theory (Simmonds, 2011; Waitere & Johnston, 2009), and other theories (or notions) that may arise later when doing research analysis.

Radical empiricism is embraced to co-create women's situated knowledges relationally from an intertwined contextual assemblage as it emerges from field research, so as to hear the women's experiences, to represent the collective real-life conditions of multiple others; to create possibilities through ethical and political relations by mobilising resources related to desires and imagination; and, to transform and empower collective-rational capacities to act ethically and politically (Braidotti, 2011b).

Through these theoretical approaches, my research project aims to newly conceptualise and enhance ways to understand displaced women's struggles and transformation by re-framing notions of subject, trauma and transformation. These approaches inform the next chapter, where I critique and interrogate the literature in psychology and wider contexts, and follow the questions that emerge for me as I journey.

Chapter 2: Trauma in psychology and wider contexts

Establishing a theoretical starting place

Through following my own story as intertwined with my peers, and hearing their stories of struggle and pain, I thought and interacted with the literature that was made visible through our friendships. Accompanied by these stories, in this chapter, I take a posthumanistic, relational-intersectional approach, prioritising process ontology and critical-reflexive theoretical positioning to inform a reading and re-reading practice to guide my journey.

My theoretical reading and re-reading practice is underpinned and guided by a theory of posthumanist assemblage: a key concept that I use throughout my research process. The philosophical notion of assemblage is associated with Deleuze and his theory of rhizomatic networks that intend to unfold, in a somewhat analogical way, dynamic concepts of material relations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Rhizomatic networks are relations that spread or interact with no fixed direction. Rhizomes form dynamic assemblages that are gathering and connecting things (including humans, non-humans, posthumans and inhuman forces, and real-life conditions) to assist and sustain each other (including displaced women) (Braidotti, 2011b, 2019b).

The posthumanist assemblages that are related to intersectionality in rhizomatic interaction assist me in imagining new possibilities to not only review and critique the literature but also to unravel assemblages embedded within the existing literature so as to understand how knowledge produced from the existing literature has come to be, and what are the philosophical assumptions? Most importantly, the notion of assemblages intersects with radical empiricism and a notion of a new "line of flight" (p. 9): proposed in an ontological way by Deleuze and Guattari (1987). Such a new line of flight opens for any "not knowing" (Lather, 2017, p. 172) to emerge through rhizomic intertwined assemblages: in this case, those that are revealed from my participant displaced women's lived experiences in their contexts. Such a new line of flight is an unknown process where I am uncertain about my 'assumed' knowledge but that opens possibilities to search for different ways of knowing. Through the process of interrogation, this approach can help me to adequately enhance my understanding of how displaced women's lives can be sustained and how their experiences can be understood differently, diversely, and relationally.

My reading and re-reading practice involves "matters of care" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 7) with unclosed narrative structures and practices through historical analyses. An example is Haraway's (2016) emphasis on neo-material positioning:

> It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories. (p. 12).

Haraway's (2016) neo-material positioning emphasises how knowledge and practice are produced not only ontologically and epistemologically, but also ethically and politically. Haraway's (2016) positioning guided me to trace the assemblages of three relational notions: subject, trauma and transformation. These are important concepts (hereafter, the three notions or the three relational notions) that re-emerge throughout the project, as embedded within the existing literature, so as to consider how I, in collaboration with my participants, might refigure them. Such a neo-material position is used to foster my speculative commitment and inquiry into the process of my relational thinking and writing with others, so as to remind me that knowledge cannot be produced with pre-suppositions that are objectively separable from socio-cultural-material worlds but instead are embedded, inter-dependent and involved in the entangling agencies, subjectivities and practices of matters in the mattering of worlds. Such neo-material positioning has ontological significance for "the politics of making things matter" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 18) which tends to be overlooked and taken for granted in dominant knowledge production, including my own privileged-situated social location in psychology.

In the process of relating to Haraway's (2016) neo-material positioning intersected with Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) notion of matters of care, I learn new practices of thinking with (and being affected by) other beings. These practices encourage me to remain "staying with the trouble … as mortal critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings" (Haraway, 2016, p. 1). Another intersection is possible with a critical cartography related to posthumanism, I become ethically "response-able" (Haraway, 2016, p. 29) to trace assemblages embedded within "the production of knowledge and subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 33) in my field study contexts. The outcome effectively relates trauma to humanitarianism. These intersected practices, which involve a process ontology, have taught

me the notion of becoming-with others (or “becoming-minoritarian” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 36)) which is an important part of relational ethics.

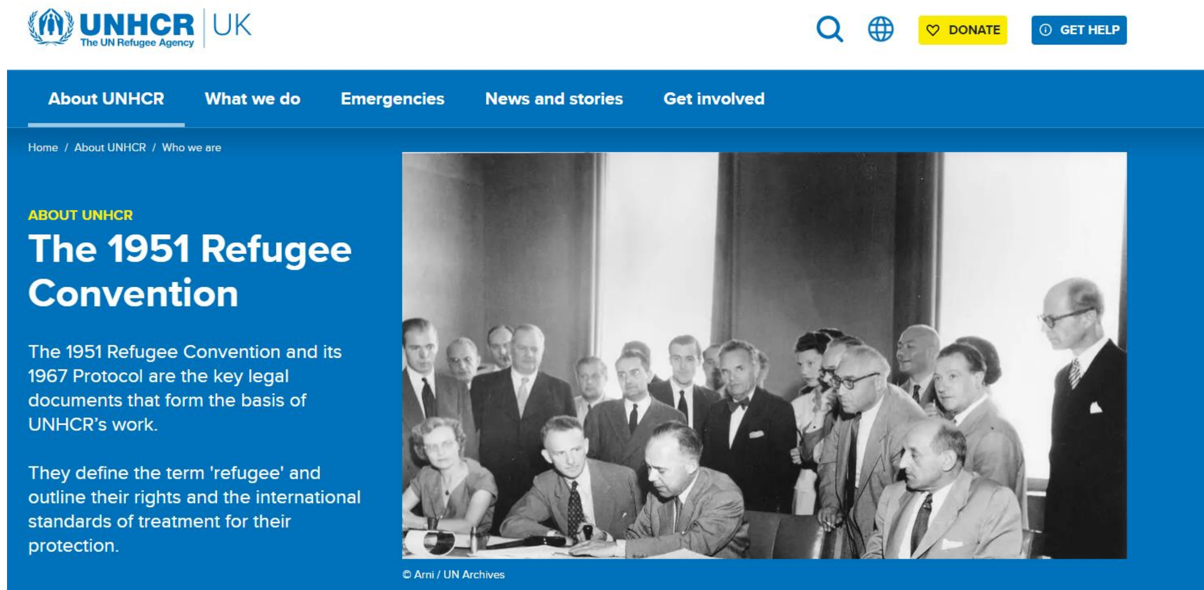
I engaged with a series of lines of inquiry through the process of knowledge production and practice in association with the three notions. I traced the underlying philosophical and methodological assumptions of these three notions that are posited in the psychological literature and wider contexts. I mapped out a series of assemblages in the literature: assemblages that take shape according to the three notions. I traced the relational assemblages situated in laws, texts, apparatuses, instruments, studies, photos, maps, as well as natures, cultures and beings.

Before I get into in-depth exploration of the three relational notions, I engage Haraway’s (2016) neo-material theoretical positioning which emphasises that “it matters which beings recognize beings” (p. 96). Going further, I am ethically “response-able” (Haraway, 2016, p. 29) to trace how ‘refugee’ beings, and more specifically, women, are recognised both through global organisations such as the United Nations, and the existing literature.

Tracing how ‘refugee’ beings related to gender are recognised in the process of knowledge production and practice in the existing literature?

Figure 1

How the Term ‘Refugee’ was Constructed, and By Who



Note. The UNHCR website image of document-signing by a group of plenipotentiaries (mainly men) (UNHCR, n.d.). From *The 1951 Refugee Convention*. Copyright 2025 by Arni, UN Archives, UNHCR.

The above Figure 1, together with accompanying text documents, is featured within the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) website. They portray how the meaning of ‘refugee’ was situated and constructed in international law, during the 1951 Geneva Convention. Within the convention, a ‘refugee’ is someone who:

> *owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR, 1954, p. 14).*

The definition of events was based on:

> *events occurring in Europe before 1 January 1951"; or (b) "events occurring in Europe or elsewhere before 1 January 1951", and each Contracting State shall make a declaration at the time of signature, ratification or accession, specifying which of these meanings it applies for the purpose of its obligations under this Convention (UNHCR, 1954, p. 15).*

In the definition, 'refugee' women are not specifically included, except by their exclusion. The use of 'his' and 'himself' demonstrate how men were taken for granted as dominant, and were distinctively prioritised in the historical context (Bhabha, 2004; Edwards, 2010). Just as importantly, even though countries that have signed during the 1951 Geneva Convention are obliged to set standards and laws to objectively 'apply for' 'refugee' people (UNHCR, 2015), such objective consideration reflects how 'refugee' beings are classified according to sets of standards and laws, fostering them to become legally less than humans (Limbu, 2009). Their subjective experiences are excluded, furthering multiple forms of marginalisation, for example, among displaced women.

Similarly, I have found that among the large body of psychological research among 'refugee' people, the study of their experiences of trauma-related mental health distress is predominant (Hall & Olff, 2016; Olff et al., 2019). While the term 'refugee' people has been used commonly in these studies, the subjective thoughts and feelings (or voices) of those who are termed 'refugees' is unrecognised. This lack of recognition resonates with the writings of Māori scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, who asks: whose voice matters, and also who decides and how (Smith, 1999)?

To this end, reflecting critically upon how 'refugees' are defined through those assemblages related to standards and laws, and how 'refugees' have been researched within the large body of the psychological literature, I found that not only is the consideration of social power relations and gender missing from mainstream research, it is also absent from mainstream discourses and narratives about 'refugees'. Such absences have led me to further trace how trauma-related mental health distress is produced and transformed in the psychological literature.

Tracing how trauma is produced and transformed in the existing literature in psychology

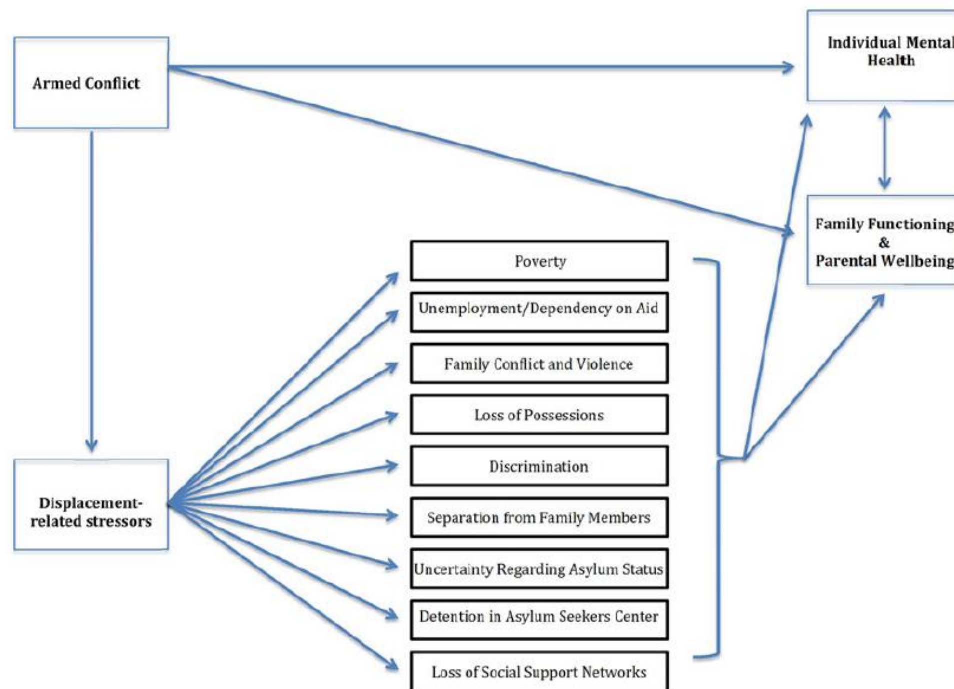
> *It matters what concepts we think to think other concepts with (Haraway, 2016, p. 118).*

To be responsible to those whose pain I witnessed and carry with me, I embarked on a journey of tracing knowledge related to trauma and how it is reproduced in the dominant psychological literature. To guide my journey, I asked by what premises and what approach has this knowledge been generated? Through my reading I noticed that the premises of these studies are tied to 'refugee' experiences aligned with particular traumatic events, explained through a three stage model. These encompass pre-migration through to their migration and on-going post-migration upon settlement in host countries (LeMaster et al., 2018; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Pre-migration stressors (or 'factors') of traumatic experiences include trauma related to war, conflict, persecution, violence, and torture occurring with themselves and their loved ones (Steel et al., 2017). Migration stressors of traumatic experiences include delays in the processing of asylum requests, fear of repatriation, loneliness, boredom, discrimination, marginalisation, poor housing conditions, prolonged insecurity and lack of control (Womersley et al., 2017). Post-migration stressors include unemployment, constant mobility, family separation, ongoing conflict in their home country (Lie, 2002; Schick et al., 2016), and disadvantage associated with race, language proficiency, gender and daily stressors (Theisen-Womersley, 2021).

The three stage model is commonly used, yet how were these factors created, and how did they come into being? How are these factors applied in practice and who decides how these factors can be used? With these questions in mind, I traced further and found that these factors became merged into a integrative contextual model, by Drožđek (2015) and Miller and Rasmussen (2017) (see Figure 2). These scholars based their models on the socio-ecological tradition of Bronfenbrenner (1986) in their attempt to predict trauma-related mental health disorders and analyse the influences.

Figure 2

A Model of Factors Involving Armed Conflict, Displacement and Mental Health



Note. The integrative model developed by Miller and Rasmussen (2017, p. 132) that situates the relationship between related stressors and mental health problems among displaced people. From *The Mental Health of Civilians Displaced by Armed Conflict: an Ecological Model of Refugee Distress* by K.E. Miller and A. Rasmussen, 2017, *Epidemiology and Psychiatric Science, 26*(2), p. 132.

The linkages within the integrative model of Bronfenbrenner (1986) conceptualise the association between trauma as stemming from not only traumatic events but also from stressful life conditions that are related to social and material conditions following displacement. These models aim for a better understanding in diagnosing, assessing and treating mental health problems among those 'non-western cultures' that require new contextual and complex perspectives (Drožđek, 2007; Drožđek et al., 2012a, 2012b). However, these models support a prior assumption that those categorised as 'refugee' peoples have trauma-related mental health disorders before conducting psychological research.

Although the three stage conceptualisation is valuable, these models are focussed on trauma-related mental health problems with an attempt to situate ways and solutions in diagnosis, assessment and treatments, rather than focussing on the real pain of displaced people that is

situated within their experience of everyday struggle. The question guiding my reading practice becomes, can we address the real pain that I *withnessed* and which affects me when I face my peers' experiences of struggle?

A prior assumption of 'trauma-related mental distress' among psychological studies with refugees has been reified into a key determinant of what 'refugee trauma' is defined as (Olff et al., 2019). It has subsequently been developed into what is apparently the most pressing concern and urgent area of research inquiry (Hall & Olff, 2016; Olff et al., 2019). This prior assumption of psychological research implicates a normative-stereotypical understanding of how trauma-related mental health distress is commonly reported in mental health settings and institutions including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues (e.g., psychosomatic disorders, grief related disorders) and as comorbidity (Copping et al., 2010; de Arellano & Danielson, 2008; Kirmayer et al., 2010; Lambert & Alhassoon, 2015; Morina et al., 2018; Schweitzer et al., 2006; Steel et al., 2009; Sturm et al., 2010; Van Ommeren et al., 2001).

Because the prior assumption of trauma-related mental health distress in the extant literature is tied to, justified with and influenced by clinical components associated with diagnosis, assessment and treatment (discussed earlier), I am responsible for tracing how trauma in the dominant discourse is constructed. Is it related to these three components: diagnosis, assessment and treatment, and by and with what instrumental assemblages?

Tracing trauma in the dominant discourse related to diagnosis-DSM assemblages

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) is a key instrument that provides criteria that guides the diagnosis of mental health conditions, including PTSD. The DSM is commonly described as a 'psychiatric bible' within the profession, first published in 1952 by the American Psychiatric Association (Kutchins & Stuart, 1998). PTSD was introduced as a diagnostic category in the DSM III in 1980 by the American Psychiatric Association (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). Through the process of tracing trauma in the dominant discourse through diagnosis-DSM assemblages, I inquire: how are criteria for the DSM and mental health disorders constructed and who decides their construction?

PTSD has a complex, long history; however, PTSD as it is studied within the dominant literature is largely driven by the use of DSM for diagnosis, without paying much attention to how PTSD is constructed historically and structurally. The diagnosis of PTSD was first

defined as a stress disorder occurring as a result of different types of stressors, both combat and civilian stress (American Psychiatric Association Committee on Nomenclature and Statistics, 1980). PTSD is rooted in an extended diagnosis of USA veterans of the Vietnam War who were predominantly white men soldiers, suffering from war neurosis or shell shock (Andreasen, 2010). The original process of PTSD diagnosis was in line with the western and biomedical paradigm. Summerfield (1999) argued for using individual-centred events for diagnosis which was problematised when applied to diverse 'refugee' people who are "non-western groups" (Bracken et al., 1995, p. 1073).

In relation to Summerfield's (1999) research, I learned insightful narratives from humanitarian aid operations involving medicalisation and psychological therapies of trauma-related mental health distress for 'refugee' people in Bosnia and Rwanda. It was supported by "the Western agencies and their 'experts' who from afar define the condition and bring the cure" (Summerfield, 1999, p. 1449).

The narrative about the origin for PTSD links me with Haraway's (2016) insight: "it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with" (p. 12). In this context, I inquire into these important questions: "whose knowledge is privileged and who has the power to define the problem?" (Summerfield, 1999, p. 1449). These questions reflect issues of Foucauldian discourse and power relations (Summerfield, 1999). While the lived and complex experiences of 'refugee' people in Bosnia and Rwanda were excluded from humanitarian aid operations, western psychological concepts and interventions are used by Bosnian and Croatian mental health professionals to diagnose and assess refugees who are 'traumatised' so that their traumatised conditions can be treated (Summerfield, 1999). In effect, power and knowledge in association with the western trauma discourse keeps producing, furthering the silencing of alternative voices and knowledges, associated with war-affected refugee people. Despite these questions about power and knowledge being raised (Summerfield, 1999; Summerfield, 2004), I suggest that the issues of Foucauldian discourse and power relations have been under-investigated and under-theorised in the dominant literature in psychology: social power relations are being overlooked.

Due to the limitations of the dominant discourse of trauma in the psychological literature, people from non-western cultures become enmeshed in a world view involving a similar discourse, the so-called western paradigm. The underlying philosophical assumption of such knowledge is still tied into the dualistic mode of knowledge production (western versus non-

western dominant knowledge production) that does not produce different, multiple or alternative knowledge. ‘Refugee’ people, with their diverse realities are produced and reproduced as equal to but different from western peoples’ realities produced from ‘western’ cultures: they are essentialised and identified as ‘non-western’. This form of “moral relativism” (Braidotti, 2006a, p. 235) in knowledge production involves the process of making “the other of the same” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 42).

Tracing trauma in dominant discourse as it is related to assessment-cultural and intervention-cultural assemblages

The term culture-bound syndrome has been used when particular signs or symptoms associated with specific cultures are diagnosed in individuals facing mental health distress. In the light of the culture-bound syndrome, there has been a search for a cross-cultural approach that could be used to apply to people who derive from specific cultures (Karthick & Barwa, 2017). Cross-cultural approaches have been included in DSM-IV (Guarnaccia & Rogler, 1999). However, thinking with Craps (2013), a postcolonial scholar, it appears to me that these approaches in dominant trauma discourse focus narrowly on racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics rather than reflecting on a postcolonial sensibility. That is, the dominant discourse of trauma in cross-cultural approaches is limited to a single and universal form of essentialist category: ‘non-western’ populations involving east versus west dichotomy and orientalism. Knowledge that is produced within the claimed ‘non-western’ cultural-universal category relies on the same sets of rules and protocols as the ‘western’ cultural-universal claim. As above, this process of knowledge production is trapped within the reductive rationale of moral relativism (Braidotti, 2006a). Under such moral essences, the knowledge that is produced is grounded upon a unilateral, universal version of ‘non-western’ subject.

This argument is congruent with how the biopsychosocial paradigm is framed in relation to clinical assessment and intervention where the cultural component is only included when assessing and intervening with people from non-western cultures. For example, psychometric instruments have been developed to assess mental health conditions of ‘refugees’ by focusing on adapting standard measures applied for different cultures and languages, involving cross-cultural approaches. The methodological and cross-cultural barriers have become a challenge for developing neuropsychological assessment, as emphasised by Veliu and Leathem (2017), scholars from my privileged location, School of Psychology at Massey University. Veliu and Leathem (2017) have encouraged the development of neuropsychological assessments for

language, culture, socio-political-economic factors, education and lived experience when assessing other cultural groups including 'refugees'. Apart from these, there are a number of scholars from the departments of Psychiatry and Psychology in USA and European countries, who have jointly written a research review on psychotraumatology (Olff et al., 2019). They suggest that some assessment instruments have made "tremendous progress" (Olff et al., 2019, p. 8), and are suitable for non-western cultural populations (Olff et al., 2019). While Summerfield's (1999) PTSD critique has been briefly addressed within this article, the scholars did not revisit Summerfield's (1999) argument in-depth but rather passed it over "for good" (Olff et al., 2019, p. 8) as they indicated:

> While early publications discussed the applicability of concepts or even doubted that (Summerfield, 1999), we have moved beyond this discussion for good. Today′s focus is on adapting standard measures to different cultures and languages and on measurement invariance. Here the field has made tremendous progress (e.g. Kaltenbach, Härdtner, Hermenau, Schauer, & Elbert, 2017, with a psychometric evaluation of the Refugee Health Screener-15, a short instrument with good feasibility, reliability, and validity). Given the special conditions of refugees, measures covering specific aspects such as particularly stressful experiences during the flight, which are not covered well by standard measures of traumatic experiences, had to be developed (e.g. the Stressful Experiences in Transit Questionnaire; Purić & Vukčević Marković, 2019). Hopefully, we soon will be able to recommend a core battery of instruments, freely available in many languages – as we have done for trauma research in general (Olff, 2015a) (Olff et al., 2019, p. 8).

Similarly, trauma-informed treatments for 'refugees' have been developed based on putatively universal parameters that are built upon the western versus non-western cultural dichotomy. Trauma-informed treatments, integrated with universal cultural adaptation, include: mindfulness-based trauma recovery for refugees (MBTR-R) (Aizik-Reebs et al., 2021); mindfulness-based art therapy (Kalmanowitz, 2016; Kalmanowitz & Ho, 2017); culturally-adapted Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) (Hinton et al., 2013; Jalal et al., 2017); and culturally-adapted Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (TFCBT) (Unterhitzenberger et al., 2015). To critically interrogate these dualistic modes of knowledge

production, I engage with Haraway's (2016) neo-material theoretical position to emphasise the process of unfolding ontological-epistemological assemblages related to notions of trauma and transformation in the extant literature.

Tracing the ontological-epistemological assemblages related to the notion of trauma and transformation situated within the existing literature in psychology and feminist psychology

As Haraway's (2016) advises: "it matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations" (p. 35). Here I trace how the ontological-epistemological rationales (or philosophical rationales) of trauma and transformation are situated within the biopsychosocial model. The rationale prioritises the reality of 'otherness' together with assumed normality and assumed abnormality and is rooted in dualism which is intrinsic to the western power-knowledge production system (Karter & Kamens, 2019). These dualist dichotomies include mind-body, nature-culture, objectivity-subjectivity, western-'non-western' and are constructed through a belief system that asserts that they can capture universal knowledge that is situated in trauma discourses of otherness (Kleinman & Benson, 2006).

Building from my critical analysis of the literature, another question emerges for me. I ask how the ontology of 'culture' that is posited within the biopsychosocial model has come to be? The idea of tracing the ontology of culture, and the ontological-epistemological rationales through the history of psychology is new to me, despite my undergraduate and postgraduate study in psychology. I have never been taught or encouraged to trace the ontology of culture through my pedagogical psychological papers, not to mention ontological-epistemological rationales behind my conventional psychology classes. Yet my thoughts are congruent with Warner et al. (2016), who suggest that "psychology researchers do not typically articulate the theory of knowledge that underlies their scholarship." (p. 171). This is also affirmed by Eagly and Riger (2014) who trace epistemologies and methodologies in the feminist psychology discipline as part of a larger examination of science in the second half of the 20th century. They stress:

> The content of the 10 methods textbooks that we examined revealed negligible attention to epistemology, and it is unlikely that many psychology researchers pay much attention to such matters, no doubt

> because postpositivist assumptions about science are broadly shared (p. 698).

The process of knowledge production in psychology is underlain with positivist and post-positivist assumptions involving evidence-based approaches that emphasise ways of capturing trauma-related mental distress which can be diagnosed, assessed and treated scientifically and efficiently (Bracken et al., 2016). Evidence-based approaches focus on technical aspects. They have been emphasised in the majority of psychology courses I have encountered including psychopathology, principles of clinical neuropsychology, clinical psychology assessment and interventions, child and family therapy, and professional practice in psychology. However, I have never been encouraged to explore the philosophical rationales of such approaches. The importance of evidence-based approaches, much like Haraway's (2016) notion of the "god trick" (p. 42), has been taken for granted in pedagogical-psychological assemblages without questioning origins. Such approaches, when used within 'non-western' settings are claimed to be a moral imperative (Patel et al., 2011); yet it is one that began in the European asylums in the 19th century (Bracken et al., 2016). Knowledge produced from such approaches in psychology often overlooks the diverse histories, cultural traditions and other non-technical aspects of care including values, meanings and relations, not to mention less active collaboration with local people's lived experience of mental health problems (Shukla et al., 2012; White & Sashidharan, 2014).

All of this led me to contemplate whether the moral imperatives emphasised within the evidence-based approaches in psychology are in line with the "moral universalism" (p. 236) that Braidotti (2006a) is critical of. The assumptions hidden in this ethical stance help explain the predominance of universal approaches when processing and practicing clinical diagnosis, assessment and treatment within a practice that pathologises the individual. In sum, the approach is constructed to demarcate normality and abnormality where the experts (or researchers) are the ones who decide who or what is normal or abnormal with instrumental apparatuses.

When used in 'non-western' settings, evidence-based approaches are problematic and the problems need some elaboration. When a concept of trauma-related mental health distress is built to be the focus of mainstream investigation among refugees, a construction takes place that serves to identify those who are normal and who are abnormal, through the use of evidence-based approaches. This method involves testable hypotheses based on 'a single

reality' which is posited to be objectively-passively observed (Summerfield, 1999). As a result, displaced people's experiences have become normalised or abnormalised within this knowledge production. Through this process, the problematics of discourse involving universally and unilaterally constructed subjects continues and reproduces in order to produce universal ways of fixing and treating trauma-related mental health distress (Summerfield, 1999). As a consequence, diverse, unique and complex displaced women's voices are dismissed, made silent and missing or absent through the dominant ways of knowledge production.

Above all, with the universal approach, not only are history and the context of displaced women missing, but also contextual issues pertinent to patriarchy and social power relations, as well as how history and context impact differently on different displaced women, are also missing. From here, we can link such missing history and context of displaced women to the definition of 'refugee' introduced in the beginning of this chapter. The definition of 'refugee' refers to 'himself' rather than 'herself' or other gender orientation. This linkage reiterates how displaced women are situated in a void of the dominant literature, discourse and narrative about 'refugees'.

As I journey through existing literature, building from critical analysis and reassembling what I know, the process leads me to take further responsibility in tracing how the notion of trauma and transformation are captured in the feminist psychology literature. Haraway's (2016) challenge is: "the need is stark to think together anew across differences of historical position and of kinds of knowledge and expertise" (p. 7). Before tracing such a how question, it is important to reflect that feminist research has largely taken place outside our psychology discipline in fields such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, social work, and education (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019; Wilkinson, 1991). Reflecting upon this, on the one hand, it could be argued that feminist research in psychology is narrow. On the other hand, it also reflects that there is insufficient published feminist research, especially among displaced women in the feminist psychology literature.

While attempting to trace this question of how notions of trauma and transformation are captured in feminist psychology literature, I soon realised that feminist psychology research largely remains within mainstream and empiricist psychology (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019) even though feminist psychology is considered transdisciplinary and therefore able to draw on many aspects of feminist theorising and research from different disciplines. With such a

realisation, I have chosen to trace the premises and approaches taken by ‘critical’ feminist scholars when studying trauma, with an aim to target a much more radical-transformative approach to capture how trauma is produced and transformed.

Critical feminist scholars take a pioneering-critical view to challenge the dominant discourse of trauma in mainstream psychology. The dominant discourse involves the pathologisation of trauma, not only to theorise trauma with a DSM application to fix individual symptoms with an emphasis on personal (or individual) responsibility (Tseris, 2018), but also to theorise trauma-informed responses and models to reproduce ‘master narratives’ in trauma research through funding and publication institutions (Thompson, 2021). The latter is referred to as the “privatization of trauma” (Thompson, 2021, p. 105): a form of what Foucault (1991) describes as neoliberal governmentality that not only privileges the individualism that is determined by experts for personal recovery and private transformation, but is also intertwined with the notion of resilience where individual subjects can manage and recover their internal-trauma symptoms (Thompson, 2021). The commodification of trauma theorised by the critical feminist scholars is congruent with a particular notion within advanced capitalism, framed by Braidotti (2013c, 2019a) who builds upon Deleuzian analysis. Advanced capitalism produces subjectivities where difference is valued in relation to a market economy, disconnecting them from their liberatory potentials of making difference in the world.

I have further learned that such master narratives become privileged in constructing a particular clinical version of reality (or truth) (Foucault, 1966; Foucault, 1973) through various assemblages including language practices (Marecek, 1999), scientific apparatuses and status of science: these assemblages have material effects in institutional power (Lafrance & McKenzie-Mohr, 2013) that can influence the master narratives to keep reproducing clinical narratives of individual psychology in various clinical, organisational, and therapeutic settings (Thompson, 2021).

The critique above is informed by decolonisation approaches, such as that of Thompson (2021) which helps me conceptualise how different notions of trauma-informed approaches, used in the dominant discourse of trauma in mainstream psychology, are problematic. Decolonial thought can challenge power-knowledge construction and the control of what we know and who can know. It becomes evident that dominant trauma discourses disconnect trauma relations between individual psychological functions and complex socio-political

conditions (Gough et al., 2013). For example, mainstream psychology does not consider gendered and contextualised narratives of trauma (Segalo, 2015). In addition, even though the mainstream psychology of trauma-informed approaches have claimed that they are moving from a biomedical to a bio-psycho-social model (Gatchel et al., 2020), clinicians primarily rely on realist assumptions that are insufficient to question their own discursive knowledge production shaped by their own subjectivity and ideological standpoints, including the roles of science related to social regulation and control (Ussher, 1997). This system of knowledge production has been challenged as a system of diagnostic imperialism (Rose, 2019).

Through decolonial approaches, some critical feminist psychologists including Marecek (1999) involve the Foucauldian notion of power to question the system of knowledge production in the mainstream trauma discourse in psychology that assigns power to scholars and practitioners to define, diagnose, assess and treat trauma. For example, Marecek (1999) involves the critical view in analysing PTSD as a colonial, white diagnosis in identifying abnormality. Additionally, the notion of trauma has been further theorised by Thompson (2021) as an institutional trauma that serves to promote institutional narratives of trauma and traumatised subjectivities. Thompson (2021) theorises institutional trauma based on a position of surviving sexual violence and complaint in the United Kingdom higher educational context. In this context, the notion of trauma is repositioned from an individualistic understanding of trauma-related mental health distress embedded within the mainstream to institutional trauma embedded within socio-political dimensions. Trauma is argued to be related to structural violence and its consequences where institutions are involved substantially in defining and transforming trauma. For example, some scientists and clinicians fail to question the social construction of trauma, as well as the influence of their own subjectivities towards theories and therapies of trauma that they use and develop (Ussher, 1997). Such failure allows some scientists and clinicians to control narratives of trauma and traumatised subjectivities institutionally where traumatic narratives and traumatised subjectivities can be mediated through therapies, creative projects and research, as well as silenced through complaints procedures and non-disclosure agreements.

The pioneering contributions of critical feminist scholars as indicated above suggests that the DSM pathologisation criticism is not new: it has occurred over decades, and despite this ongoing disruption of the trauma dominant discourse, the 'master narratives' are still maintained (Lafrance & McKenzie-Mohr, 2013). Now, I ask: what matters then? Haraway

(2016) reminds me that "the details matter" (Haraway, 2016, p. 115): the details that "link actual beings to actual response-abilities" (Haraway, 2016, p. 115). While tracing a tangle of assemblages, each time I have been introduced to new knowledge which has helped me enhance collective thinking and has made me accountable to displaced women whose voices are missing and silenced by the dominant psychology discipline that I am embedded within. Yet, it is not just physical displacement but academic and theoretical displacement that is most noticeable through the absence of their voices.

Through assemblages that keep producing 'master narratives', I explore further how displaced women's voices are produced in the existing feminist psychology literature. One of the unexpected findings that emerged though my literature critique was that existing feminist 'refugee' studies in the discipline of psychology were predominantly conducted under the theme of gender and women. White (2000) has suggested that these studies largely followed empirical and scientific tradition that are aligned with positivist and postpositivist rationales that used trauma dominant approaches. These studies focused on gender differences associated with trauma-related mental health distress. 'Gender' has been highlighted as a significant 'factor' that influences displaced women's experiences related to mental health distress (Theisen-Womersley, 2021). The terms 'gender' (women, men), and 'sex' (female, male) within these studies have often been confused and applied to classify gendered nature or sexed biological nature to normalise 'refugee' experiences. For example, a psychiatric paper indicated "female refugees" (Alpak et al., 2015, p. 45) experienced PTSD twice, compared to "males" (Alpak et al., 2015, p. 48), in response to traumatic events.

According to Tekin et al. (2016), 'refugee' women report certain PTSD conditions more than men: these conditions included flashbacks, hypervigilance and intense psychological distress In the meantime, men reported certain PTSD conditions more than women: these conditions included feelings of detachment from others (Tekin et al., 2016). In sum, 'refugee' experiences of trauma are theorised within individuals following overwhelming stressors, not only indicated through the dominant three stages of migration models (addressed in the beginning of this chapter), but also rape and other forms of gender-based violence.

The details of the above gender/sex difference research are important as they highlight that even when gender difference becomes the spotlight, research continues to overlook history, context and lived experiences. This reinforces my responsibility with displaced women that Haraway (2016) has reminded me of. She reminds me that the stories and experiences that I

was privileged to become a part of were my peers' stories and are related to the structural, historical, cultural and situational contexts that influence displaced women's experiences of mental health distress and other circumstances in their everyday living conditions. Their lived experiential contexts are overlooked in most traditional and some feminist literature therefore silencing displaced women's experiences within the patriarchal structure. Such a narrow approach can have material effects on limited access to displaced women's migration and therefore they are less likely to be able to migrate (Norton, 2000). This narrative can be linked with the definition of 'refugee' that I introduced through legal assemblages related to in the 1951 Geneva Convention discussed in the beginning of this chapter that emphasises a particular gender within the definition. In relation to this analysis, it has been reported that women seeking asylum are less likely to receive granted refugee status compared to men, influenced by asylum processes in receiving countries involving greater structural and cultural barriers (Hollander et al., 2016; UNHCR, 2013), leading to not only the invisibility or absence of displaced women but also furthering the notion of subject as unitary.

To help address structural and cultural barriers historically, the inclusion of an intersectional approach from feminist theory is postulated to espouse subject differences, constituting through different intersecting contexts and power relations involving various social categories and systems. These include gender, race, class, history, status, sexuality, education, age, disabilities, context of country of origin where complex contexts, meanings and narratives of displaced women's lives can emerge and be voiced so as to provide some visibility at the margins (Crenshaw, 1991).

Critical approaches to psychological research that enable context and stories to be told through intersectionality and narrative theory

A theory of intersectionality provides us with an opportunity for critical analysis to gain insight into power relations embedded within a complexity of multiple social categories and systems that influence multiple forms of marginalisation, especially among women at the margins (Cho et al., 2013; Crenshaw, 1997; Crenshaw, 1991). The notion of intersectionality grew from feminist black civil rights groups in the USA, established in the late 1980s to challenge Eurocentrism and the lived experience of white and middle class women (Salem, 2016). Intersectionality was initiated to challenge the dominant process of knowledge production driven by a one-size-fits-all theory that has treated women as a homogeneous categorisation (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). It enables us to critique social power relations

and silences at the margins of discrimination and subjugation. Involving intersectionality can make the effects of power relations more visible and complex among lived experiences of women at multiple intersectional positions of differences through intersected social categories (e.g., gender, race, class, education, sexuality, age, disabilities) (Warner et al., 2016) as well as in broader social structural systems (e.g., capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, nationalism and patriarchy) and power relations (Salem, 2016).

Intersectionality has become a primary feature in some areas of feminist scholarly work (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019), which trace related feminist psychology assemblages. This approach is not without critique, however. Some critical feminist theorists, for example, Salem (2016), argues that intersectionality underlies different ontologies: this pluralism leads to ontological conflict with others, undermining and erasing the radical-critical potential of intersectionality. Erel et al. (2010) contend that some researchers can pay attention to categories just as a descriptive formula or as a simple listing of differences, resulting in difficulties in grasping relationality and power relations. While differences in a subject position constituted through gender, race, class and sexuality may be addressed, how this subject is positioned and is made interdependent and related to other subjects in terms of dynamic power, domination and oppression may not be addressed. Erel et al. (2010) further argue that intersectionality is popularly believed to have emerged from the Global North, ignoring its original emergence initiated from the Global South, resulting in depoliticisation and further silencing women of colour and migrant women. Brown (1995) states that intersectionality has been impacted by neoliberalism in addressing issues of diversity or inequality rather than power relations or domination.

As well as intersectionality, a theory of narrative has been promoted as an innovative feminist approach to challenge the dominant empiricist tradition in psychology (Gergen et al., 1999). In feminist research women are enabled to talk about their experiences, to break the silences within traditional research and to give women a voice for social transformation and political mobilisation (Romero & Stewart, 1999). The use of narratives in research is congruent with social constructionist and postmodernist approaches (McHugh, 2014). They are further theorised as fluid responsibilities where narratives can migrate (or travel) across the globe to disrupt the dominant narratives and widen political and geographic imaginations for change (Fine, 2017).

Despite the advancement of intersectionality and narrative approaches, I have searched within *Feminism and Psychology*, an academic journal of feminist psychology, and other journals that publish feminist research, and I have *withnessed* that intersectionality and narrative approaches have been underutilised in feminist psychological research. I have also noted psychological studies purporting to employ intersectionality and narrative theory in feminist psychological research. However, as Fine (2017) suggests, these theories can be employed without thinking through the critical-reflexive elements of the theoretical practice that links with history, privilege, violence, dispossession, white supremacy, resistance and their reproduction. Warner et al. (2016) further suggest that social categories can be composed and relegated to be factors or variables that are fixed and essential. They appear through my reviewed literature in trauma studies in feminist psychology. The consequences are that acknowledgement of power and activism can be missing.

Intersectionality can be used in psychology with limited understanding in relation to social justice and transformative effects (Warner et al., 2016) while narrative theory can be used in psychology with limited ethical and epistemological considerations and responsibility (Fine, 2017). For example, while the narrative-based trauma therapy privileges the telling of stories as a means for recovery, the process of telling stories involves a non-neutral exercise (e.g., women are required to revisit their abusive past) (Cohen et al., 2000). Most importantly, the knowledge and practice of using narrative-based trauma therapy continues to utilise a language-based diagnosis and treatment, and simply involves a talking approach with pharmacological response (Tseris, 2018). Using narrative-based trauma therapy in this way allows mental health professionals to take control over the therapeutic process (Tseris, 2013), not to mention continuing to re-establish a particular cultural motif and myth about 'madness of women' (or women's distress), furthering invisibility to effects of patriarchal systems and male violence against women (Ussher, 2011).

Above all, not only does mainstream psychological research use intersectionality and narrative approaches within refugee trauma dominant discourses associated with 'assumed' trauma and 'assumed' morbidities, but also this limitation implicates how the notion of subject is constrained and constructed as universal. Such universality led me to realise that the use of intersectionality and narrative approaches without reflexive processes and lack of understanding around the colonisation of psychology and the harms this does, continues to colonise others' processes of knowledge production with embedded power relations. Some

researchers may not be aware of this. In effect, not only can multiple missing voices be undermined, but also the critical notions of intersectionality (Brown, 1995; Erel et al., 2010; Salem, 2016) and narrative theory can be devalued, including political acts for transformation through storytelling (Connor, 2007).

Tracing the ontology of subjects in relation to notions of trauma and transformation in the existing literature in psychology and feminist psychology

What I have learned throughout from the process of interrogating existing assemblages with an attempt to find the gaps that appear when questioning the notion of trauma in the dominant discourse in mainstream literature in both psychology and feminist psychology, is that: women's experiences of trauma are reduced into one single reality associated with 'assumed' trauma and 'assumed' morbidities. This reduction follows from the assumptions of both positivist epistemology and post-positivist epistemology (Eagly & Riger, 2014).

In congruence with the above epistemological assumptions, 'refugee' subjects are framed as homogeneous individuals, applied especially to those who experience the aftermath of traumatic events including sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence (Bracken 2002). Through my interrogation of the literature, I have read that refugee subjects have been categorised variously as: traumatised victims (Bancroft et al., 2016; Hensel-Dittmann et al., 2011; Vukčević Marković et al., 2023), traumatised refugees (Lely et al., 2019), trauma survivors (Decker et al., 2017), survivors of trauma (Ministry of Health, 2012), survivor population (Bajwa et al., 2020), and vulnerable population (Health Navigator New Zealand, 2015; Hvass & Wejse, 2017). In mainstream feminist psychological research, refugee women have been classified as female survivors of violence (Theisen-Womersley, 2021; Tseris, 2018) and women victims of war-related violence (Dossa & Hatem, 2012) as well as resilient subjects (Arnetz et al., 2013; USA for UNHCR, 2020). Even in other feminist psychological approaches involving decolonising perspectives, displaced women have been classified as survivors of violence (Tseris, 2019) and traumatised subjects (Thompson, 2021), not to mention as a grateful refugee (Schwöbel-Patel & Ozkaramanli, 2017). The latter involves a social construction of image and narrative which imposes a burden on refugees consisting of certain expectations and behaviours including a willingness to work and gratitude to their host nation (Schwöbel-Patel & Ozkaramanli, 2017). These classifications that include survivors of violence, traumatised subjects and grateful refugees

can lead to further problems; especially when contemplating how the notion of subject is produced and whether the notion of subject keeps reproducing as universal and unitary?

The above categorisation contradicts my own experiences with my peers' situated knowledge: as my earlier discussion shows, they insist that they are not victims. The congruence between the literature and personal experiences links me to Henriques et al.'s (1998) critique of the centrality of the notion of the subject that is an underlying problem in the existing literature in psychology and feminist psychology. The linkage has led me to ask: how is the notion of subject related to displaced women produced and whether their differences, complexities and uniqueness in relation to situational-historical-cultural-socio-political-economic-institutional contexts are recognised?

After reading Henriques et al.'s (1998) critique, I asked myself: might there be any advancement in 'feminist' psychology in terms of the notion of subject? I traced various philosophical stances in the feminist psychology literature and asked how the stances can inform me about the notion of subject. Among the feminist psychology literature I searched and learned from, three philosophical stances are preeminent as captured by feminist scholars including: feminist empiricism (congruent with psychology's dominant postpositivist approach), feminist standpoint theory, and the "'turn to language' movement" (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019, p. 4) that includes social constructionism, constructivism, postmodernism and poststructuralism (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Eagly & Riger, 2014; Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). Feminist scholars involving standpoint theory and the stance of the 'turn to language' movement have shared a commitment to develop knowledge and practice in non-androcentric and decolonising ways (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019). At an epistemological level, these stances promote women's voices by prioritising women's lived experiences as legitimate knowledge sources that inform how the world (realities, knowledges, truths) is understood. At a methodological level, in exploring women's experiences, these stances reflect an ethic of collaboration, respect and caring (Campbell & Wasco, 2000).

Despite the progressive manner of some feminist approaches, feminist scholars in psychology have slowly begun to recognise the problematisation of the notion of subject. I recognised that, to a certain degree, as I write this, I am in a process of exploring them. My current understandings suggest that while these theories privilege the position of subject (the subject of women who are knowers), when the theories are applied in practice, women subjects are positioned in unified and universal ways, attached to a particular (perhaps familiar) position

(e.g., victims, survivors). Such a position can result in theory being lost in the application of it. Such positions relate to how narratives of women are framed. The narratives are framed through stories of violence (e.g., domestic violence, sexual violence, war, torture) associated with refugee women's migration journeys. How are researchers' subjectively positioned within the academy while privileging the position of participants who are being researched? Most importantly, who are researchers accountable to?; how can they become response-able to those 'others' (Haraway, 2016), not to mention how can they manage complex power relations situated, embodied and embedded in research processes (Braidotti, 2019b). These questions reflect how the philosophical underpinnings of feminist research privilege participants as the knower. Yet, these feminist researchers come from a position of power associated with the academy and eurocentrism (Crenshaw, 1992, 1997). Therefore, they act as gatekeepers where they influence and control how knowledge can be produced methodologically-politically-economically. In the context of a gatekeeper, they act their roles as proficient, excellent and superior, influenced through structural and epistemological violence. Yet, even some feminist researchers need to maintain their positions within the academy which restricts what they research, what they can get funding for and what they publish. In effect, how can transformation occur if these feminist researchers do not embody their responsibilities of decolonising knowledge? Instead, acting as a gatekeeper without repositioning their power stance can reinforce and entail colonising knowledge where their power can be maintained within the academy.

In relation to the above analysis, I further argue that in trauma studies, even though the notion of trauma shifts from individual trauma to structural-institutional trauma through some feminist psychology theories, when the notion of subject is not yet shifted, it can affect the notion of transformation. Or, trauma among women refugees is transformed or changed in a unified, universal way where trauma can be fixed through personal and institutional contexts in accordance with how subjects are framed in a specific narrative of violence in relation to domestic violence, sexual violence, war and torture as well as structural-institutional violence. Linking with the critical posthumanist stance (Braidotti, 2019a), I ask whether this kind of transformation is sustained? Also, what other women's struggles and transformation might there be that has been overlooked due to a narrow research focus on a particular kind of violence related to 'assumed' trauma and 'assumed' morbidities?

The underlying reasons above are related to limits in ontological presence and to potential research questions in the existing literature, leading to the possibility of inquiring further into new extended research questions. This has led me to take 'response-ability' (Haraway, 2016) to develop a research question, building up the interrogation of existing literature in psychology and feminist psychology: *What women's struggle and transformation assemblages might exist in relation to women's situated-embodied-embedded experiences and contexts?*

This key research question is underpinned with process ontology related to the three relational notions: subject, trauma and transformation, introduced earlier in the chapter. In summary, what has been found through my theoretical position: a posthumanist, relational-intersectional and a critical-reflexive approach[4], is that displaced women's voices have been made silent or ineffable, and in turn the process of silencing turns them into victims to be pathologically treated through the ontological and epistemological incongruences with the academy. In reply, I am responsible to develop new theoretical-political possibilities to work with displaced women through process ontology so as to reveal their felt and lived experiences that are unheard and difficult to articulate from their position that is submerged within mainstream discourse.

Ethical response-ability to develop, think and re-think new theoretical possibilities

Process ontology has taught me to develop new possibilities theoretically, methodologically and politically which open new ways in shifting the dominant notion of subject, trauma and transformation that are embedded within essentialism, relativism and universalism. Process ontology encompasses posthuman relational ethics that are grounded in notions of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988), of thinking and writing with (and being affected by) others "by heart" and by "working from memory" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414), together with critical-reflexive positioning.

I draw on Haraway's (1988) notion of situated knowledges related to standpoint feminist theory that reconceptualises the knowers (Wigginton & Lafrance, 2019), and privileges the

[4] The approach is described and established in the beginning of this chapter as a theoretical foundation to interrogate and tackle the three notions in the existing literature in psychology and feminist psychology, as analysed throughout this chapter.

acknowledgement of women's situatedness and partiality related to their specific social location and their lived conditions (Haraway, 1988). Displaced women are the knowers or experts of their own experience, manifest also as bifurcated knowledge where women understand their own situatedness while simultaneously understanding their embeddedness within the restriction of more dominant ways of knowing (Mamdani, 1996; Sseremba, 2023).

The theoretical-methodological-political stance of my thesis, first and foremost, links with narratives, grounded upon our relational situated knowledges (my peers, displaced women, and myself), that emerged unexpectedly from my memories of the 15th March 2019 event, the day of the Christchurch mosque shootings. My memory of feeling pained and overwhelmed with uncertainty from that event was lucid and relationally shared. The event links me to the pains of displaced people for real and *vice versa*, leading me to question my own notion of subject. Through my journey so far, I have started to realise that ourselves (myself, as well as those local and national NZ residents, and international residents) are affected by displaced people's pains. We will not sustain and survive if displaced people are not sustained and survive: "they—we—are here to live and die with, not just think and write with" (Haraway, 2016, p. 125). We are affected, moved and troubled relationally by displaced people's pains as a foundation to produce knowledge relationally.

The realisation was situated from interaction with my peers' and my situated, embodied and embedded subjectivity and experience which enabled me to inter-relate with, affect and be affected by those others (displaced people and more specifically, displaced women). While this process has helped me to question the notion of subject that typically is situated as universal, I continue to ask the questions, how can the notion of subject as universal be changed? How can ontological processes contribute to subject formation and in what way can that help me do research with displaced women differently? While contemplating these questions, it is not only the shifting of subject we should be considering but also the affection, movement and trouble of the researcher, who is affected by participant's stories, moving together relationally with participants.

The above interaction of situated, embodied and embedded experiences of myself and my displaced peers has assisted me in relating with the becoming a "we" process (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 37; Haraway, 2016, p. 125) as emphasised in Braidotti's (2011b) theory of nomadic becoming and in Haraway's (2016) process of "cultivating response-ability" (p. 130), building upon critical posthuman relational ethics. "We" are part of the becoming a "we"

process (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 37; Haraway, 2016, p. 125) in “sympoietic arrangements” (Haraway, 2016, p. 58), composing ourselves as “subject assemblages” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 55), as “transversal subject assemblages” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 54), and as “collective selves” (Connor, 2007, p. 61), in recognising that ‘we’ “cannot survive or act alone” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 18); and our “potential of what ‘we’ are capable of becoming” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 54) so as to increase our relational capacity for resistance, for producing knowledge and for change.

The process of becoming a ‘we’ is grounded upon a notion of relationality including interdependency and partiality. The notion of becoming a ‘we’ could be seen as resonating with Foucauldian power/knowledge theories although it derives from a different perspective, producing a ground breaking stance (Vacchelli, 2018) as subjects are not just situated but partial, dynamic and inter-relate to situational, historical, cultural, social, political constituents individually, relationally and transversally (Braidotti, 2013a; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1986, 1990). To this end, the notion of relationality is a key philosophical foundation in terms of the position of the subject as well as the position of the researcher in research processes. This version of subject formation requires acknowledgement in relation to the limitations of predominant feminist research approaches in the context of my project. Therefore, while:

> We are all responsible to and for shaping conditions for multispecies [and vast kinds of beings] flourishing in the face of terrible histories, and sometimes joyful histories too, but we are not all response-able in the same ways. The differences matter—in ecologies, economies, species, lives (Haraway, 2016, p. 29).

The process is a dynamic and hybrid way of shifting the ontological notion of subject that is associated with shifting ontological notions of trauma and transformation. The shifting of these three notions involves process ontology and intersectionality. The former encompasses posthuman relational ethics. The latter is inspired by Warner et al.’s (2016) epistemological challenge, providing me with new possibilities of intersecting feminist theories connected to methodologies and methods. In brief, the new possibilities involve posthuman relational ethics resting on a process ontology which is intersected with situated knowledge, the politics of location, and notions of interdependency and partiality, posited as relational-theoretical

assemblages. These assemblages[5] aid a critical and reflexive review of the literature: so as to inform my research processes with displaced women.

The term assemblage which is described in the beginning of this chapter is associated with philosopher Deleuze's theory of rhizomatic networks (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). It requires further elaboration about how it can inform my research processes when working with displaced women. In my research context, assemblages that are related to intersectionality in rhizomatic interaction assist me in inventing new possibilities while I dislocate what I have embodied and embedded in relation to the humanistic worldview (e.g., the process of identification and categorisation of dichotomies in conventional psychology (e.g., normality vs abnormality) (Braidotti, 2006b). I use the term assemblage in various ways as part of not only subject figuration, but also an application for intersectional theories (used interchangeably as intersected relational-theoretical assemblages or as intersectional theory assemblages). Most importantly, assemblages are used as part of a radical empirical cartography, mapping out relational-intertwined contextual assemblages related to women's situated knowledges and their narratives, emerging from field research.

A radical empirical cartography is a theoretical-political based approach: it is generated from conceptualising the power locations that structure our subject position that is grounded upon the critique of universalism and liberal individualism (Braidotti, 2013c). To enact the radical empirical cartography, Haraway's (1988) notion of situated knowledge and Haraway's (1988) notion of the politics of location which rest on process ontology (Braidotti, 2006b) are also involved in my research processes when working with displaced women. Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledge argues that science is unable to operate apart from social orders but rather operates as part of it. Haraway's (1988) situated knowledge problematises not only object but also subject, challenging the god trick: the god view of science that "see[s] everything from nowhere" (p. 581). Consequently, all knowledge is socially situated as there is no such thing as a detached and neutral observer (Lafrance & Wigginton, 2019).

Haraway's (1988) situated knowledge privileges a notion of partiality drawn from women's standpoint epistemologies (Harding, 1992), arguing that other epistemologies situate full

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[5] The term assemblage is described in the beginning of this chapter.

knowledgeability to the subjects' position (Haraway, 1988). The notion of partiality involves a plurality of situated standpoints, and an ontological process of recognising human beings' limited capacities, being aware of partial, incomplete, specific ways of knowing (Haraway, 1988). A politics of location provides approaches to manage dynamic power relations emerging from research processes and knowledge production.

A politics of location is associated with the characteristics of particular locations of particular subjects. It derives from Haraway's (1988) argument involving "feminist objectivity" (p. 583) in relation to "limited location" (p. 583) and "situated knowledge" (p. 583) that "allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see" (p. 583). The politics of location was developed to challenge a singular feminist standpoint and insist on specific and different feminist standpoints by arguing that a politics of location is "insatiably curious about the webs of differential positioning" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590), and is contrary to the politics of "fixation" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590) that undermines the "vulnerability" (Haraway, 1988, p. 590) of marginalised lives.

The politics of location highlights the specific social location of researchers in relation with people whom are being researched as well as their relationships with environment and others (humans, non-humans) (Haraway, 1988). It is where the situated, embodied and embedded social locations of researchers can influence how research is being processed through the development of research questions, processes of storying and analysis. Such situatedness, embodiment and embeddedness is interwoven with subjectivities and experiences of researchers and participants individually and collectively; and that can be entangled in power relations in research processes (Braidotti, 2013a; Haraway, 1991; Harding, 1986, 1990).

The politics of location guides me as I locate myself and displaced women (my participants) in specific locations and imaginaries through transversal bonds that can sustain relationships between our collective and relational selves. Most importantly, the politics of location allows me to reveal my location that can be entangled in power relations in research processes that underpin knowledge production: the location that I might be embodied and embedded within. The unearthing helps me to realise who I am accountable to which may have been unrealised or taken for granted by the majority of researchers. This realisation is desirable for refiguring the subject as it is necessary for researchers to become ethically "response-able" (Haraway, 2016, p. 29) to the missing peoples "who never managed to gain powers of discursive representation" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 414) including displaced women. This realisation affirms

my desire to cultivate my response-ability through not only a critique of the existing literature and associated approaches, but also through my methodologies and methods which will be discussed in the next chapter, with an aim to put forward different ways of coming to know.

Chapter 3: Cultivating response-abilities through ethical methodologies

Process ontology becomes manifest here through intersectional theory assemblages with philosophies and practices of relationality. The intersection of a critical posthuman philosophy (Braidotti, 2019b; Haraway, 2016) and mana wahine – Māori feminist standpoint philosophy (Simmonds, 2011; Waitere & Johnston, 2009) supports a process ontology that actualises my research project which commits to the grounded process of becoming a 'we'. It is underlined with the notion of interdependency and partiality. These intersectional-philosophical notions have been enacted into ethical methodologies. The ethical methodology (Hydén, 2014) I have engaged involves the following relational guidelines for recognising and practicing. They include non-innocent practice; listening and hearing practice (Waitere & Johnston, 2009); blurring the boundaries (Connor et al., 2015); cartographic accuracy (Braidotti, 2019b); and the powers of specificity, affect, memory and imagination (Braidotti, 2019b; Haraway, 1988) (hereafter the five relational guidelines). These relational guidelines were co-opted into my research plan, process and practice as I conducted research with displaced women.

Process ontology is employed to tackle the research question, to work relationally by intersecting with institutional ethics, and to guide a relational-ethical-methodological approach that activates the "ongoingness" of storytelling where "many kinds of absence, or threatened absence, must be brought into ongoing response-ability, not in the abstract but in homely storied cultivated practice" (Haraway, 2016, p. 132).

Who I am accountable to is a question, underpinning my attempts to cultivate responsibilities through methodologies and methods. The process of cultivating responsibilities is activated and enacted through Haraway's (2016) notion of storying or storytelling about the way that my research methodology and methods were undertaken. This involved an account of what and who has been involved through different stages, including reframing research questions, applying for research ethics, recruiting participants and storying the relational-methodological processes. Yet, power relations and responsibilities underlie my thesis: they have continued to emerge throughout the research processes. I will revisit and narrate emergent processes in the method inquiry at the end of this chapter.

Reframing the research question as ethically response-able

A re-framing has become necessary for the initial research question, which was: *What women's struggle and transformation assemblages might exist in relation to women's situated-embodied-embedded experiences and contexts?* As I have read through the literature, it has emerged for me that as Haraway (2016) suggests, revised relational spaces and practices of care are not only ongoing, but also accountable and part of lived storytelling. In response, I amended the initial question to allow for the possibility of collaboration that can occur materially to cultivate conditions that allow for dynamic ongoing conversation, consideration and discovery. My research question became: *How do displaced women experience and transform their situated struggles through both relational disruptions and capacities, and further, what* relational *contexts are involved?*

What is specific to 'both relational disruptions and capacities' is that they are underpinned by interdependency and partiality, shifting the ontological notion of subject and transformation: my participants and I are inter-related, and together are part of knowledge co-production. We (my participants and I) will co-produce relational meanings (knowledges, stories, theories, practices, transformations) from unexpected-situated contextual assemblages philosophically-materially. Most importantly, the amended question contains a question within the question: namely, the question contained within the 'how' question in association with 'what relational contexts are involved'. These questions are underpinned with speculative commitment and inquiry as an essential part of a relational ethics of care that serves as guidance in avoiding entrapment in the face of 'assumed' knowledge. When conversing with and thinking with my participants, I raise doubt on and query "ready-made explanations" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 66) that maintain conformity through the "superimposition of moral or epistemological norms" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 66).

The process of raising questions was conducted through loose collaboration and consultation within my research community (my supervisor and members of the HEARTH Research Cluster at Massey University) and in the composing of my ethics application, for example:

> *Please tell me a little about what it means for you to be a refugee in New Zealand?*
>
> *Please tell me a little about some of the experiences you've had here as a refugee*

If explaining your situation in words is difficult, can you tell me about how your experiences might look like in a form of colour or images?

These questions were co-opted with a listening-hearing practice grounded upon Māori feminist standpoint philosophy (Simmonds, 2011; Waitere & Johnston, 2009): the listening-hearing practice is where respect, dignity, power and authority of women are prioritised, recognised and facilitated in research processes (Waitere & Johnston, 2009). Furthermore, in the field, these questions were revised in tune with my participants' stories, interactions and interrogations.

I initiated 'conversation' instead of 'interviews' to de-familiarise from the universal mode of inquiry associated with the interview practice (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). I involved conversation to emphasise relational-conversational ways that are aligned with displaced women's situated knowledges related to their situational-historical-cultural-social-political-economic contexts.

Institutional ethics, intersecting with and working relationally to be ethically response-able

Before research began, I developed a full ethics application (SOP 22/67) through consultation with both my research and my participants' communities which was subsequently approved. All documentation is included in Appendix A. My cultural adviser was associated with the latter community who worked with displaced women and their diasporic group and was available for consultation throughout the project.

I strongly emphasised the process of de-identifying our participants, given they came from a relative small community. Not only pseudonyms were provided through narrations within this thesis, but I was careful to remove all identifying information from the transcripts. To ensure this, some of my participants' stories have been modified to protect my participants' confidentiality.

I worked towards collaborating our philosophies of relationality through intersecting with an institutional ethics. Given that relational ethical principles are aligned with Treaty of Waitangi considerations and obligations. For example, manaakitanga and kia tupato are being upheld with the research through recognition of the importance of respecting and enhancing the mana of participants. As a researcher, I aspired for reflexivity in my role within the

research and the need for political and cultural caution. I specified how the project would be beneficial to not only displaced women, but also their marginalised communities including Māori, as the project's posthuman philosophical rationale involves processes of decolonisation, aligned with indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. The alignment involved the ongoing reflexive thought around the gendered power relations that impact negatively on women's marginalised voices and their communities, including Māori women and Māori communities.

Being ethically response-able in developing relational-methodological approaches

Relational-methodological approaches were performed through not only the enactment of ethical responsibility (Haraway, 2016) but also ethical methodology (Hydén, 2014) involving the five relational guidelines. The guidelines, grounded upon the intersected-philosophical notions of relationality, were co-opted throughout research processes.

Non-innocent practice

The research process began officially after I received approval from the ethics committee. Thereafter, it took me about three months to recruit, and complete and transcribe conversations with my participants, and contact them to read, make any changes and to sign a transcript release form. In effect though, it had begun when I heard and *withnessed* the voices of displaced women who were my peers attending at a local English class since 2019. I acknowledged that my and my peers' situated knowledges (Haraway, 1988) have already been a part of an unfolding research process. It emerged from a specific and non-innocent position and commitment as part of "contemporary mappings of women's consciousness" (Haraway, 1991, p. 124). Haraway (1991) emphasises that:

> 'Women's experience' does not pre-exist as a kind of prior resource, ready simply to be appropriated into one or another description. What may count as 'women's experience' is structured within multiple and often inharmonious agendas. 'Experience', like 'consciousness' is an intentional construction, an artefact of the first importance. Experience may also be reconstructed, re-membered, re-articulated (p. 113).

Through Haraway, non-innocent practice is an essential part of my ethical methodology and responsibility in tune with my passions, hopes, and positioning that has already been

established within the community. The term community here is not condensed around the ethnic communities that my participants belong to but it is about the relational community that my participants (and I) are part of. The term community is grounded with the ontological scope of relationality. The community involves those whom my participants and I relate with and not limited to my participants' diasporic group.

Even though I had already connected with the community of displaced women, I re-connected with the community again through existing community relations involving those who had access to displaced women and who could recruit participants. I sent them an email with a brief of my research description together with my information sheet; I asked them whether they could be an intermediary contact and whether I could drop off a printed information sheet at places that suited them including their houses.

Through re-establishing existing relations for the particular purpose of conducting research, I again visited an integration of my relational ethical approach, in reflexive partnership with institutional ethics. The latter privileges impartiality and objectivity with a "technically "impersonal"" position (Haraway et al., 2018, p. 199) and a value-neutral position: the position that attempts to maintain an outsider position related to what is being studied and to minimise any 'contamination' or power issues between researchers and participants. I was caught here in an ethical paradox, one of many that I encountered through the process. How could I avoid these issues, and if I did avoid them, then whom am I accountable to, and to whom do I commit to research with and for?

To follow institutional ethics with impartiality, respect and an attempt to maintain the dignity of participants is considered as a universal and conventional principle: one that is linked with individualism (Tomaselli et al., 2020). Several quandaries arose for me such as how the women were involved in the research process itself and at what levels of participation? For example, I asked myself the following questions, do they participate at decision-making levels in producing meaningful and collective knowledge? Will I engage with respect and dignity of participants with normative and institutional ethics rather than relational ethics of care? The latter involves participants in relation with others that are interdependent and embodied within relational contexts (Tomaselli et al., 2020). From the theoretical perspectives that inform my research, the notion that my participants have an independent self is naïve and irrelevant. The participants do not exist in isolation but are embodied through relationships with others. Consequently, a reflexive negotiation was required, both

epistemologically and institutionally, to maintain the integrity of the research and uphold the ethical requirement of the University.

The episteme of non-innocence (Haraway, 1991) has opened new possibilities to engage in ethical relations with ‘matters of care’ (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) that invite the enquirer to practice “thinking with and living in more than human worlds” (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 1). Such an invitation requires researchers to decentre human agency and to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway, 2016, p. 117), or any unknown, that is embedded within human doing (Haraway, 1991; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017). By involving non-innocent practice intersected with the ontological scope of ‘matters of care’, I found that it is impossible to obscure or ‘cover over’ any blind spots including a lack of awareness of social power relations within research processes as we (my participants and I) are subject to real-world relations that require me to be accountable for my participants. I need to consider how I might be positioned in a relational power network so that I do not take issues of power and inequality for granted (Haraway et al., 2018).

The arguably radical perspective informing my research allowed me to become aware and maintain awareness of my own privileged social location in psychology, a position that could be perceived by my research participants as the knower. Also, paradoxically, due to my embodiment related to my privileged social location, I may not realise that I am the one who holds more power. Nevertheless, through the lens of non-innocent practice, I realise that I am responsible for what Haraway (2016) describes as “staying with the trouble” (p. 58) and being responsible to my non-innocent position, where I acknowledge that issues of power relations and visibility are unavoidably tangling with my research process (Haraway et al., 2018). Yet, through involving Haraway’s (2016) notion of “staying with the trouble” (p. 58), I intersect with the non-innocent practice and a critical reflexive approach throughout the entirety of my research journey.

Through interacting with non-innocent practice, I was able to gain access to participants in my community relations. Five participants were recruited and together we generated rich conversations and storied experiences within a collection of different social settings of the participant’s choice.

Listening and hearing practice

The practice of listening and hearing became an indispensable part of my ethical methodology, drawn from mana wahine knowledge underpinning Māori feminist standpoint theory. Waitere and Johnston (2009) suggest that even though Māori peoples, as well as other indigenous peoples, women and displaced women, might be invited to speak, the act of speaking does not guarantee that their voices will be heard. Listeners may not engage a hearing practice that is not only about 'listening to' participants as in detecting sound but in addition requires listeners to actively engage their ability to hear so as to socially construct relational meanings (Waitere & Johnston, 2009).

The ability to hear requires a shared space where socio-cultural-political-historical contexts that have not been normally heard (or made differing and missing) can be engaged accountably (Waitere & Johnston, 2009). Such ethical obligations involve ontological and methodological scopes of airwaves, diversities, and women's complex realities interwoven with multiple forces of subjugation (sexism, racism, class and colonisation). These forces can be overlooked by researchers, and simultaneously, researchers lack accountability (Waitere & Johnston, 2009).

Listening-hearing is centred on a critical reflexive approach. This approach facilitates recognition of the respect, dignity, power and authority of women (Waitere & Johnston, 2009). I applied listening-hearing practice throughout my research process to strengthen the non-innocent practice intersected with Haraway's (2016) notion of "staying with the trouble" (p. 58).

I continued to encounter ethical conundrums that were affected by my non-innocent position, a position interwoven with my privileged location and historical status quo. Such conundrums led me to analyse my participants' voices through my old habits of thought that are embedded within dominant knowledge production, resulting in little room for new possibilities. At these points of disruption and self-reflection, I engaged with listening-hearing practice so as to ensure that my participants meaningfully participate in my research.

Above all, the listening-hearing practice intersected with the non-innocent practice has helped me to re-frame my questions with an ethics of care when conversing with displaced women in my community field research. For example, when I was about to ask of their experiences of being a 'refugee' (as part of my opening question, 'please tell me a little about what it

means for you to be a refugee into New Zealand?'), I made an apology about using the term 'refugee'. Most importantly, these practices used with ethics of care situated me in the process of decentring English language as a form of control. By asking the opening question in this way, I engaged through Haraway with "a risk-taking proposition, not an innocent translation" (Haraway, 2016, p. 87):

> a risky proposition in relentless historical relational contingency. And these contingencies include abundant histories of conquest, resistance, recuperation, and resurgence. Telling stories together with historically situated critters is fraught with the risks and joys of composing a more livable cosmopolitics (Haraway, 2016, p. 15).

The following conversation is an example of my interpretation of Haraway's (2016) understanding guiding the beginning of the conversation I had with Irene.

> *Ruedee: Could you please tell me a little bit about what does this mean for you to be a refugee?*
>
> *Irene: What it mean to be a refugee? I am not sure from where I can start? What do you mean to be a refugee?*
>
> *Ruedee: perhaps talk about your experience?*
>
> *Irene: you means we being refugees, is it good or bad…*
>
> *Ruedee: umm, something like that, or even the term refugee itself if you don't like this term you can tell me as well.*
>
> *Irene: do you want to hear my experience from childhood too until now?*
>
> *Ruedee: yes. It would be good, especially when you have to leave the country, during your journey until you come to New Zealand.*
>
> *Irene: okay. Let's me start then.*

These revised questions opened possibilities for me to 'hear' unexpected stories related to my participants' histories, specificities, inconsistencies, and contradictions related to pain and joy[6], for example, when they expressed their experiences about being a 'refugee':

> *Anya: in my opinion my understanding is like having a second chance to have a right to live in another country ummm we have good support from New Zealand government. It was very good.*
>
> *In the meantime, it was difficult because it's so hard that the society accepted you but you are really happy because it is a big hope. Being a refugee is so difficult in other countries like Pakistan, Indonesia and Malaysia or any other countries you don't have any right to live there.*

Raya expressed her painful experience when hearing the UNHCR classed her as a refugee when she was in the refugee camp:

> *Ruedee: How would you feel when people call you a refugee?*
>
> *Raya: I don't feel much now but when I first heard a man who was the UNHCR officer came to the camp. And we were living in camp. They just told us like you are a refugee here you don't have the right. You don't have the right to do this and do that. I was shocked because you know like I didn't know the meaning of being a refugee and I thought we came there so they could support us. They could help us like with going to school or going to work.*
>
> *I did not know who made this rule.*

By using listening-hearing practice and non-innocent practice, I discovered that their experiences as women were absent when interrelated with being a 'refugee'. I subsequently asked another question to explore lacunae that my participants had not yet mentioned: what about being a women as well as being a 'refugee'? Most of the time, I focussed on hearing and occasionally I asked my participants to further elaborate on issues that were briefly mentioned. These following questions are examples:

---

[6] The term 'joy' refers to an ethics of joy, or affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2018).

When you say it is difficult for society to accept you, can you please tell me more about it?

What would be the reasons that you came here without your husband and do you feel that this is not your home?

You mentioned at that time, when you suffered severely mentally and the counsellor couldn't help. Could you please explain that?'

When you mention 'your god might be different from your husband's god', could you please tell me more what do you mean by that?

I also engaged with 'how' and 'what' questions in relation to my participants' affection, imagination and actions. For example, I asked: (a) how do you feel about it?; (b) what makes you feel that way?; (c) what makes you say that?; (d) what might the reasons be? To this end, from the re-framing of questions to take up the listening-hearing practice, I have further brought new possibilities of displaced women's embodiment that was hidden to presence (Haraway, 2016). In this context, I engage with the notion of "line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9), so as to open for any "not knowing" (Lather, 2017, p. 172) that might emerge through particular rhizomic intertwined assemblages that were revealed through the process of becoming with displaced women's situated, embodied and embedded experiences and knowledges.

It took me some time to revise the questions on the spot. I also made some English grammatical errors when I conversed with my participants. With regard to language mistakes and the application of the listening-hearing and non-innocent practices, they not only allow us (my participants and I) to partly undo our humanness as well as decentring 'English' language as a form of control, but I also learned that:

> With good questions, even or especially mistakes and misunderstandings can become interesting. This is not so much a question of manners, but of epistemology and ontology, and of method alert to off-the-beaten-path practices (Haraway, 2016, p. 127).

I asked myself what Haraway (2016) meant by "good questions" (p. 127)? I found that good questions were ones that helped me engage with the process of becoming by dis-identifying

from my ‘assumed’ knowledge related to the pathologisation and categorisation of trauma. There is a learning process through asking these questions, drawn originally from my literature reading practice, which allowed me “to propose together something unanticipated, to take up the unasked-for obligations of having met” (Haraway, 2016, p. 130) as part of my “cultivating response-ability” (Haraway, 2016, p. 130). To this end, I engaged with relational listening and hearing practice throughout my research process, not only with my participants, but also our relational community, my cultural advisor, my supervisor, as well as those to whom my participants referred (e.g., my participants’ friends and their relatives who have suffered from a civil war) and those other displaced people whom I relate to, grounded upon my participants’ stories.

Blurring the boundaries

When the listening-hearing rationale is intersected with dis-identification, a blurring boundary practice is part of the process of becoming. The process of becoming and dis-identification can be strengthened by using blurring boundary practice, as the practice allows us (my participant and I) to disrupt any taken-for-granted positionality and dualistic modes (e.g., sameness/difference, past/present, local/global, women/men, nature/culture, western/non-western, indigenous/non-indigenous, objectivity/subjectivity). These dualistic modes emerged through my research process including during the conversation between my participants and I, interwoven with my process of analysis.

A question I asked myself was, how do we (my participants and I) disrupt dualistic modes? For example, when the key research questions are dis-identified from ‘assumed’ trauma, my understanding of subjection related to negativity (e.g., victims related to mental health distress, violence and war) is shifted to entail creativity (Braidotti, 2019b). The latter involves a neo-material approach underlying critical cartographies of affirmative ethics (Braidotti, 2019b): this approach assisted me in thinking differently from my current understandings. Subsequently, I could grasp my participants’ situated, embodied and embedded knowledges that are linked with complex-different layered assemblages that emerge from my participants’ stories (e.g., experiences of struggles related to women’s roles, poverty, patriarchal systems). While some of them have some experiential similarities, their experiences are “not one and the same” (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 52), although their experiences can interact together to produce relational meanings (Braidotti, 2019a). For example, while my participants linked their experiences with cultural types or processes related to their diasporic group, experiences

were also linked with different sets of assemblages including shame-guilt-affective assemblages. The process of relating with their culture-based differences led me to another line of questioning and inquiry: what might be the ontology of culture in relation to the cultural assemblages and secular/postsecular assemblages that displaced women were confronted with?

By linking the blurring boundary practice through the lens that links with these experiences, I had noticed my participants' "not knowing" (Lather, 2017, p. 172). My participants were unable to comprehend what had been going on with a particular situation (e.g., fundamentalist attacks, being a Muslim from birth) based on their situated knowledge. For example, I asked Anya, my participant who is a Muslim woman:

> *Ruedee: in your home country, you mentioned that you could go to school. You also mentioned that you needed to be careful because bombs can happen and 'they' don't like women going to school? Who are 'they'?*
>
> *Anya: A fundamentalist group.*
>
> *Ruedee: what do you think about the fundamentalist group and why they don't like women going to school?*
>
> *Anya: I don't understand them at all because they are trying to make Islamic government but they are like the enemy of humanity. Islam has never been against humanity.*

My participants' not knowing (as indicated above) linked me with notions of affirmative ethics that allowed further involvement with a new rhizomic "line of flight" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 9). What rhizomic intertwined assemblages and ongoing rhizomic intertwined assemblages might there be: in reference to the assemblages that emerged from my displaced woman participants' contexts? In effect, the blurring boundary practice helped me to re-frame my participants' experiences outside of the dialectics of dualistic representation.

Furthermore, this blurring boundary practice opened opportunities for me to bridge the gap between experiencing, knowledge and power relations so as to deal with power issues (Hydén, 2014); not to mention the ability to grasp unheard stories of lived experiences of

displaced women. For example, every participant mentioned that they were uncertain whether they were good enough in terms of English language and knowledge to participate in the research. These issues were sometimes mentioned in the beginning, or during, or in the end of our conversation. When I heard my participants mention these issues, I reaffirmed with them that they are the knowers who have knowledge related to lived experience and I felt privileged to hear their stories. Thus, objectivities and subjectivities were blurred, power relations were rearranged, and the gap between experiencing and knowledge was gradually bridged.

The rationale behind my methodological analysis was related to the notion of partiality and interdependency, together with the process of dis-identification in relation to my research question. The blurring boundary practice helped us (researcher and participants) to co-construct alternative knowledge and counter-construct knowledge framed within the dominant knowledge production, as framing through our relational subject assemblages as an important part of relational ethics. The blurring boundary practice is espoused by the founding ontological stance of posthuman ethics:

> The knowing subject is not Man, or Anthropos alone, but a more complex assemblage that undoes the boundaries between inside and outside the self, by emphasizing processes and flows. Neither unitary, nor autonomous, subjects are embodied and embedded, relational and affective collaborative entities, activated by relational ethics (Braidotti, 2019a, pp. 45-46).

To strengthen the process of blurring boundaries, I engaged with Hydén's (2014) ethical-methodological practice by using different forms of representation including images, colour and arts so as to encourage and support my participants to expand and explore their storytelling. Using these different forms of representation is related to not only non-innocent practice and the listening-hearing practice, but also my other methodological practices including cartographic accuracy, and the powers of specificity, affect, memory and imagination.

Cartographic accuracy

The practice of cartographic accuracy is used to strengthen the process of becoming (Braidotti, 2013c) and is related to a critique of the universal subject position. I have incorporated the practice of cartographic accuracy to conceptualise our subject formation

(myself and my participants and other beings) with an emphasis on partiality. As both of us (myself and my participants) are considered as others, our situated knowledges and subject position are composed of different-dynamic-complex assemblages. Our relational being and becoming are constantly immersed in, negotiated and changed (Braidotti, 2019a).

Language is a part of rationale. Language is one of our intersected assemblages that embodies our situated knowledge production. Conventional English language and skills are what we (my participant and I) use to communicate with each other. Even though conventional English language is commonly used among 'others' living in English-speaking countries including New Zealand, paradoxically, using such a common language as a standard way for communication implicates an imperialist-colonial instrument (Haraway, 1991). Such instruments have material effects that can disturb and dis-embody the process of becoming with others, reinforcing traditional humanism and undermining resistance to dominant knowledge production that is embedded within such instrumental control (Haraway, 1991). This rationale is linked with English language being a means for normalisation and acculturation that centres the dominant group while simultaneously decentring others (Waitere & Johnston, 2009).

Building on the above ground, I use the practice of cartographic accuracy to question whether using English language is adequate in the sense of "an adequate cartography" (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 34): whether English language can provide "adequate and differential accounts (cartographies) of multiple subject positions that are in the process of becoming" (Braidotti, 2019a, pp. 69-70). To this end, I use alternative ways of communication through the practice of art so as to gain a better understanding of "undoing the human" processing (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 34).

Using art is one way among many to decolonise dominant and universal knowledge claims (Asher et al., 2021) which can enable me/us to blur the boundaries of normalisation. The art medium that we used is a form of images and colour. We used photographs that had been already taken by my participants from their mobile phones. This approach is a somewhat novel way to de-familiarise knowledge production. I did not follow through on the standard of photovoice methodologies that is usual within ethnographical approaches: ones that are based on feminist and Freirean theory with a participatory research method and social psychology approaches. In these cases, researchers provide a camera together with photographic skill training for participants (Hodgetts et al., 2010; Vaughan & Khaw, 2021).

Instead, by using photographs that were taken by my participants, either in the past or present, with their own equipment: power relations are shifted and matters of care (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017) are intersected to affirm relational ethics with respect and dignity, rooted in Māori feminist standpoint philosophy (Simmonds, 2011; Waitere & Johnston, 2009).

In order to protect my participants' confidentiality, despite their given permission, I did not directly use their photographs in my thesis. Instead, I linked my participants' stories by involving photographs that had already been presented through technologies (web browsers). This rationale was inspired by Sophie's (one of my five participants) actions. Sophie moved to New Zealand from Thailand, which is my country of origin.

Sophie asked me whether I ever saw the camps for displaced people – I replied that I had never seen them. Sophie then showed me a photograph which I thought that she had taken using her mobile phone. Instead, she searched for the camp photographs through the internet, and showed them to me: the photographs of poorly constructed housing, and flooding. In relation to the photographs' context, I asked whether she had experienced flooding situations at the camp. Sophie replied "*yes*".

After hearing Sophie's stories and linking Sophie's stories with photographs presented through technologies (web browsers), I have now discovered that displaced people living in Thailand face multiple oppression intersected with their places of origin, experiences, contexts and gender.

Inspired by Sophie's action to show photographs that were absent from her mobile phone but present within technological relations, I further relate such "telepresence" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 108) with Haraway's (1991) notion of cyborg and Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) notion of matters of care. After being affected by my participants' stories, I engaged with these intersecting notions to blend our imaginations with material realities, and to link us to histories and various forms of assemblages for our relational transformations, so as to "contribute to relations of care in moving worlds" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 69).

Using photographs that were taken by my participants though their mobile phones, I also engaged with photographs posted on my participants' Facebook application as well as photographs (together with documentaries and films) accessed through technologies that can move 'us' (my participants, myself, other displaced people, health professionals and scholars in psychology) to co-construct relational meanings, practices and approaches to work with

displaced women, with the aim of intersecting with the two notions in the previous paragraph. For example, when I saw a photo of Nara, Nara was not wearing a hijab. The photograph was taken with a beautiful river behind. This photo indicating the absence of a hijab, linked me to question a normative assumption that we (residents of New Zealand) should wear a hijab when attending a ceremony after the wretched event – the Christchurch mosque shootings on the 15th March 2019.

Nara said that she did not wear a hijab regularly. She wore a hijab when she went to a community event and where other members of her diasporic group were present (including the English school) as she did not want other members of her diasporic group to feel and talk negatively about her not wearing a hijab. I used photographs as an arts medium to inquire into my participants' situated, embodied and embedded experience to navigate the power of specificity, affect, memory and imagination.

The inquiring process through arts helps me strengthen affirmative ethics, particularly the speculative commitment in ethics as it "invokes an indecisive critical approach" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 7). This process helps me to advance my ongoing and shared response-ability (Haraway, 2016). I am responsible to encourage a new 'line of flight' that emerges from my participants' situated, embodied and embedded experience. The inquiring process through arts helps me to shift the three relational notions (subject, trauma and transformation) which are the focus of my analysis in tandem with my questions. My participants participated meaningfully and ontologically in research processes. Repositioning and refiguring my participants' subject (and my subject) as assemblages (not unitary) assisted me in unfolding contextual understandings of displaced women's experiences, detaching from a normative discourse of trauma and prescribed interventions.

The powers of specificity, affect, memory and imagination

In relation to the above analysis, the practice of art involves not only blurring boundary practice and the practice of cartographic accuracy but also non-innocent practice, and listening-hearing practice. These practices as art-technological relations can help me to apprehend the powers of specificity, affect, memory and imagination and their assemblages (e.g., pains, injustices, negotiations, re-imaginations, desires, passions, hopes, dreams and creativities). The apprehension opens new possibilities for me to co-construct relational meanings and facilitate the process of becoming with others for transformation.

Yet, engaging in art together with these five methodological practices, I have been affected by their unexpected stories during our conversation, and this has been ongoing. I have been in the flow of my participants' embodiment. Our recorded conversation took 45 minutes to two hours. Some of my participants allowed me to go with them on their daily activities at a location that my participants preferred, as an extension of the recorded conversation.

After finishing our recorded conversation, it took me some time to settle. Some nights I was nearly awake. Occasionally, I broke into tears when the painful stories of my participants emerged in my memory. Thinking with my participants about their painful stories had unsettled me, even though I realised my participants' strengths. While I documented these affects into ethnographic journals (Runswick-Cole, 2011), I was wondering about my unsettledness as the real pain of my participants was still vivid in my memory and imagination and that related to my feeling of unsettledness. Such unsettledness not only links me with Haraway's (2016) notion of 'staying with the trouble' but also links me with Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) notion of matters of care. Both notions help me to realise that my unsettled feeling is part of relational ethics that fosters my speculative commitment and inquiry to be involved with any "not knowing" (Lather, 2017, p. 172) that emerged from participants' stories. Being in the process of speculative commitment and unsettledness helped me to discover how I can think with others differently with relational ethics of care which is about:

> A commitment because it is indeed attached to situated and positioned visions of what a livable and caring world could be; but one that remains speculative by not letting a situation or a position—or even the acute awareness of pervasive dominations—define in advance what is or could be (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 60).

My unsettledness seemed to be interwoven with feeling too overwhelmed, burned-out, and I felt that I did not do a good job during my recorded conversation with my participants. Learning from Braidotti's (2019a) notion of praxis and affirmative ethics, I constantly need to ask myself whether I have been trapped with the "falsely universalist notions of the 'human'" (p. 17) related to pathological-familiar conditions and dominant ways of fixing and solving problems that link me to traditional power structures. Braidotti (2019a) taught me to acknowledge my negative human habit and to change that to affirmative relations involving a creative posthuman approach intersected with a collective praxis of affirmative politics which

requires me to not "depend on wilful individualism" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 180), as well as put in effort and labour to "increase relational powers and to deal with complexity without being over-burdened" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 171), not to mention to engage with relational capacity to produce situated and contextual understandings and knowledges by interconnecting with transversal alliances with human and non-human relational forces in intertwined worldings.

Taking a relational ethics approach (Braidotti, 2019a), related to a speculative commitment (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), together with Haraway's (2016) "staying with the trouble of complex worlding" (p. 29), I grounded my negative emotions by involving affirmative relations with my methodological practice related to the powers of specificity, affect, memory and imagination so that I could gain a more adequate understanding of displaced women's struggles and transformation.

To put the methodological ground into practice, Nara's photograph of not wearing a hijab has linked me with Nara's everyday struggles and how she has been affected by her peers who have struggled with a fundamentalist-religion based government in her home country. Nara said.

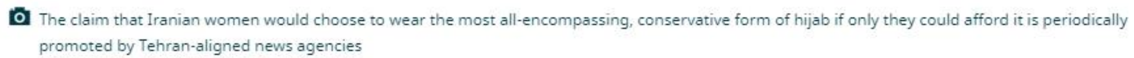
> *Through facebook, I have a lot of friends and they still live in my home country yeh, even my close friend, she is there, and when I heard something about them … like my friend, she was studying journalism. She studied for two years in the university but now she doesn't have any job just stays home. She wants me to help her, whether I know some people who can help her and support her to leave our home country. Cause I don't have any opportunity to find any person to help her and that have an effect on my mental health yeh, cause she is my best friend but I cannot help her and I can't do anything for her.*
>
> *And also on social media everyday there is an explosion; there is violence for women and children in my country. When I hear these on the social media, absolutely these have affected on my mental health. …*
>
> *…all of my friends are in the same situation. Cause it is not just one person in my home country yeh for every person even for boys or men. The fundamentalist government choose their clothing styles and jobs. They have to have moustache, not take it out, and sometimes long hair yeh likes that.*

I link my participants' experiences that were expressed and grounded in their stories, together with the notion of "telepresence" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 108) by interconnecting with the visual imagination of displaced people through various technological relations. For example, I looked up on the internet, including Twitter and YouTube, to see their clothing and their movement.

Through multiple connections from 'telepresence', not only have I been affected by my displaced woman participants, but also other displaced people regardless of places/spaces, times and genders. Such affection, especially, opened other possibilities for me to link Raya's embodied experiences of wearing a hijab and of oppression with my unsettled experiences. My unsettledness was not only situated when I heard Raya's stories during Raya's migration, but also reminded me of my peer's experience who migrated to New Zealand. She mentioned that she has limited rights from being a woman in an Islamic country. Raya told me about the difficulties she faced when she needed to wear a Chador (see Figure 3). Raya and my peer's stories connected me with women in Islamic countries including Iran, who refused to wear a hijab, after the death of Mahsa Amini, a 22 years old woman who was hit multiple times for wearing a hijab improperly (Tanis, 2023) (see Figure 4).

Figure 3

A Chador



Note. Linking with this photograph, I was able to see how a chador looks. From *Iranian Media: Women Oppose Forced Hijab Because 'Black Chador Is Too Expensive'* by S. Ghadarkhan, 2022, *IranWire* (https://iranwire.com/en/women/106436-iranian-media-claims-women-oppose-forced-hijab-because-black-chador-is-too-expensive/). Copyright by IranWire.

Figure 4

Protests that Spread Worldwide to Support Iranian Women's Rights After the Death of Mahsa Amini

Note. From *Iran Protests* by T. Valley, 2022, Flickr (https://flickr.com/photos/92574222@N00/52382844047). CC BY 2.0.

To this end, a visual image of a river and other kinds of telepresence including YouTube and Twitter helps me relate to complex singularities grounded from my participants' embodied experiences, rather than a single reality claim through universal forms of pathologisation and intervention grounded within dominant knowledge production. These telepresences can move me to becoming with others in a non-linear way as part of the process of affirming the speculative commitment in ethics (discussed earlier). Through this process, my adequate understanding of displaced women experience can be enhanced in response to my research questions and the process that evolved as I engaged with the women's stories.

When I first wrote my process, I did so intertwined with the analysis and discussion of the women's stories. Although the different streams of this process coincided, it became apparent

to me that my journey through the project, intertwined as it was with the women's stories, was in danger of becoming a predominant focus of the project. Hence, as part of a process to allow the women's stories to be heard, I've followed my process below, so the women's stories can be heard clearly in chapter 4 and 5.

(Re) visiting emergent processes of research in method inquiry: how relational ethics is enacted to become minoritarian

Given the relational and emergent methodological processes and continued engagement with theory, I (re) visit and document these chapters so as to unfold the analysis and discussion process as a guide for the reader. While the five relational guidelines were theoretically-methodologically enacted throughout my research process, my research method of inquiry is predominantly driven by the listening-'hearing' practice. I asked myself whether I heard my displaced woman participants adequately. This question is related to: 'who is this research conducted for (or who I am accountable to), and how does this research matter for my participants'? (hereafter, the guiding questions). Phrased differently in the theory terms adopted here, who are mattered and how is this research mattered for? These questions are driven by how social power relations and responsibility are relationally enacted: I followed a posthumanist analysis that "goes hand-in-hand with the analysis of power relations" by involving the cartographic politics of location in emphasising the "importance of learning to think differently" (Braidotti, 2018, p. 341).

My displaced woman participants' living matters were interwoven with their specificities, situated knowledges and social locations, and empirically guided my research method of inquiry. They became embedded through my thinking process. I have enacted my ongoing responsibility to becoming minoritarian in the context of how I have been thinking with my displaced woman participants. In this way, I have been able to better understand what they have been through, how they feel and what they are going through as ongoing lived experiences.

For me, to confront the guiding questions, as researchers and practitioners, we must undo our humanness through refiguring our subjectivities, our understanding of trauma and prescribed interventions so that 'we' can move forward relationally. Refiguring the three relational notions (subject, trauma, and transformation) serves the displaced woman participants and their communities going forward relationally so that we can gain better understandings and

move away from pathologising difference where diverse everyday lived experiences related to effects of history, conflict, pain, joy and any emergent-contextual assemblages, can be more respectful, dignified, understood and recognised to benefit displaced women and their communities.

To refigure the three relational notions of our subjectivities, our understanding of trauma and prescribed intervention, not only have I been thinking with displaced woman participants but I have also been thinking with other scholars who take a critical feminist approach and a posthumanist conceptual approach. This includes Thiruselvam's (2019) concept of marginalisation. What is more, I have been thinking with Butler's (1997) theory of *subjection*, along with Hirsi Ali's (n.d.) critiques of fundamental Islamic institutions. On top of these, I have been thinking with Braidotti's (2011b) theory of nomadic becoming, and Deleuze's (1997, 2001) notion of 'just a life' (or an immanent life).

My thinking processes with my participants and these scholars has kept shifting and changing through different positions across places/spaces and times so that we can think differently where different lines of flight (or pathways or possibilities) of inquiry can be opened to enable us to know what we could not have known if we had followed a normative set of research assumptions that were related to 'assumed' trauma and knowledge that are linked to individual responsibilities. My thinking process with them is a dynamic practice where I have been engaged with "a zigzagging pattern of dissonant nomadic subjects" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 28) . The aim is to dis-identify from 'assumed' trauma and knowledge, undo our humanness and activate dynamic and ongoing responsibilities.

Through the zigzagging patterns which can be described as complex rhizomes, I constantly practise reflexive-critical questioning and then trace whether I have been trapped within my ethical conundrums and dualistic modes of knowledge production. In effect, different lines of flight emerge and lead me to think with my participants differently, approach my participants' stories differently, and change my analysis and discussion in different directions. This ontological-epistemological practice relates to different literature while I am engaged in 'hearing' my participants' stories in relation to their diverse-multiple lived experiential contexts that emerged through rhizomic intertwined-situational-historical-cultural-social-political-economic assemblages. My thinking processes of shifting and changing emerge and unfold through different reflexive-critical questions and narratives throughout my analysis and discussion processes. My thinking processes are narrated every

now and then in Chapter 4 and 5 to emphasise the enactment of relational ethics in association with the displaced participants' stories that have been gifted to me or us (Oakley, 2015).

How analysis and discussion unfolds methodologically through the contribution of non-human entities

The different lines of flight unfold through different sets of human-nonhuman assemblages; where different understandings emerge through the heterogeneous processes of 'not knowing' that are derived from different lived experiences involving good lives, 'tough' lives, and 'struggled' lives.

The process of 'not knowing' unfolds through the affective and relational contributions of non-human entities in a vital and affirmative manner. Non-human entities are parts of living matter that are assembled with human relations which form the core features of a neo-material philosophy which attempts to replace dualisms (e.g., east/west, nature/culture, humans/non-humans). Instead, it emphasises how matter is dynamic and active (Braidotti, 2019b, 2022; Haraway, 2016).

How is this neo-material concept enacted in method inquiry? Methodologically, the analysis of a series of 'non-human' entities emerging from the everyday interactions of my participants within their lived stories is carried out so as to reveal hidden and unknown complexities, struggles and challenges. More specifically, the locality of non-human entities as present in my participants' stories has material effects, played out in an intricate network of role and relationship in a process of becoming, that involves my participants' everyday interactions, including materiality, the body, affect, and emotion. The non-human forces assembling heterogeneously through the women's everyday interactions act as productive and affirmative forces in bringing my participants' new lines of flight into presence.

The series of non-human entities that emerged from my participants' stories partly guided my analysis and discussion. The non-human entities included rivers, veils (or hijabs), god, gates, doors, mobile phones, climates, weather, mattresses, heaters, heat pumps, housing, infrastructure, and veils. They enabled me to explore how my participants' complex lived experiences were situated, embodied, and embedded in particular contextual assemblages, together with specific inquiries about how participants' capacities (or potentials) were affected. These affects led me to further unfold complex issues related to power relations that

were embedded in participants' everyday lived struggles; and how they attended to such complex power relations.

Rivers are an exemplar. All of my participants' stories involved rivers, even though the rivers were narrated variously. Some mentioned that they loved riding a bike beside the river whenever they felt bored. Some mentioned that they loved to go for a picnic near the river for leisure with friends and families. Some mentioned that they love praying with god down by the river. Nearly all of them loved taking a photo in front of the rivers. Some of the photos showed my participants not wearing a veil.

The women's stories of interacting with rivers were different as they are related with and affected by different human-nonhuman assemblages. The differences enabled me to 'hear' and unfold the participants' various complex lived experiences in particular contextual assemblages that are intertwined rhizomatically. The assembled components of histories, cultures, societies, politics and economics that are embedded in participants' lived experiences were revealed through different places/spaces and times. For example, in Chapter 4, the rivers emerging from the lived stories led me to explore and challenge normative assumptions including CBT applications. In Chapter 5, the rivers were situated in a photo representing a participant's beautiful hair without a veil. That image was a guide for me to transverse difficult and complex issues around shame, culture and religion.

Boundary gates are another exemplar (analysed and discussed in Chapter 4) that enabled me to explore various contextual assemblages in Thai geo-political spaces bringing new lines of flight related to history, laws, safety and social problems that constrained displaced women's capacities. Doors are a part of complex non-human assemblages in New Zealand geo-political spaces, assembled with other non-human relations (e.g., mobile phones, infrastructure relations) (analysed and discussed in Chapter 4) that enabled me to explore impositions on participant's capacities.

These relational non-human entities enabled me to take a critical reflexive approach, enhancing my capacity to 'hear' my participants' lived experiences differently from 'assumed' trauma knowledge (Drožđek et al., 2012a, 2012b; Miller & Rasmussen, 2017; Olff et al., 2019; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Further, these relational non-human entities shed light on material relationships and effects that emphasise dynamic and active living matter. These entities also become part of an affirmative ethics that encourages us to challenge, shift

and change our normative assumptions, stereotypes, and to enable new approaches for treating displaced women and their communities as human beings. To this end, they enable us to become minoritarian subjects as the analysis and discussion unfolds.

Examples of procedures: A zigzagging pattern of narratives and a method of transformative-becoming through Irene's stories

Irene's stories stayed with me. I clearly remembered through my zigzagging pattern of narratives that emerged from memory when I 'listened to' Irene's stories, and the direction I approached them when I started to 'hear' her stories. I cried on the night after the conversation with Irene. I hardly slept that night and I felt upset. Some of Irene's stories did not make sense to me. I had tried to making sense of Irene's story without realising that such making sense was linked to my old habits of thoughts, stereotypical and normative assumptions.

One story that has kept emerging through my memory is a need of a husband in New Zealand. I linked this story with Anya's narrative who mentioned that many single, displaced women need to go back to their home countries to get married and bring their husband to accompany them in New Zealand. Anya described this narrative as *"a very male dominant culture"*.

When such a collective story about a need for a husband intersected with my own and another participant (Sophie's) situated knowledge and experience, I had kept pondering on such a need but it was hardly making sense to me. As a consequence, I was trying to making sense of such a story by thinking with Thiruselvam's (2019) concept of marginalisation, Butler's (1997) theory of *subjection*, and Hirsi Ali's (2008, 2010, 2015, 2021) lived experiences of Muslim women's oppression in relation to fundamental Islamic institutions (Bosch, 2008; Hirsi Ali, 2008, 2010, 2015, 2021; Schrock, 2016). Through my thinking process with these scholars, I felt relieved although I kept asking myself whether I 'heard' Irene's voice adequately?

Such a question of whether I heard Irene's voice adequately emerged constantly through my heart and my working memories (Braidotti, 2010), together with the guiding questions. Thus, I traced my old habit of thoughts that might be embedded within a dualistic mode of representation including oppression vs domination, Muslim vs non-Muslim. The process of tracing my old habit of thoughts ran parallel with my 'assumed' thinking about my displaced

peer who had been categorised as a traumatised victim, with the cause attributed to domestic violence. It seems I had been trapped within a narrative of normative assumptions pertinent to domestic violence at the intersection of race and gender.

These old habits of thoughts had gone very deep as they had been embedded within my situated knowledge and experience where I related to many women facing domestic violence and oppression from patriarchal systems. Such deep embodiments had led me to encounter an ethical conundrum while trying to understand what was going on through a 'hearing' practice. The intersecting of hearing practice had guided me with dis-identifying from 'assumed' trauma, undoing my humanness and activating my ongoing responsibilities as they are vital to relational ethics. Not only did I trace my old habits of thoughts interwoven with my ethical conundrum related to stereotypical and normative assumptions, but I have also traced the process of knowledge production and philosophical assumptions underlying Thiruselvam's (2019) concept of marginalisation, Butler's (1997) theory of *subjection*, and Hirsi Ali's (n.d.) critiques of fundamental Islamic institutions. Consecutively, I traced postcolonial feminist analysis, Foucauldian approaches with semiotic materiality and technologies of self, and the underlying critiques of fundamental Islamic institutions in relation to Hirsi Ali's ethno-centric positioning (Braidotti, 2013b).

Through the process of tracing these theoretical pathways, patterns of oppressions in relation to dialectic modes of knowledge production that are attached to individual responsibilities have emerged repetitively. With such emersion, I acknowledge the limitation of these pathways where we (myself and these scholars) have encountered ethical entrapment and reproduce patterns of knowledge production. In effect, the acknowledgement had led me to look for connections with other theoretical pathways (or possibilities or new lines of fight) to approach women's stories differently.

Examples of new lines of flight include the notion of 'just a life' (or an immanent life) (Deleuze, 1997, 2001); "materialist vital ethics" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 256); the "ethical subject" (Braidotti, 2006c, p. 36), and the ""faithfulness" of the subject" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 306). I have related these new lines of flight to different ways of understanding social power relations with an attempt to increase displaced women's capacities so as to sustain them and myself, not to mention to dis-identify individual responsibilities. To this end, these new lines of flight have led me to refigure three notions: subject, trauma and transformation. For example, I have shifted my understanding of the notion of subject from unilateral subjects to

subjects as assemblages (and transversal assemblages) where we, myself as a feminist researcher and other scholars and practitioners are assembled with displaced woman subjects. The understanding of trauma, grounded upon the displaced woman participants' stories, lends us a way to transform pathologisation.

In hindsight, my journey through the analysis has been one of transformations, not only for the research process, but also for myself and allowed me to question my own assumptions and reflexively question whether I could really hear the women's stories of their lives and struggles. What follows, in the next two chapters are the women's stories, analysis and discussion as my own understandings shift and change to allow their voices, stories, strength and struggles to emerge as a catalyst for change.

Chapter 4: Mapping out rhizomic intertwined assemblages and critical cartographies of affirmative ethics associated with the struggles of displaced women

Process ontology: A practice of becoming

To involve process ontology and ground it as a practice of becoming, stories matter. Haraway (2019) reminds us that the stories we think and write about make sense of our worlds and with that in mind, I think with and are affected by displaced women's stories in ways that embody my epistemological and ethical commitment. Guided by Haraway's (2016) philosophy of process I hear her challenge to "stay with the trouble" (p. 117), and take up an invitation created by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) for a new "line of flight" (p. 9). This process allows an opening for any unknowns that might emerge through rhizomic intertwined assemblages. The potential for emergence opens new possibilities for different and diverse ways of knowing and understanding through the process of becoming with displaced women.

I have been inclusive of absences in my analysis and discussion that follows: this is my ongoing and shared response-ability (Haraway, 2016). I begin my storytelling with an emphasis on non-human entities: the first example is the Manawatū River which served as an opening for me as it resonated with my own river experiences and connections.

Becoming humanitarian by interacting with a river, a non-human agent.

As I considered my own experiences, a new line of flight emerged through my displaced women's participants' stories as they interacted with rivers through different spaces/places including the Manawatū River in Palmerston North (see Figure 5). All of my participants include rivers in their stories and through my own imaginings, they became the starting point of my analysis. As part of my posthuman approach to research, the rivers metaphorically and symbolically represent the importance of non-human agents as they convey our collective imaginings (figurations in the posthuman approach). Our collective figurations resonate with Braidotti's (2019a) insight: "We-Are-(All)-In-This-Together-But-We-Are-Not-One-And-The-Same" (p. 52). That is, even though we all involve the rivers in our stories, "we are not one and the same, but we can interact together" (Braidotti, 2019a, p. 52) flowing through different sets of relational, heterogeneous and multiple intertwined assemblages. In other words, metaphorically and symbolically, the bends of the rivers emerged from new lines of

flight flowing through the analysis that embraced women's stories differently albeit collectively.

Figure 5

Manawatū River in Palmerston North

Note. Photo of Manawatū River in Palmerston North. Own work.

Through my imaginings, I was drawn to my own love of the river and how I like riding my bike alongside it when life gets me down at times. My imagined interaction with the river led me to think about how it resonates with *in situ* technical practice for psychological intervention including Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) which is a recommended therapy for displaced women in psychotherapeutic treatment plans. This is because culturally adapted CBT techniques are promoted as an effective treatment for refugee populations (Kananian et al., 2020). Hence, my imagination is not only parallel with CBT approaches, but also resonates with some participants' stories.

Some participants mentioned that they loved riding a bike beside the river, whenever they felt bored. Some of them mentioned that they loved to go for a picnic near the river for leisure with friends and families. Nearly all of them loved taking photos in front of the rivers. Some of the photos they showed me were taken without my participants' wearing their veils. The women's stories interacted with rivers differently and led me to unfold their various complex lived experiences that are situated, embodied, and embedded in particular rhizominc intertwined assembled contexts historically, culturally, socially, politically and economically.

Alongside the various women's stories, the above imagination and the parallels towards CBT approaches, I drew a 'line of flight' emerging from my analysis through Irene's story of seeking support:

> *[The counsellor/health professional] was telling me to go for a walk and sit in front of the river, imagine you see it different, for example, ... think just positive and see the tree grow up and look at the leaf and see the shadow bla bla bla. I said [in my mind] which shadow, which tree. There is no tree. And if I go for a walk I don't want to because I am not happy… If you are not happy, everything is not good for you…. how can I go for a walk and sit in front of the river? Doesn't work.*

Despite all of my participants having relational connections with rivers, when a CBT treatment technique incorporated the river, as recommended by Irene's counsellor, the treatment did not work for her. While Irene had suffered mentally for "*two years or something*", her painful stories reflect more complexity than could be simply 'fixed' through CBT. She went through five different sets of anti-depressants, which ultimately did not help her either. As Irene said: "*every time she gave me tablets, they were even worse, worse, worse, worse; and the last one was even worse. I just gave up, I can't do anything like that*". Apparently she was not re-assessed when her first or second sets of anti-depressants failed to influence her mental health conditions and the process was the same for later sets of medication. Failing to adequately assess and later rectify the treatment plan suggests that clinical assumptions were made in line with a process of normalisation pertinent to refugee mothers who experienced depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidality (Abi Zeid Daou, 2022; East et al., 2018; Schweitzer et al., 2018; van Ee et al., 2012). Due to normalisation, the 'master narratives', related to trauma-informed responses including dominant CBT practices, continue to be reproduced (Lafrance & McKenzie-Mohr, 2013; Thompson, 2021). In effect, not only are differences among displaced mothers undermined, what and how refugee mothers should be cared for beyond the discourse of trauma are left underexplored.

'A tough life': Lived experiences of struggle

Through one and a half hours of conversation with Irene, a new line of flight gradually emerged through intertwined assemblages as she told stories of her childhood and life as a young woman/child bride.

> *As for childhood, I had good childhood. And umm, as a child I mean, I had a good childhood experience and had my father, mother, they loved me and I loved them. I was a good and clever child – but not now. I was born and grew up in a countryside but my father had some muddy house and I grew up in that house, then when I was about 16, or 15 years old, I got married. … I was very mature at that time and I got married and that's when my parents moved to the neighbouring country.*
>
> *Then I stayed with the husband, and also with the husband's family and my life was good for six months. After that, life got worse, worse, worse, and my husband went to another country. And after two years I found out he was, ummm, drowned in the water, yeh. And after two and a half years, my father and mother visited our home country and I ran away with my father from my husband's family cause they were trying to stop me – but I wasn't happy to stay with them and they said that I had to marry one of those guys there, my husband's brother, but I didn't want that.*

A journey of struggle emerges through the telling of Irene's lived experiences. A very tough life of struggle is implicated through Irene's narrative involving intertwined assemblages that cannot be categorised into DSM criteria related to trauma-related mental health distress. Neither can they be addressed through the dominant practices of CBT. Rather, Irene's story represents relations of movement in her history, context and everyday life: how she grew up; when she got married; what her married life was like and how it ended in tragedy; and how a widow was treated by her in-laws and how she resisted such treatment. As a widow, moving forward and building new relationships was difficult. Irene explains the situation of women who have been previously married, "*no men want them – she needs to marry with someone who has got a wife, or divorce; but not those ones who are single men"*.

Irene did not want to accept the social-cultural norms associated with being a widow in which she was embedded in her country of birth, she *"didn't want that"*. Instead, she resisted the norms, and chose to remarry, although to do this, her past marriage was kept secret. While Irene was entangled within the complexities and impacts of these social-cultural norms, she was happy with her second husband, but he disappeared during the year 2011, to escape the consequences of civil unrest. Even after this tragic event, she managed to raise her children with her income from sewing, she said proudly. She received a refugee quota from UNHCR

to move to New Zealand. At that time, she was a single mum and had not yet found her missing husband, although her family found him later. Once relocated, she attempted to bring him to New Zealand but her husband's visa application was declined by New Zealand immigration. She suffered mentally from this setback, leading her to *"visit a counsellor for a while"*. However, Irene said:

> *It didn't help me because I was upset from inside and I was thinking about how should I bring my husband here, as immigration doesn't listen to me. They don't know what the truth is. ... I know this is good for me ... I knew what my medication was. I needed my family [to] come to live here. I want my husband here. Not what [a counsellor] is telling me to imagine.*

Having listened to Irene's story, I was troubled by Irene's complex lived experiences of intertwined assemblages, such as loss, the socio-cultural impacts of stigma and the subsequent separation of herself and her children from her husband, as well as untreated institutional violence induced by the material effects of immigration and health professionals' criteria and actions. Irene's intertwined assemblages implicate different aspects of affect, emotion, imagination and desires that are materially embedded within Irene's life. These circumstances-based assemblages are incongruent with how Irene's life came to be pathologised as mental health distress through the application of dominant psychological knowledge.

I also became curious as to why Irene needed a husband here in Aotearoa, when she was able to survive and look after her family successfully without a husband in the household before relocation. This curiosity became a critical and reflexive point in my analysis where I faced an ethical conundrum around my own situatedness within the research and I continued to revisit it as the analysis unfolded and shifted through questioning of my own ability to 'hear' the women's stories.

I linked Irene's complex experiences and the minimalization of her own understandings of her needs and context with Anya's concerns. Anya was also challenged by how displaced people's lived experiences are minimalised and reduced to mental health distress. She had become concerned about this after taking a University psychology course.

> *The psychology paper was really difficult. I wanted to study a paper in psychology because I am from refugee background. The mental health*

> *issues that I learned from this paper, for me [it] wasn't a mental health [disorder]. Instead, [a mental health problem] was normal for me because [we] are from a very tough background. I wouldn't accept that as [a] mental health [disorder] or anxiety. … Yeh because we have a very different mentality.*

I was guided here by Haraway's (2016) neo-material positioning who allowed me to acknowledge the absence of displaced women's lived experiences from dominant narratives that were related to *"a very tough background"* that emerged as a new line of flight through Anya's story. Such an emergence needs to be acknowledged and embraced as our ongoing ethical responsibility. The absences and silences within her story led me to ask Anya to elaborate more on what *"a very tough background"* was? Anya made sense of what a very tough life meant to her.

> *You don't have the right living in the country. You deal with poverty. And you have very high levels of racism in the country. They don't like you living in their country. And lots of violence from other people, you live with them. Because you live with people in the country, they live before you, and they know more than you and they are bullying you, sometimes hurting you. Yeh. They have their mentality. This is your life for the rest of your life. You have to believe like this for the rest of your life. And they don't have any hope, like all my life doesn't get better. And you live in slow motion. You know [what] I mean? Everything is moving very slow and your life doesn't improve. Like you are stuck somewhere and you cannot get out of there. It's so difficult.*

She also further elaborated that such a very tough life is related to a lack of support and isolation:

> *Have you been like in the situation [where] you don't know what's happening tomorrow? You cannot go outside and talk with people, they are trying to hurt you. You cannot trust anybody and you don't have any family and friends to support you.*

For Anya, such a very tough life is also where her notion of relational family support is missing.

> *In my home country we have big families and relatives, my siblings they were helping us. I never thought how to earn money back home because my dad was very wealthy and within 24 hours your life changed from very wealthy to very poor life. It was very difficult to cope and you have to work 16 hours a day to earn something to eat and live. It was so difficult.*

At the end of my conversation with Anya regarding such a very tough life, Anya summed up her thoughts: *"from that's life to that's life…imagine what could be the mental [health] problem?"*

Anya's prioritisation and feelings towards relational family support and her challenge to normal interpretations of her experiences around mental health disorders, alerted me to the incongruence of pathologising Irene's struggles from the perspective of dominant psychological knowledge. Both Anya and Irene knew, as experts of their own experiences that a family was what they needed around them to ease their struggles and hurt. Their experiences and feelings around family relations and support were also relevant and important for shaping my own perceptions and understandings within my research as a frame for a relational ethics project. The issue of family support intertwined with the 'needing of a husband' is about relational understanding, a different frame compared to western terms involving individual understandings of personal and gendered relationships.

Anya's reply also helped me to materialise the lived experiences of displaced women in ways that challenged a normative notion of trauma discourse. For Anya, the tough life of displaced people includes racism, violence, and sudden changes in socio-economic circumstances; which should not solely be *"counted as mental [health disorders]"* as qualified and quantified within the existing literature (Drožđek, 2007; Drožđek et al., 2012a, 2012b; Olff et al., 2019). Anya suggested that mental health issues are *"simple issues in their lives"* and spoke of the shift from her own experiences of a very wealthy life to a *"very poor life"* which she felt at times *"was very difficult to cope"* with. Even so, by shifting and changing different social locations and status in her life she still could not *"imagine"* how displaced people's lived difficulties can be equated to "*mental [health disorders]*".

Through our conversations, nearly all of my displaced woman participants expressed their lived experiences as a struggle. For example, Raya mentioned several times about how she has been struggling a lot with her family issues, especially the younger members of the

family, whom she could not help, albeit she said she has *"to live with it"*. Raya also mentioned the lived struggle of others in relation to poverty and lack of access and understanding of what displaced people have been through involving institutional violence, and in some cases, sexual violence:

> *I think the people are just struggling. They have to get out of the country or they are forced to get out of the country because there are no other options. They cannot go to work. They cannot help their own family. They cannot go to university or study because they are being poor. Some of them have been raped by the attackers. And they don't have any other options, either they died or got out of the country.*

The experience of both a tough life and struggle, leads me back to thinking with Haraway (2016), who thinks 'with many' involving a methodological approach of engaging with multiple ends and different positions in tangling with pre-existing categorisations. For example, I inquired how the notion of trauma can be understood differently when taking departure from a different entry point, or by taking departure from 'a tough life' position; rather than from pre-existing mental health conditions interpreted as trauma.

The experiences of such a tough life, as described by my displaced woman participants, are conventionally theorised through the process of marginalisation or oppression. Thiruselvam (2019), for example, expressed her concerns that "marginalisation and social isolation are already a condition of migrant/refugee life" (Thiruselvam, 2019, p. 65). Adding to these conditions, refugees' bodies are made vulnerable, racialized and gendered. In these circumstances, they are forced to perform as a grateful refugee, obliged to serve the country they reside in. I became aware that through linking Thiruselvam's (2019) concerns with some of my participants' narratives, I had redrawn the lived experiences of displaced women into the process of marginalisation in relation to patriarchal systems. I became entrapped within a historical status quo process and system while I thought I was 'listening to' my participants' lived experiences. I had not yet engaged in a hearing practice that became one with their experiences of multiple marginalisation from their positions as experts.

Halting the new line of flight when encountering my normative-orientalist understanding related to a "very male dominated culture"

When exploring my participants' social location, marginalisation became topical. For example, when I asked participants how they felt about being a woman as well as being a displaced person. Anya replied:

> *Being a women and a refugee, it is so difficult. You know in our country, woman – they don't have that much right[s] and we have lots of right[s] here. And you want to have them. And the society we belong to, our [diasporic] community we belong to. It is so difficult to handle, like they think woman, they count women very low.*

Anya expressed how a displaced woman's life became difficult through a *"very male dominant culture"* embedded within her diasporic community where women *"have never been independent before"*. That situation affected their general life condition as well as their decision-making ability. Anya described:

> *A woman in our country, they never been independent. [They] always have been [dependent] on their father. After their father, brother. After brothers, husband. After husband, their son. And they [have] never been independent and they don't know sometimes what they should do for their life. And that's very difficult. Yeh, they never choose for themselves. Somebody, they make the choice for their life. You know. It is [a] very male dominant culture.*

While I was thinking to practice my speculative commitment (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017), remaining open to any unknowns that might emerge through rhizomic assemblages, I was drawn toward the quote, "*a very male dominant culture*"[7]. I had my own pre-existing assumptions of how women's equity, rights and choices were limited within a patriarchal

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[7] In relation to the quote *"a very male dominated culture"*. I acknowledge issues of sex and gender conflation in the understandings of the women themselves which is important and needs to be elaborated. The issues involve stereotypes and cultural assumptions which are about the application of gender categories on biological difference. Therefore, it is not about males and females. It is about the difference that we ascribe to them through our social-cultural understandings and patriarchal belief systems.

dominant culture. My curiosity about why Irene needed a husband here in New Zealand emerged again from these reflections. In between moment-to-moment situations, I was upset at times, as for me, the issues of domination and women's rights are close to my heart, and my social location.

My own embodiment is intersected relationally with *"a very male dominant culture"* which is congruent with normative assumptions highlighted in feminist discussions (Ahmed, 2013; Tronto, 2020; Young, 2020). I was born in Thailand and we, Thai women, face similar circumstances to Anya. I had also listened to a peer who studied with me at the local English school. He was a Muslim man who told me I should stay home and dress myself nicely and wait for my husband to come home. I also experienced a differential social structure in a mosque where men sit at the front and women sit at the back. Even so, as a Thai woman and Buddhist who grew up in a household dominated by my father, I also acknowledge that he also supported me through education and subsequently, a professional career. Sophie, a participant who resided in Buddhist Thailand during her migration journey before moving to New Zealand, expressed her liberated and inclusive position where she now engages with a local Christian church. The majority of her diasporic group belong there, even though she insists she loves her Buddhist religion and has not lost her faith.

By engaging with my embodiment and Sophie's embodiment intersecting with Anya's experiences of *"a very male dominant culture"*, I was led to 'messing up' with my old habit of thoughts where pre-existing categories are embedded within. In effect, I began reflecting on modes of comparison mapped out within dualist modes of knowledge production (sameness vs difference/oppression vs domination), undermining diverse experiences (or multiple singularities). While I compared my situated knowledge and Sophie's situated knowledge, in relation to our social locations (being a woman intersected with being a Buddhist person), I became even more upset when 'listening to' Irene's stories and reflecting on them in relation to my ethical concerns. Irene, as a Muslim woman, explained how she had suffered mentally *"for two years or something"* and had mentioned that *"I knew what my medication was. … I want my husband here"*. I linked her story with Anya's experiences of patriarchy, women's limited rights and how these issues seemed to be a norm in her diasporic group.

As mentioned earlier, Irene told me that the Immigration Department declined her husband's application to bring her husband to New Zealand. Irene came to New Zealand as a single

mother with two kids and she had no English knowledge but can now speak English fluently. Her husband went missing when her second child was born in Pakistan. At the time around 2011, she said people started shooting at Muslims. She did not know who were the shooters but guessed they were a fundamentalist group whom she termed as *"bad"* Muslims.

During the time when her husband was missing in Pakistan, Irene said she was able to raise her kids with her income from sewing. She had difficulties in Pakistan but she could live there without her husband. But in New Zealand, she said: *"I couldn't feel this is my home because I have no one here to open the door for me, to come to my place and visit me"*.

Irene's stories indicate her strength although initially her story did not make sense to me. Yet, at this point, I did not engage with the 'hearing' practice and I was trapped within my 'assumed' knowledge and stereotypical understandings. While trapped, I focused on what might underlie the difference between needing a husband in New Zealand but not in Pakistan. Near the end of our conversation, I had a chance to ask her "*would you mind telling me why your husband is really important for you?"*. Irene said:

> *I think a husband is important for every family … he is the one who supports me and who I can lean on and socialise with I think yeh, and feel that you have someone behind you. And plus, culturally, other people don't think I am a single mum. If you are a single mum from god['s instruction] that is okay. But if you have had [a husband] before, ... It's kind of a bit different. It's kind of shameful because culturally, we should have a husband. We should have.*

After 'listening to' Irene's narratives, with no engagement of the 'hearing' practice, my analysis proceeded by intersecting with the cultural norms of being a single mum related with shameful issues. Such an analysis was built on the themes pertinent to patriarchal culture intersected with women's limited rights and concepts of marginalisation. I was upset about god, Muslim men and the material effects of power that come with religious protocols and norms. To this end, I had become entrenched in a particular direction, embedded within processes of normalisation.

Changing the line of flight: Rippling from normalisation in relation to god, Muslim men, and the material effects of power

Through the process of normalisation, I was troubled by displaced women's stories that went in a particular direction. Irene's stories reminded me of Raya's story that also emerged in interaction with the Manawatū River, and involving god and family problems. Raya visited the Manawatū river on the occasion, for example, after her social worker could not help her siblings apply for an immigration visa. Raya wanted to bring them here as they lived illegally overseas. Raya mentioned that her social worker said to her *"you know you will never be able to bring them here and that is it"*. While we talked, she spoke of her reaction.

> *I was like pretty shocked …. I cried, I went to Manawatū River, I talked to god, and shouted, and I said no I am not going to accept this. … Until now, even after four years I have not accepted it. I know life is going on. I couldn't bring them here but still I am much more confident in speaking English, doing my own job so maybe in the future I can bring them here. Who knows? One time a miracle might happen [laughed with a sad tone and took a long breath]".*

I thought with Raya's stories through her specific social location, as being a Muslim woman. While Raya disagreed with Muslim religious protocols in terms of differences between women and men, she still struggled to leave her religion and her husband. Her husband upset Raya at times because he controlled all family spending, deciding what to spend and who could spend it. Even small things like expenses related to the children's activities required approval by her husband.

To help me 'make sense' of Raya's positioning between her beliefs and her acceptance of cultural understandings of gender norms I extended Thiruselvam's (2019) concept of marginalisation by engaging with Butler's (1997) theory of subjection. Through using Butler pathway, I was able to interpret that Muslim women had been subordinated by their own subjection through their embodiment of religious protocols and norms. Butler's (1997) theory of subjection was pre-eminent among many including scholars specialising in Islamic studies (Ask & Tjomsland, 2021; Mahmood, 2001, 2006; Vasudev & Inbanathan, 2021) in analysing the paradoxical character of Muslim women located in a particular historical and cultural situations so as to come to understand the process of subordination of women who embody it.

I felt rather relieved that I had appeased my own ethical misgivings, but as I repeatedly listened to Irene’s voice along with my other participants’ voices, I again asked myself whether I had ‘heard’ displaced women’s voices adequately? For example, when I classified my displaced women’s participants as ‘Muslim women’, was I perpetuating the same understandings of humanness, attached to what I was familiar with and what was embedded within the historical status quo including dominant knowledges, norms and values. To this end, I had been entangled within my ethical conundrum and its intersection with the historical status quo, and the dominant knowledge production through dualistic modes of representation, while attempting unsuccessfully to do my humanness differently.

To strive towards becoming minoritarian, and to be part of subjects as assemblages (and transversal assemblages), I engaged “a zigzagging pattern of dissonant nomadic subjects” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 28). What manifested was a realisation of my theoretical entrapment. Through Thiruselvam’s (2019) concept of marginalisation thought with Butler’s (1997) theory in subjection, I was trapped within dualistic modes of representation including Muslim men versus Muslim women; subordination versus superiority; and dominance versus marginalisation and oppression. In effect, I had located responsibilities in displaced individuals following the dominant discursive practice in psychology.

I carried an absence that remained self-undetected while I involved two intersecting concepts to criticise god and patriarchal systems through a conventional linear approach so embedded in our everyday understanding, underpinned with humanism. Consequently, I was not hearing my participants’ stories in ways that open other new possibilities to make relational meanings that are congruent with participants’ contextual specificities.

Upon reflection, as part of process ontology grounded through posthumanist relationality, the analysis started shifting away from humanism, laying the foundation for a new starting point and a new line of flight that allows for transformation and the ‘hearing’ of the displaced women in my study.

Shifting from humanism to posthumanism: (re) grounding the notion of subject, laying the foundation for a new starting point and a new line of flight

'Refugee' and vulnerable subject versus becoming humanitarian or minoritarian subjects

The majority of the existing literature has objectified (and subjectified) displaced people as 'refugee' people, a term given significance in the 1951 Geneva Convention and subsequently institutionalised by multilateral agencies (Summerfield, 1999; UNHCR, 1954, 2015). However, in the existing literature, the specific social location that is 'refugee' is given a negative categorisation, described in terms of victims and vulnerable people (Health Navigator New Zealand, 2015; Hvass & Wejse, 2017), or as comprised of traumatised victims (Bancroft et al., 2016; Hensel-Dittmann et al., 2011; Vukčević Marković et al., 2023). Other complex and diverse matters and relations that might emerge from displaced women's experiences can be taken for granted when refugees are labelled as vulnerable people or victims.

I, therefore, think with Braidotti (2014), and consider that, based on this social location, scholars' analysis and critique can be reduced into a logic of negativity that disengages from affirmative ethics. Such a negative logic is also linked within the notion of subjection drawn from Butler (1997) and the notion of marginalisation or oppression drawn from Thiruselvam (2019). The theories of Butler (1997) and Thiruselvam (2019), when related to the negative logic, can serve to undermine and misrecognise displaced people's potentials.

These theories are related to accountability involving technologies of self (Boland, 2007; Foucault, 1988). In this context, the agency of displaced women had become limited to the bounds of discourses involving 'subordination', 'marginalisation', and 'oppression'. In alignment with these discourses, they are compelled to normalise themselves in whatever they do, think, act and are responsible. Their own subjectification and marginalisation manifests in accordance with specific cultural practices. As a consequence, where does the accountability lie and who are we as academics accountable to? Do we keep reproducing dominant knowledge that can lead to the ongoing production of unequal social power relations?

To this end, research processes that start from one social location, in this context as a refugee with negative logics of vulnerable or victimised subjectivity, together with an analysis of

subordination and marginalisation or oppression, are still based on humanism. The rationales are therefore reinforcing the notion of subject as unitary and universal and undermining the disruptive process of refiguring the subject. The combination of such research processes and analysis with humanist pathways can have far reaching impacts, not only for displaced women but also for 'being a woman' in general.

Changing lines of fight: Hearing a different flow

Unravelling the notion of subject through posthumanist pathways, I was enabled to 'hear' my displaced participants' stories (hearing as in hearing-listening to, not listening to) by engaging how they made sense of being classified as refugees. Displaced woman participants expressed different perspectives and mixed feelings of being a 'refugee'. Sophie, for example, mentioned that when people call her a refugee, she said: *"I don't feel bad about that too much but sometime I feel very like I don't really feel happy about that"*. Even so, she said she understands their normalised, stereotyped views due to her background *"so they can call us refugees"*.

Such normalisation of refugees was unknown to Raya's situated knowledge. Raya mentioned dishearteningly: *"I didn't know that we were refugee[s] before arriving in [an overseas country]… I didn't know the meaning of being a refugee…I did not know who made this [decision whether one is a refugee]"*.

Raya entered an overseas country with a passport but had been told by a UNHCR staff member that *"you came here illegally"*. Raya was *"shocked"* when he said:

> *You are a refugee here you don't have the right [to stay]. You don't have the right to do this and do that, you don't have the right to go to school or you don't have the right to talk to people, you don't have the right to go like looking for a job or go to work.*

Raya felt *"sad"* and *"did not like"* how she had been classified as a refugee as she "*thought we came there so they could support us. They could help us like with going to school or going to work … We just came there just for help"*. Raya has further emphasised the relationship between displaced people's struggles and how their 'refugee' beings are treated as less than humans regardless of their gender:

> *Unfortunately when they get out of the country [, for example,] most of the young men -- they think when they go to other countries they will be treated as humans but still they have been killed. They have been [treated as] a refugee, not being able to study and go to other countries but you know, they are young, they are less experienced. They think when they get out of the country, they get like much more comfortable and they can go out you know go for work but still lots of people have been killed since last year at the border of Iran and Pakistan. That's unfortunate, we cannot do anything about it. And other governments or people who can help them they just say no we cannot [help].*

As well as the above narrative, Raya also told me that: *"because [of] being [a] refugee, it is hard [although] we are not only refugee. We were orphan[ed] and none of [the institutions] gave us [a] visa. So that's why we left, like you know not only being refugee but we were a kind of stateless"*. Raya also said that *"people think that we are refugees whereas we just want to be human"*. The issue of being a human, as an important social location, was emphasised by other participants as well.

My participants' perspectives on these issues are situated, embodied and embedded through their multiple social locations; not only by being a refugee, a woman, a girl, a wife, an orphan, a Muslim, a Buddhist, a widow, a single mum; but also a human being. These participant perspectives, based on multiple locations, are of a different order from those of conventional psychological approaches that tend to theorise displaced people's experience as if it was associated with a singular location, and furthermore, framed in refugee terms that entails victimhood.

One may argue that, we are in the process of humanism (not posthumanism), when involving a 'human being' as part of multiple social locations. However, I argue that such involvement process is considered as posthumanism rather than humanism. This is because the involvement of displaced women's multiple social locations, including being human, emphasises different ontological grounds, through a different, and a more complex version of subject. Posthumanism espouses epistemological and ethical ways to understand human beings. The reality of having potentials and capacities that can be transformed when intersected with other beings is also the process of transforming from 'being' to 'becoming' as part of subjects as assemblages. Most importantly, posthumanist understanding opens new

possibilities for me to de-familiarise negative logics attached to a linear, ‘assumed’ notion of a displaced woman as a victim.

The process of hearing my participants’ voices on their positioning suggested to me that their potentials were greater than what we might have envisaged. Therefore, new possibilities can be opened for understanding displaced women differently. Once I began ‘hearing’ my participants’ voices, my analysis shifted from one that assumes a ‘victim related to pre-existing mental health conditions including trauma’, to another different-epistemological entry point – an entry through ‘a tough life’ or a struggling position, as emphasised by my participants. Changing the entry point (or starting point) is part of an affirmative ethics in posthuman philosophy. This different entry point occurs at an epistemological level to position how knowledge can be relationally produced and understood (Van der Tuin, 2011).

A tough life, a life of struggle, is just a life?

The participants’ multiple social locations guided me to shift the positioning of my analysis to ‘a tough life’ or a ‘struggling life’. Their guidance has inspired me to think with Braidotti (2014) who thinks with Deleuze (1995, as cited in Braidotti, 2014) in association with the notion of ‘just a life’ (or an immanent life) (Deleuze, 1997, 2001).

I engage with the notion of ‘just a life’ or ‘an immanent life’ with reference to a dynamic understanding of life where there is no outside or transcendence (Deleuze, 1997). This approach emphasises the relationality of human life and the network they inhabit. The notion of ‘just a life’ disrupts categorisation, expressing the endless originality of becoming which is unique and particular and moves away from individualism (Flood, 2019). Life is “an open-ended project. One has to work at it. Life is passing, and we do not own it, we just inhabit it, as a time-share location” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 344). Life is “a state of negotiations” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 347), resting on process ontology, that should be acknowledged in producing affirmative or positive ethics.

‘Just a life’ as a state of negotiation: who (humans) and what (non-humans) have been involved in displaced women’s relational networks?

It was not only the narratives of Irene, Raya and Anya that inspired a link with the concept of ‘just a life’, but inspiration has also come from the narrative of Sophie who lived in Thailand as a displaced woman before moving to New Zealand. Through my situated knowledge, as a

Thai person, and as a woman, I have been oppressed by sexism, a patriarchal system, nationalism, and socio-cultural norms. I imagined she and her diasporic people were more oppressed than myself and many Thai people through more layers of material conditions including political marginalisation and different structural systems involving dominant knowledge production, values and norms.

My imagination that is related to my situated knowledge is relatively congruent with Sophie's lived stories. Sophie *"lived in a big camp"* where *"many people lived"*. The camp where she lived is one of among nine camps (The Border Consortium, 2022) operated as 'temporary shelters' by the Thai government (Rattanapan, 2021; UNHCR, 2023). Her life had been confined within the camp even though there were occasional opportunities to go out and work *"but now the situation has changed*". If she wanted to go outside, she needed to get *"a paper"* permission from a government authority. She needed to *"pay money"* to receive a paper to relocate, but she had only *"seven days to go out and work before that paper expired"*.

When I asked *"how do you feel when you are not allowed to work?*", Sophie said *"I feel like I will live in a prison and we don't have much opportunities"*. Similar to Raya, she felt that displaced beings are treated as less than human in relation to their limited rights and lack of financial support. Sophie did not have the same right to get education, the same right to work and earn income *"at the same level [as Thai people]"*. In addition to these constraints, Sophie faced everyday financial struggle:

> *As humans we need money to feed our family. [Be]cause of …ummm…like I mean [the] Thai government like don't give us money, just food, they brought food but we still need some money to buy things that [are] important and necessary for us and for our life [and] to use.*

What is more, she had been affected by racism and discrimination. She commented *"in Thailand if you are from refugees and if you want to go to work outside, and may be [with] Thai people or other ethnicities they look down on you"*. In addition to this, being a displaced woman, Sophie expressed how she felt unsafe and negative about the conditions in the refugee camps in Thailand where there is insufficient support, lack of resources and poor housing infrastructure:

> *I feel, not very safe for me as a woman. But we have a woman officer. In the camp even we have security, but they don't work at night. Just 8am until 5pm. At night time, they don't work so it is not really safe for us. Otherwise, our housing is not like here [New Zealand]. We just have like…I can show you picture. That [Thai camp] way, we don't have safety, or murder[er] or criminals can enter in our houses. Then they can kill us or do something bad to us as a woman.*

Sophie's unsafe feeling and the poor and insecure living conditions reflected the relevance of gendered power relations. In sum, Sophie and her diasporic group have been marginalised in their everyday lived struggles through different and multiple systems of marginalisation and dehumanisation including racism and discrimination intersecting with gender, class, nationalism, different rights of working and studying, predicaments of education, confinement, and insecurity as well as other conditions that emerge from Sophie's story.

Relating new lines of flight that emerged from interacting with different sets of non-human entities through changes in different geo-political spaces

Effects of Thai geo-political space and transformation

Sophie tells of different, albeit limited, rights, especially the rights that are basic for human beings so that they can live and sustain themselves. Sophie said that she had been living in Thailand for more than 20 years but had not received a Thai ID card. Without a Thai ID card, Sophie did not have *"the same rights"* as Thai people. Even though she was able to study and get a certificate while in the camp, her certificate has not been recognised by the Thai government. While studying, she was taught by a teacher from her diasporic group and although she studied seven different subjects, she said *"we didn't learn about Thai language"* - the controlling *lingua franca.* Reflecting on Sophie's story, I was encouraged to think differently about 'Thai' language. I used to think that English language was a recognised form of control as it has been globally dominant whereas Thai language was not. After hearing Sophie's story, I recognised that the social power of language that is in dominant use in specific social locations can be a form of control, including the regional Thai language.

Apart from restricting access to the dominant language, the Thai government's hegemony involves other strategies to place restrictions on displaced people's capacities to relocate.

These restrictions have not always been in place, so I asked Sophie more specifically about the changes and when they had occurred.

> *Sophie: It changed in 2015. They close[d] the gates and we had so many gates. Because they closed all the gates, we could not go out anymore. If we want to go out we need to get permission from Thai government. Also, there are a lot of drugs in the camp.*
>
> *Ruedee: do you know where the drugs come from?*
>
> *Sophie: they [were] bought outside the camp and then they used in the camp. Drugs are illegal.*

The voice of Sophie is not emanating from the human alone, but rather a complex network of human and non-human entities. Sophie had told me that the Thai government erected many *"gates"* or checkpoints to monitor displaced people's movement, not only in front of the camps but also in several places along the Thai border (see Figures 6 and 7). Large numbers of similar kinds of gate were placed in 1,887 places (Depchand, 2022) and had been used to control other minority peoples in Thailand together with various laws and institutions, such as the Martial Law Act B.E. 2457, the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situation, B.E. 2548 (2005) in the Southern border provinces of Thailand, the 2008 Internal Security Act, Internal Security Operations Command (McCargo, 2017; McCargo & Thalang, 2023).

Figure 6

Gates or Checkpoints along the Thai Border

Note. From *“เรามีหวังเสมอว่าจะได้กลับบ้าน” เสียงจากริมน้ำเมย ชะตากรรมที่เลือกไม่ได้ของผู้หนีภัยกะเหรี่ยง [We Always Hope That We Can Go Home”, Voices from the Moei Riverbank, a Destiny That Cannot Be Chosen by Displaced People Who Are Karen]*, by W. Amarinteva, 2022, *The101.world* (https://www.the101.world/mae-sot-karen-refugees/). Copyright by The101.world.

Figure 7

Gates or Checkpoints along the Thai Border

Note. From *ชีวิตที่ 'พยายามปกติ' ของชาวมลายูมุสลิมใน 3 จว. ชายแดนใต้ [Lives That Are 'Trying To Be Normal' of Melayu Muslim People in Three Southern Border Provinces]*, by T. Kummetha, 2015, *Prachatai* (https://prachatai.com/journal/2015/08/60959). CC BY-NC.

Sophie's relational involvement of surveillance and control through a *"gate"*, has enabled me to retell stories of displaced women participants from different positions.

Infused with a nomadic-relational approach associated with posthumanism, a *"gate"* can be interpreted as a non-human other that has opened spaces for me to connect with Sophie's embodiment as it relates to her social location in real life living conditions in Thailand. In other words, a posthumanist approach enables me to bring stories related to hidden and unknown struggles that are embodied in Sophie's everyday life. The emergence of the metaphorical gate, a non-human entity, became a productive or affirmative force to bring the new line of flight related to changes in geo-political contextual assemblages around settlement locations for displaced people.

Tracing the changes that emerged from "*gates*", a non-human entity, situated in displaced women's assembled networks of negotiation

"*Gates*" are embedded as a non-human other, interconnected with subject assemblages and cartographic mappings of human and non-human relations through and within different networks of power relations associated with geopolitical locations. I use it metaphorically, epistemologically and ethically to open a different way of knowing and to gain better understanding of displaced people. A *"gate"* reflects a symbol of control and the interrupted flows of movement through boundaries and borders through ontological categorisation. 'Refugee' persons are categorised through structural and institutional assemblages as less than human and treated accordingly.

In relation to Sophie's embodied and embedded contexts, a *"gate"* is enacted not only as a physical constraint but is also theoretically enabling. Such enactment occurs both ways, and resonates with Braidotti's (2011b) philosophical concept of nomadism and the impermeability of borders, reflecting a different way of thinking about the everyday nomadic experiences of displaced women. In association with nomadism and messing with borders and categories, the metaphorical gate not only represents a possible permeable pathway through the impermeability of dualistic thought but also represents embodied flows of displaced people and affect.

Interacting with the *"gates"* allowed me to trace the changes and restrictions of movement that Sophie spoke of, leading a different way to understand how displaced people's potentials are undermined and how they are placed in unequal power relations. What Sophie described involved the changes that occurred in 2015, after the coup of 2014, during the time of Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha's government: resulting in increased limitations on Thai people's rights, and more restrictions on displaced people and marginalised communities.

Prayuth Chan-ocha made a pronouncement against the humanitarian crisis of the time, with a claim of limited resources, albeit, limited understanding about responsibility, stating:

> If we take them all in, then anyone who wants to come will come freely. I am asking if Thailand will be able to take care of them all. Where will the budget come from? ….Everyone wants a transit country like us to take responsibility. Is it fair? ("Malaysia and Thailand turn away hundreds on migrant boats," 2015, para. 5).

Through taking this conservative political position, Prayuth Chan-ocha abdicated the Thai government's responsibility for a series of the humanitarian crises culminating in the influx of refugees into Thailand, and placed responsibility onto displaced people, by involving international regulations and an absence of national asylum law. Thailand has no legal obligation to recognise displaced people rights because Thailand is not a signatory to the 1951 UN Convention associated with displaced people status (Janmyr, 2021). Consequently, displaced people have limited access to precarious humanitarian assistance with legal support (Coddington, 2018).

The changes related to the *"gate"* that are intertwined in Thai political history and contexts indicated how Sophie's capacities were further diminished and that further affected Sophie's living conditions. Under Prayut Chan-o-cha's government, regulations were tightened through bureaucratic processes that give more power to authorities to control displaced people (Sharples, 2016). In effect, the Prayut Chan-o-cha government created more restrictions that furthered arbitrary and harmful practices towards displaced people (Palmgren, 2020).

Most importantly, by giving more rights to authorities, paradoxically, previously restrictive drug laws were negated by corrupt authority networks, as evidenced by the increased supply of drugs in the camp mentioned by Sophie. The stricter regulations, and more rights to authorities, when intersected with other counteracting forms of oppression, exposes Sophie, and other diasporic persons, to unequal power relations where access to resources is reduced. This affects how she can live, study, work and earn an income so as to sustain her life and her family life in Thailand. Above all, the payment of bribes exacerbated corruption through a so-called 'stricter regulation', counteracting the claim for a corruption free Thailand, as promised by Prayut Chan-o-cha's government after seizing power (Palmgren, 2020).

While encountering these multiple systems of oppression, Sophie said that she was *"happy to live there [in Thailand]"*. When I first 'listened to' her positive experience, I was rather surprised as this did not make sense to me. Sophie also showed me her photographs. One photograph showed her friends and family at the river. She also mentioned that she grew some vegetables near by the river and the camp and was able to earn some income from the garden. Contrarily, I inquired how it was that Sophie was happy in that oppressive situation living in Thailand? Sophie emphasised that:

> *We are happy to live in there because we couldn't live in our homeland or our country. Even now, we can't go back and live in there. Nowadays [indigenous] people attack other ethnic groups. We couldn't live in there even nowadays we can't go back to our own country.*

Sophie's positive experience is commonly linked to a concept of resilience among the existing literature of trauma discourse (Ehlers, 2023; Hawkes et al., 2021). This concept, as commonly understood, expresses how displaced people as 'traumatised' subjects can adaptively manage to recover from their trauma conditions. While the concept, to a certain degree, is linked with the subjective experience of displaced people, I argue that such an understanding of resilience is attached to individualist frameworks that are interwoven with the notion of technologies of self. Following this theoretical position, the discourse related to the production of displaced people's resilience, moves the focus away from affirmative ethics and collective politics. Displaced women as subjects are framed as normalising themselves as responsible subjects. Such an analysis is embedded within humanist approaches: undermining other complexities and challenges that displaced people face materially in their everyday life struggles, and under-exploring issues of social power relations that are constituted in everyday relations. Yet, involving Sophie's expression of happiness with the notion of 'just a life', opens different lines of flight as an antidote to potential under-exploration.

In contrast with the normative understanding of the concept of resilience, involving the notion of 'just a life' opens a new perspective for me to process Sophie's negotiation when interacting with multiple oppressions that can be used to counter-narrate the dominant trauma discourse. Sophie mentioned during our conversation that she does not have any mental health disorders although she felt bored at times. Sophie's statement surprised me. I even felt more surprised when Sophie mentioned how she overcame her feeling of boredom by engaging with different activities. One activity that she mentioned helped me further de-familiarise myself from my dominant knowledge system in 'assumed' psychological trauma. She said that when she got bored, she *"danced"* and *"sang a song"*. Before hearing what kind of dance and song, I assumed she engaged with traditional-indigenous songs and dance as part of traditional healing that I was familiar with.

Contrary to my imagination (indicated above), this was not what Sophie meant: being involved in a dance performance was not spontaneously related to her traditional dance. She had her own favourite artists that she listened to and followed. Yet, this was one among other

moments that helped me de-identify from pathologised trauma-related mental health disorders and their prescribed treatment. To this end, even though Sophie was facing multiple systems of oppression, she insisted she was *"happy"*. Such resistance is how Sophie kept (re) negotiating to overcome the difficulties of her living conditions situated within unequal-complex social power settings.

To this end, to become minoritarian, I have a responsibility to narrate Sophie's stories from a different line of flight that can help us, as health professionals and researchers, to de-familiarise our 'assumed' knowledge and its production and gain more nuanced and contextual understandings of displaced women. Through engaging with posthuman approaches and relational ethics of care, practices of spaces/places and new opportunities emerge to offer alternative understanding of displaced women's lived experiences, embodied within a more than human relation (e.g., gate, infrastructure relations).

We are not the one and the same: An analysis of different lines of flight of 'just a life', drawn from different social geographical locations

You'll remember I was listening and not hearing Irene's lived story of struggle because of my own preconceived knowledge. I then began writing and thinking through my ethical conundrum that I encountered. I am returning to her story to think of it differently now through different lines of flight that have emerged from different sets of human and non-human relations situated in a non-unitary version of subjects. While there is some similarity between Sophie and Irene in relation to the issues of multiple systems of oppression, the process of limiting displaced people's capacities and placing displaced women in an unequal social power relation, their "being diasporic, nomadic, hybrid, in-between are not the same" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 253). The differences are related to differences between the situated politics of location, and different sets of the intertwined assemblages that are situated in different places, times and contexts.

Unlike Sophie, Irene's life relates to different social locations, a Muslim, a woman, and a single mother in a new social geographical location here in Aotearoa. Irene's situated-embodied-embedded knowledges are composed from different intertwined assemblages. Hearing Irene's stories in this new geographical place opens different understandings for me to assemble another set of more than human relations to compose a more adequate cartography where I can gain a better understanding of Irene's lived experiences.

Effects of New Zealand's geo-political space and transformation

The living conditions in Irene's new geo-political space have structured how her being in the world relates to her social modes of belonging and not belonging (Braidotti, 2011b), and how these modes affect her everyday interaction, needs, decisions and negotiation for having a husband in New Zealand, not in Pakistan. A different line of flight emerged from Irene's lived struggles that highlight the collective stages of negotiation and transformation, building upon the notion of 'just a life'. Her posthuman subject is part of a more than human, inter-dependent relation involving both human and non-human entities: these relational networks have dynamically shaped and transformed Irene's everyday life contexts that she is situated-embodied-embedded within.

Irene had been struggling in several ways in different living conditions in New Zealand. She had arrived in New Zealand with other displaced people in a month when the weather was *"okay"* for a Kiwi, but she said *"for us it was very cold and we didn't bring any warm clothing".* Irene felt *"very cold"* in her accommodation at Mangere camp while having "*backache"* due to a poor-quality mattress.

Irene expressed her frustration of not knowing about a device or apparatus in her Mangere accommodation: *"there was something…long heater or something. I don't know how to describe [it]. Something but I didn't know. I thought this was broken. Now I think maybe I do know how to turn it on"*. What is more, when Irene arrived in Palmerston North, she found *"my house was even colder"*. There were two heaters in her house *"but they were not good heaters"* and they were costly to run and they even *"couldn't heat the house properly"*. She had been warned by staff at the Red Cross *"don't turn it on a lot because you can't stop the bill. [The] bill can increase. You can't pay because you have less money."*

Instead of turning the heaters on, Irene and her sons wrapped themselves with blankets. At that time, she thought *"if I was turning it on, it does not heat the house why I have to pay my money for nothing?"* Irene raised issues of poor-quality heaters with housing New Zealand. She insisted that she *"needed a heat pump and that's it [nothing happened]"*. After three years of living in New Zealand, she has *"installed better heaters"* and benefited from new government policy that provided for home heating and insulation. And *"now I have [a] heat pump",* she said with a feeling of relative relief.

The non-human that is assembled heterogeneously in human relations as narrated through Irene's stories involves a climate, the weather, a mattress, heaters, and a heat pump. These non-humans, that emerged from Irene's stories represent modes of moods (or emotions) of affective belonging: telling a story of how Irene was struggling in everyday life in a new geo-political space that comes with monetary cost, physical pains from uncomfortable material living conditions, and a sense of frustration, not to mention a sense of resistance. Irene kept negotiating, for example, calling Housing New Zealand and requesting a heat pump.

After 'hearing' Irene's voices and lived stories again and again rather than just 'listening to' them, I enacted my relational-ethical commitment and responsibility: I remained "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58) to "making things matter" politically and affirmatively (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p. 18) through the more than human relational matter.

While I activated my ongoing relational ethics and responsibly through hearing practice, I heard Irene's differences and her commonality with Sophie. Irene mentioned several times about *"language struggling"*. While both Irene and Sophie struggled with language, their stories are different. Irene mentioned: *"when I came here, I had no English"* but *"I got better of English and I can survive"*. However, Irene disappointedly said *"it was less with the native speakers"*, particularly with her workmates with whom she could not feel connected as she does not *"have anything in common with them"*.

In terms of *"language struggling"* for Irene, it is not only English but also other dominant languages used by an interpreter during her GP appointment. *"I couldn't understand what they were saying. It was harder than English. I could understand my doctor [better] than them. It was double hard for me"*. In the meantime, struggling with language encouraged her to learn English. *"Otherwise, whenever [I] come to [my] doctor, [it will be] the problem".*

Apart from language struggle, Irene's life *"turned opposite"* when she came to New Zealand. Irene emphasised that they were not only displaced people, but also *"we are Muslim". We are a bit different, how we raised our children; we need some close relative or family which I don't have"*. She painfully mumbled *"as a single mum where my husband was. ...how can we survive? I need him here."*

She faced *"cultural shock"; "many things are not matching our culture",* even among her diasporic group. She emphasised:

> *I am not blaming the culture is different, but it is the reality. And umm, the place where I lived previously we could visit each other easy but here even in my community we cannot catch up with other families easily. We have to book an appointment with them to catch up. Otherwise, everyone [is] kind of, if not busy, the culture is a bit different we cannot see them easily. That means we isolate at home, isolate, and the children, when they grow up, they go out. The mother just stays here, stare and see [out] the window when they come home, which we don't have in our culture.*

Hearing Irene's story, I have been encouraged to think differently. Her understanding of culture is far beyond a simplistic-dichotomous cultural difference between a western versus non-western world that is emphasised repeatedly in conventional psychology in relation to 'assumed' refugee trauma that is aligned with particular traumatic events (Olff et al., 2019), including those stressors and mental health problems that are conceptualised through a reductionist three stage model: pre-migration, migration, and post-migration (LeMaster et al., 2018; Theisen-Womersley, 2021). Instead, Irene's story reiterates how she struggled in everyday life in terms of language struggles, not feeling connected with her workmates or even her diasporic groups, and these struggles cannot be classified as trauma-related mental health disorders.

Feelings of disconnection can be enunciated as social isolation, as an 'assumed' living condition of displaced people's life (Murray et al., 2019; Rosbrook & Schweitzer, 2010; Thiruselvam, 2019). I argue; however, that it is important that the feeling of disconnection is further unravelled with an attempt to reveal hidden and unknown struggles.

The affect of Irene's disconnection was enacted through the more than human relations in different geo-political spaces. Through housing structures interacting with those aforementioned non-human forces (climate, the weather, a mattress, heaters, a heat pump), Irene's potential was reduced to accommodate to a new material living conditions. In the New Zealand geo-political space, Irene lived in isolation from her diasporic groups and she needed to phone a member of diasporic group before being able to visit them. Another consideration involves Irene's statement: "*I have no one here to open the door for me, to come to my place and visit me. I am not sure why?*". "*The door*" was enacting as another non-human force embodied metaphorically and materially. "*The door*" acts in human and non-human relations to assemble how Irene lives individually and solitarily, at home. Irene's story

as related to her situated, embodied, and embedded knowledge is enacted and interacted with not only material objects and affect but also politics and economics, in this case, through the labelling and classifying of 'refugees' as being a less than human, which can be affirmed through the impacts of history, coloniality, the condition of everyday life through displacement.

Being part of a new geo-political locality has limited Irene's capacity (and the capacity of her diasporic group) in engaging with their own social-cultural norms. When living in isolation, their capacities to move around and support each other are limited. Compared to living in Pakistan, living in New Zealand and being surrounded by and immersed in social, cultural and economic differences: reinforces individualisation rather than collective relations among displaced women and their community. In the end, when living in the New Zealand geo-political locality, Irene and her diasporic group have become situated with decreased levels of potential and compromised power relations, compared to when living in Pakistan.

Influenced by these material effects, Irene had an increased need and made a decision for having a husband and also another non-human (god) in her relations, so as to increase her capacity and position herself for negotiating with dominant values and norms. In addition to being labelled as a 'refugee', Irene had been labelled and pathologised as a single mum. Irene's social locations were even more complex when her combined contexts were intersected. The intersecting of labelling and pathologising, and being a Muslim woman further decreased Irene's capacity and social power relations of being in New Zealand.

Through an analysis that involves the aforementioned non-human entities that emerged from Irene's posthuman-nomadic-everyday interactions, I gained a better understanding of Irene's need and decision for having a husband in New Zealand, but not in Pakistan. Involving these entities as part of Irene's posthuman, inter-dependent subject, I recognised an important process of dis-identifying Irene from the 'normalised Irene' who was perceived as a single mum. Irene resisted such normalisation by involving god in her relational network to challenge a shameful experience: "*if you are a single mum from god['s instruction] that is okay. But if you have had [a husband] before, ... It's kind of a bit different. It's kind of shameful because culturally, we should have a husband. We should have*".

Irene's resistance indicated above, encouraged me to dis-identify Irene from the discourse of sub-ordination, oppression and marginalisation related to a Muslim woman. Such resistance

was revealed through her relationship with the non-human entities, manifesting Irene's embodied flow of struggles and transformation. Irene faced multiple forms of struggle leading Irene to involve collective stages of negotiations as part of her everyday 'just a life' in transforming her everyday struggles. Her everyday negotiations are multiple and non-directional, including how Irene was trying to find a way to relieve her physical pains involving the weather and the mattress, requesting a heat pump from the Housing New Zealand, dealing with language struggles, dealing with the cultural shock of raising her kids, dealing with the feeling of disconnection with her workmates and her diasporic group, finding ways to live sustainably in New Zealand when the housing structure is isolated, and last but not least, involving a husband as part of her inter-dependent, more than human relations in resisting dominant values and norms. Her husband is part of Irene's relational network, and *vice versa*, and has a role where he serves to increase Irene's potential capacity and social power relations.

Involving the notion of 'just a life' as a state of negotiation opens possibilities for the researcher to map out multiple, complex-intertwined assemblages that are related to and beyond the discourse related to 'assumed' trauma; to map out multiple, complex human and non-human relations that are situated, embodied, and embedded within diverse and complex-intertwined assemblages that have emerged from specific contexts of displaced women's lived experience. The notion of just a life has shifted understanding of displaced women's lived experience from a dominant trauma discourse that relates to a refugee with victimhood and vulnerability, linked with trauma-related mental health distress. Most importantly, the notion has provided an understanding of how unequal social power relations have existed and are affected by the shifting notion of subject, trauma and transformation that emerged through participants' stories.

To become with the displaced women, the next chapter will continue to attend to new lines of flight that emerged from my participants' situated, embodied and embedded experience in different rhizomic intertwined assembled contexts. The new lines of flight will be storied as they are guided through different sets of more than human relations, in an interdependent way.

Chapter 5: The ontological assemblages of shame, culture and secular-postsecular in the process of negotiation and transformation

In this chapter analysis and discussion will be storied through non-human entities, in particular, a river and a veil in assembling subjects with human relations embedded in dynamic, material worlds. Different sets of heterogeneous assembly act as affirmative forces in enfolding a new line of flight for diverse participants' material lived struggles as they go about their everyday 'just a life'.

The differences related to participants' material lived struggles unfold through a river-veil non-human assembly, manifested predominantly from photographs of some of my displaced woman participants. These non-human entities initially exposed me to practice of participants' veiling and unveiling the hijab in front of a beautiful river. Subsequently, after these non-humans emerged, I have been led to explore complex and difficult issues that are rarely communicated among my participants' diasporic groups including shame as related to family, values and beliefs. Among the existing literature, the discourse of trauma is tied with 'pre-existing' emotional responses attached to traumatic events including shame, guilt, anger, sadness (Lee et al., 2001). Shame and guilt are central to a large body of literature that is recognised as important: self-conscious emotions relating to trauma (Cunningham, 2020; Tangney & Dearing, 2003). Shame is claimed to be tied with trauma ubiquitously (Morrison, 1998).

I explore how we might understand displaced women's lived experience related to shame and guilt, differently, ethically and responsibly, when de-pathologising trauma and normative understandings of culture and religion; and involving neo-material approaches with relational ethics. Through these approaches, three dynamic assemblages emerged as new lines of flight from participants' experiences: shame-guilt-affective assemblages, cultural assemblages and secular/postsecular assemblages. These three dynamic assemblages will be unfolded throughout the analysis and discussion in this chapter in a way to challenge the normative assumption of the discourse of shame tied with trauma, in a particular culture and religion (Bentley et al., 2021).

My analysis and discussion is linked with Braidotti's philosophical-posthumanist concepts, including "materialist vital ethics" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 256); the "ethical subject" (Braidotti, 2006c, p. 36), and the ""faithfulness" of the subject" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 306). I explore

understandings of trauma related to shame, guilt and other associated emotions in the processes of negotiation and unequal social power relations. These concepts emphasise the intersecting of woman’s embodiment assembled with multilayered relations and subjectivities as a replacement for dualisms (Braidotti, 2022). Intersections include those that are associated with how a notion of shame is formed through pathologisation and categorisation in relation to east-west dualistic premises.

Grounded upon the above intersections, the instigation for my analysis and discussion in this chapter involved my memories and experiences from the time when I was with my displaced peers around the tragedy of two mosque shooting events in 2019 in Christchurch. The mosque tragedy had strongly linked me with the discourse of “they are us” (Whyte, 2019, para. 5), proclaimed by our former Prime Minister, Jacinda Adern: “many of those directly affected in this shooting may be migrants to New Zealand. They may even be refugees. They have chosen to make New Zealand their home and it is their home. They are us”.

The discourse of ‘they are us’ was intertwined symbolically with how our former Prime Minister wore a headscarf for the occasion (Malik, 2019; “'They are us' - Ardern's words after Christchurch terrorist attack recognised as New Zealand's quote of the year,” 2019). This symbolic act encouraged women in general and some men to wear a headscarf during condolences around the country (Cole, 2019) (see Figures 8 and 9).

Figure 8

Former Prime Minister Wearing a Headscarf During Condolences

Note. From *Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Will Be among Leaders Praying Alongside the Muslim Community in Christchurch* by A. Tovey, 2019, *RNZ* (https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/385288/pm-urges-people-to-pay-their-respects-as-nation-mourns). Copyright 2019 by A. Tovey, RNZ.

Figure 9

Residents Wearing a Headscarf During Condolences

Note. From *All Are Welcome in Aotearoa* by J. Dann, 2019, Commons.Wikimedia (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:All_are_welcome_in_Aotearoa.jpg). CC BY SA 4.0.

Through our collective actions of wearing a headscarf, I felt solidarity in supporting our country's stand against anti-Islamic racism and xenophobia. Nevertheless, my experience was imbricated with western orientalism (Said, 2003). At that time, I did not realise that the discourse of 'they are us' intertwined with the practice of wearing a headscarf served to reinforce normative cultural and secular or religious understandings which can disrupt other alternative understandings pertinent to the cultural-religious contexts. The discourse was built upon an 'us versus them' dichotomy. In this case, it was constructed for individual actors in communities to fulfil moral obligations and responsibilities (Bivins, 2006). Such a discourse has been critiqued by some feminist scholars: relational meaning-making is absent; and displaced people's representation exists outside of relationships (Lazar, 2005; Van Dijk, 2005). In effect, the notion of a homogenous subject ('they are us') is (re) producing. It not only undermines diversities and differences of 'others' but also maintains the power of state actors who can legitimise their stances and decisions, as well as deny their responsibilities (Zhao, 2023).

My process of thinking with and becoming with my displaced woman participants was gradually enacted when I started to realise how the non-human entity (veil) dynamically played out in my participants' lived experiences. The veil affirmatively unfolded hidden, formidable, and complex stories related to shame. These stories were revealed differently from how they were normalised through the discourse of trauma that is intersected with our normative cultural and secular or religious understanding, reproduced in conventional psychology literature.

A new line of flight that emerged from a river-veil non-human assembly: Shame-guilt-affective assemblages related to power and resistance

Raya suggested several times that her diasporic groups *"do not want to talk about"* certain issues. For example, Raya mentioned that her diasporic group did not want to talk about the marriage dowry of a young woman in cases where her family received monetary bridewealth from her husband and her husband's family. I asked what might be the reason for not wanting to talk about that.

Raya spoke not just of shame but also about her respect of elders, revealing complex reasons why talking about such things was difficult. *"[Many young women] don't say those kinds of thing"* even though *"this is not the right thing to do"* and they do not like that. They cannot tell their parents that they are *"not going to get married"*. Raya also expressed with frustration the material effect of hiding these issues that can have ongoing impacts on others especially among *"poor people poor families"* who have to borrow money to give to the girl's family, and to do the ceremony. Raya emphasised that the relational issues of marriage among *"poor people"* were not understood by *"lots of people"*, including her friends. From Raya's perspective, *"it's a kind of useless"* for a poor family to borrow some money for these purposes because after that that they need to *"work hard"* so that they can *"rent a house"* on top of other living cost and spending. They *"would end up just working the whole of [their] life"*.

There was a sense of shame in relation to the exchange of money for marriage, but this is difficult, especially for young women who must negotiate through family cultural expectations and responsibilities. For Raya, it became even more difficult as she faced multiple forms of oppression, being a woman intersected with being poor and being an

orphan: *“Like myself, I really didn’t like that … my husband gave my siblings a bit of money”*.

In the meantime, Raya emphasised *“because I did not have my parents. I needed some money or someone to look after my siblings”*. Even so, Raya said *“I still feel guilty about that … So, I ended up having my siblings say hey no, you did the wrong thing”*. Raya has carried her guilt until now because of two reasons: a refusal from her siblings to accept bridewealth and an ongoing impact on her siblings’ lives due to her marriage. She felt that she had left them behind; she could not support them financially and emotionally as much as she wanted. Instead, she needed to provide her husband and his family with money that she earned. Her husband also refused to help her siblings when they needed support. They had been struggling while living overseas outside of their own country illegally.

The lived experiences of displaced people contained multiple intersected struggles, especially their struggles towards their loved ones who have been forced to live under stateless conditions (Parekh, 2016). Among displaced women, they can face gendered differences related to traditional-social-cultural practices, roles, and responsibilities (Bauer, 2000; Parekh, 2016). The lived experiences of displaced people in particular locations remain under-theorised and under-researched (Darling, 2017; Ermansons et al., 2023).

My conversation with Raya about marriage and its impact linked me with Irene’s lived experiences. Irene mentioned that she got married when she was young and told me it was normal for a young rural woman to marry at that age. Irene drew my attention to many of the differences between rural and urban life, and especially the differences between gendered cultural practices and interpretations, and how these differences also impacted on her movement, opportunities and experiences as a young woman:

> *Culture differences. …cause every village the people who live there, they have their own culture, and when I was child, I went to the doctor but the doctor was far away, one hour away with the car… There were doctors, there were nurses, but compared to my place when I was born, nothing….*

The restriction of physical movement became more apparent as Irene further recalled her childhood experiences: *“woman could not go outside without men permission”*. There had to be *“the boys, fathers, and us on the way to school or way to home”*. Irene’s life had been

affected not only by the distance and locations of the social services, as she said: *"there was no school nearly"*, but also through cultural-social norms as she needed to be accompanied by fathers or brothers, leading Irene and other girls to have less access to education. Irene's and the other girls' capacities were devalued and were also interwoven with family obligations which she nearly *"forgot"* to raise:

> *Parents could keep their daughters at home to do house chores for them. We worked very hard, when I was a child, compared to nowadays children. I collected the leaves for winter heating, and umm my father had animals, we could provide grass for them. We could feed them, water them, anything. We had a lot of chores to do at home. We had no time to go to school and the parents could keep their daughters on purpose. Yeh.*

In Irene's narrative above, it appeared that school for girls was not a priority and more of a privilege. Should they be allowed to accompany their fathers or brothers? Irene told me about how the emphasis was on the education of boys:

> *Their parents could say … We can send the boys to school because they are our future, and they can do something, but the girls if they grow up, they get married with someone else. And going to provide their own family, why we spent money for them. They think it is not worth to educate girls. Yeh.*

The emphasis was education for boys, whose role was to provide for their families financially, whereas the woman's role did not require an education, given that it was ultimately to keep house and to have and nurture their children. The woman's role was further emphasised by the shortage of money, as Irene confirmed: *"yes…it is true. It is the case for money reasons, girls couldn't go to school. Even now many parents try to keep their children at home to do house chores"*. Financial shortages, therefore, within families made the division of labour and gender roles more explicit. The education of boys was a priority and the education of girls, a luxury.

The collection of narratives involving Raya and Irene's lived experiences implicates a range of movement and entanglements related to shame, guilt, context and gendered-cultural practice, through time, from past to present and vice versa. Their movement and entanglements implicate an element of multiple-intersected oppression. For example, in

Irene's lived experiences of struggle; her embodiment of being in the world as a widow, a Muslim daughter, and a single mum, was not only intertwined with shame but a shame infused with multiple oppressions. Irene's multi-layered process of oppression encompassed not only gender but her different social location, places (living in a rural area), family relations, and patriarchal systems. Both Irene and Raya spoke of issues related to places (living in a rural area), although they do not consider themselves to be 'poor' in accordance with the norm of western stereotypical understandings.

These contexts that adjoined Raya and Irene's lived experiences involve shame and guilt, reflecting complex singularities that are missing in the existing literature. These contexts have been overlooked in the conventional analytic literature in psychology. Their lived experiences in context have been reduced to a single reality as part of trauma discourse. According to Lee et al. (2001), contexts related to shame and guilt have been spotlighted in a narrow or linear way as 'pre-existing' emotional response to traumatic events, apart from fear that is considered as a dominant affect in forming and maintaining PTSD: resulting in developing a narrow or linear approach in assessing meaning related to shame and guilt so as to facilitate an 'effective' PTSD treatment.

Irene suggested that women should not be married at that age (15 years) as they are too young to know how to be a wife. Irene *"had a lot of difficulties"* as she *"was just a kind of a child"*, she *"didn't have any information how to be a wife; nothing"*. After getting married, she went to her husband's house and he *"wasn't alone. He had parents, brothers and brothers' children"*. Irene lived with them *"in one house altogether"*. Irene cooked for them and did house's chores, *"everything"*. She felt that she *"was a kind of servant"*.

Even so, Irene had insisted on how she is *"important"* to her family in relation to her gendered roles related to social and cultural norms: *"the parents could think, they came to my door and ask for my girls, I am important, my girl is important and just say yes, you can take [my daughter] like that"*. I further heard a sense of disruption interwoven with such a norm when she emphasised:

> *But it was also important for me to get married because my mother was thinking kind of good girl, mature girl, and when someone came to my father and for me and my mother said yes, and father said yes, and I got married.*

Despite the multi-intersected-layered process of oppression Irene encountered, a neo-material approach with affirmative ethics pervades Irene's embodied experience of being *"important"* relationally, collectively and affectively. Irene's embodiment of being *"important"* not only disrupts social-cultural norms but also unfolds a sense of immanent life through the process of transforming negative logics to positive passions (or positive, productive and affirmative ethics). This is what Braidotti (2014) refers as "materialist vital ethics" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 256) involving the process of becoming through ethics of joys and affirmation in the everyday immanent life of displaced women's negotiations when encountering normative assumptions in the *status quo*.

I also linked Irene's statement with abstraction in moral reasoning related to a gendered "different voice" intersected with a caring practice drawn from Gilligan (1982). This helped me move away from the discourse of shame related to trauma, but I reflexively inquired whether I reinforced the stereotypical caring nature of displaced women (Spelman, 1991); whether I downplayed the risks that Irene might face within unequal power relations (Bartky, 1990), and whether nature-culture dualism is inherent within this analysis?

These inquiries led me to further unfold Irene's statement about being important relationally and collectively, by linking with a different entry point. Instead of involving the discourse of trauma linked with pre-existing emotional responses, and the caring nature of women, I involved a neo-material approach that links with Braidotti's (2014) "materialist vital ethics" (p. 256) and Deleuze's (1997) dynamic notion of 'just a life' or 'an immanent life'.

The dynamic notion of 'just a life' was reflected through the importance of Irene's subject formation relationally and collectively, which is prioritised through the spirit of nomadic subjects, posited in an ethical way of negotiating and resisting a stereotypical understanding of being a Muslim woman and daughter. The negotiation and resistance is fused in everyday intervention of her everyday life struggles so as to highlight: "the importance and the autonomy of affects and desire" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 259); and, the ethical demand of displaced women in "constructing subjectivity" (Braidotti, 2014, p. 259) in relation with the role of others. In Irene's case, her subjectivity is related to her family relations, being an important daughter of her parents.

Braidotti's (2014) "materialist vital ethics" (p. 256) can be further grounded empirically with the help of Raya's narrative. Raya had also been married when she was a young woman. At

that time, her siblings refused to receive money from Raya's husband. Shame is part of Raya's and her siblings' ethical practice of negotiation, in relation with affect, desire, and the ethical demands of subjects in relation with others. These relationships go beyond the conventional discourse of shame related to trauma, formed through a clinical model in assessing and treating psychological dysfunctions (Lee et al., 2001; Matos & Pinto-Gouveia, 2010; Platt & Freyd, 2015). These relationships can be elaborated through Raya's situated-embodied-embedded experiences, in contrast to the clinical model that offers universal explanations irrespective of the varying conditions in displaced people's lives.

The shame that is related to Raya's and her siblings' ethical practice of negotiation is situated within their 'just a life' struggles. *"I suffer and struggle all the time with not having them here"* in New Zealand. Her siblings have been living illegally in another country overseas. Irene explained why she could not bring her siblings to New Zealand. Her explanation is related to how she was legally classed as *"a refugee tier 2"* where she could not meet the Refugee Family Support Category sponsorship criteria because she has a husband or immediate family in New Zealand (New Zealand Immigration, n.d.). *"I have my brothers in my background, they are pretty young when I left them…I used to cry all the time at night, and when I came to New Zealand I cried for about one whole year every night"*.

She did talk about this matter with the counsellor *[but] they couldn't do anything about it. They said they couldn't do anything because I was a refugee tier two.* This institutional classification and its material effect placed Raya and her siblings in a position where they were classified as less than humans. The counsellor decided what and how Raya and her siblings could be treated institutionally. In effect, their rights, dignities, capacities, mobility, and differences were undermined. Raya appreciated the support she got by *"talking"* with the counsellor. However, the counsellor could only help her with "*emotional*" relief.

The inability of the counsellor to provide help within a wider context reflects how human subjects are constituted in the counselling profession. In this case, it appeared that the counsellor did not attempt to relate herself to the life of the others and the safety of the others. The counsellor's formation of the human subject was disassociated from interrelated dimensions. This formation of the human subject is different from those of posthuman human subjects conveyed through Raya's narrative that is inter-related with the safety of others:

> *but for me until I don't bring them, I don't feel comfortable. I don't feel I am safe because all the time even at night sometime I wake up and say hurr … I couldn't help them. … There's many kind of things that I do regret for not being able to help them. I wish I could bring them here, so they would feel safe as well.*

Raya's narratives reflect not only subjects as relational assemblages, situated-embodied-embedded within a posthuman subject figuration, but also her thoughts and acts of shared responsibility to sustain the life of others and safety of others. Individual responsibility grounds the constitution of human subjects associated with the counsellor's view, theory and practice. This responsibility follows mainstream neoliberal discourses that foreground unitary subjects (not posthuman subjects) related to individual manners, behaviours, choices and capacities (Lemke, 2011). Such discourses are reproduced throughout mainstream psychology and mainstream feminist psychology where health professionals are the knowers who have knowledge and exert power through institutional practices and power relations to control, justify and discipline others (Adams et al., 2019; Rottenberg, 2014).

While hearing Raya's elaboration of her context, I became further involved in the notion of materialist vital ethics that disrupts unitary subjects that are tied with a discourse of trauma related to pathologisation and emotional responses such as shame and guilt (Lee et al., 2001). Raya was emotionally affected by the plight of her family due to inability to help her siblings. Raya's narrative reflects the notion of subject as mediated within a relational assemblage, a posthumanist subject, which enables Raya's voice to be heard from her position. This was exemplified when Raya insisted, *"I don't feel I am safe"*, a condition inter-dependent upon bringing her siblings here so that *"they would feel safe as well"*. Hearing Raya's contextual meaning was a guide for me to engage with displaced people's situated knowledge where knowledge is subjective and multiple. In this context, Raya's embodiment highlights that she is more than a unitary subject, more than a stereotyped subject to be pathologised through normative emotional responses as shame and guilt tied with a discourse of trauma, not to mention more than being a refugee or more than a victimised subject.

Rather, Raya's embodiment highlights the importance of an ethics of affirmation, reflecting that the life Raya inhabits is not just her; she does not feel safe until the others *"are safe as well"*. Raya's narrative sheds light on Braidotti's (2011b) insight that emphasises how

displaced people "are better placed to take the lead in the process of ethical transformation" (p. 344).

Even though Raya has gone through pains and suffering, she said *"I don't give up"*. By not giving up, she did not accept how she and her siblings had been treated; Raya resists the unequal power relations that pervaded the immanent lives of Raya and her family. Making a statement about not giving up is an ethical way of sharing her ongoing responsibility and disrupting individual responsibilities that are reproduced through the position of Raya's counsellor, embedded within the mainstream neoliberal discourses.

Hearing Raya's voice as it was related to her contextual meanings reflects how emotions (shame, guilt) are part of displaced people's struggles. Braidotti (2011b) suggests that it is necessary to "acknowledge and feel compassion for pain and those who suffer it" (p. 348), by working through it. Braidotti's (2011b) recommendation for an application of lived experience enables these contexts of affective assemblages that emerged from the participants' 'immanent' lives, to be heard, which enables us to shift our understanding from 'prescribed' intervention (or transformation) to a different kind of understanding of what transformation might mean. The different understanding of transformation is part of an ethical "as well as a political project" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 348).

Through Irene and Raya's experiences, affective assemblages of shame and guilt open spaces to reveal further complexities of ethical and multiple relations among human (the participants, their relations with family members and a husband, as well as their diasporic group), and non-human relations (god, the veil, the river, environment), including myself (and other health professionals) who are part of these relations. This is an ethical practice of negotiation where 'we' increase our capacities so that we can mobilise power relations for negotiation. The ethical practice rests on a vital materialist version of subject that involves multiple relations of human and non-humans which are intertwined with material and affective conditions (Braidotti, 2011b). These conditions include not only shame, guilt, lack of safety, an element of trauma-related mental health condition (e.g., anxiety, depression), but also desire and a sense of being resistant. This is part of 'just a life' among displaced women where their subjects are dynamically transformed through a state of negotiation. To this end, shame-guilt-affective assemblages are framed and actualised nomadic subjects that infuse the movement and mobility of displaced women's lived struggles that are beyond the conventional discourse of shame related to trauma.

A new line of flight that emanated from a river-veil non-human assembly: Cultural assemblages

This new line of flight in the form of cultural assemblages instigated and inspired me to revisit the discourse of 'they are us', as constructed by our former Prime Minister to encourage solidarity. A number of critical scholars including Butler (2004) and Gilroy (2004) suggest that solidarity can be created intentionally through the collective memory of trauma and pain so as to express a form of loyalty and promote an ecology of belonging.

By contrast, Braidotti (2011b) argues that the collective stance above can act as "politics of melancholia" (p. 320), a rhetoric which "has become so dominant in our culture that it ends up functioning like a self-fulfilling prophecy, which leaves very small margins for alternative approaches." (p. 320). In effect, the discourse of 'they are us' can reflect how stereotypical, superior and prejudiced understanding is embodied and embedded in our everyday normative cultural-religious understanding, undermining the multiplicity of displaced women's cultural understandings.

The multitude of cultural understandings (as cultural assemblages) was unfolded through my participants' stories, disassociated from the discourse of trauma that is tied with a particular culture and religion. Anya, for example, strongly emphasised that being a Muslim and living in New Zealand affected her material living conditions. Even though Anya indicated that she has a *"big hope"* in terms of opportunities for education and living conditions in New Zealand, she said *"I am a Muslim and I do wear a scarf"*. Anya felt it *"difficult"* to live in New Zealand as it depends whether people living in New Zealand society will *"accept"* her. I subsequently inquired *"how does it make you feel"* and Anya's replied:

> *I don't feel anything because many people if they are out of their country, they get some racist or … any … they get doesn't matter. And I was living in Pakistan, they were looking at me just so different because I was not Pakistani and yes it's happened.*

Anya's narrative implicates her movement of affect where her struggle is posited as part of her material living conditions, including the pain of not being accepted by people in local societies. This not only happened in New Zealand but also in Pakistan, albeit differently, where she lived before getting a Refugee quota to move to New Zealand. Anya's life in Pakistan *"was very difficult"* as "*we didn't have any [man] in our family*". Due to being a

woman, without a man, she was struggling; even "*going shopping by yourself. No men. [People] look at you very bad*". In New Zealand, while she *"is really happy"*, compared to living in Pakistan, she wishes that New Zealand would have a system to educate people in society so that people can gain a better *"understanding of"* those who are from *"other cultures"*.

After hearing Anya's view on her living conditions across different places/spaces and times, I framed a critique involving the existing literature that analyses trauma-related mental health disorders and treatments among 'refugee' populations. Through this critique, it became even clearer to me that Anya's pain-struggle cannot be reduced to *"mental health disorders"*. Such an analysis of pathologisation, assessment, and intervention is built upon cultural differences resting on a dualistic opposition between western and non-western cultural differences (or east-west cultural differences) (Drožđek, 2007; Drožđek et al., 2012a, 2012b).

Such a dualistic opposition can over-emphasise negativity (Braidotti, 2022), including trauma-related mental health distress, reducing marginalised people's capacities to act and removing the processes of becoming. This kind of cultural understanding is grounded upon the philosophical assumptions of cultural relativism that is embedded in contemporary psychology (Braidotti, 2006c). For example, as part of the pathologisation process, some conventional psychologists take an evidence-based approach that centres on reductive science-driven theory supported by a colonial and androcentric orientation where universal human genetic traits and behaviours are the core of understanding and healing (Marecek, 1999). This approach is likely to take for granted and deny the complexities of displaced women's living conditions with specific social-cultural-political-material and relational dynamics. For example, the practice of CBT with compassionate-focussed therapy is assumed to be universally appropriate when cultural values are included in assessments and tested for efficacy (Amlashi, 2018). This evidence-based approach may serve to perpetuate the values of the status quo in psychology including masculine authority in controlling and discriminating against women and ethnic others.

On the other hand, posthumanism involves a neo-material approach where dualistic oppositions (east-west cultural differences) become blurred. Even though some of my participants have mentioned cultural differences a few times, when they compare the differences between New Zealand and their origin home, as well as between rural and urban

areas, what emerged from their narratives are flows and networks of relations where culture is a part.

The emerging stories of Anya, Irene, and some of my participants guided me to not only question the ontology of culture but also guided me to articulate ways of involving a de-territorialisation process in establishing habits of thought, in particular, for developing an awareness of dualistic modes of representation (e.g., western versus non-western, rural versus urban), and exposing positivist and post-positivist epistemological analysis. This approach enabled me to "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 117) in finding a new line of flight to understand differently in the face of impacts of the west versus east stereotypes: culture is part of the displaced material living conditions of displaced women.

The situated-embodied-embedded narratives of my participants inspired me to approach culture differently. Culture is not a discrete factor as claimed by some early social science theorists who influenced conventional psychology (Triandis et al., 1973), instead, culture is assemblage (culture-assemblage). The notion of culture has been used by my participants in various circumstances in describing displaced women's everyday life. Raya, for example, mentioned that when she arrived in Palmerston North, staying for one or two months, she wanted to make friends with people. Raya met a lady who lived close by her friend's house. While Raya sat in a car waiting for her friend, the lady came to talk with Raya. The lady invited Raya to come to her house. However, before that happened, the lady asked where Raya and Raya's husband originally came from, and from what region did they depart from? Once Raya indicated in her reply that she did not come from the same region as the lady, the lady suddenly said *"Oh okay okay, good bye"*. Raya said to me that some people may think this is about culture differences between different ethic-diasporic groups; however, Raya insisted that *"but I don't accept it as a culture but just of like their own behaviour"*.

Raya's insistence indicated that she resisted the norm of stereotypical understandings. In Raya's context, the 'cultural' difference between different ethic-diasporic groups is deeply ingrained in social relations and emerges in the everyday life of displaced people where discrimination and marginalisation are interwoven.

While resisting, Raya and my other participants are entangled in dominant norms and values. The entanglement appears in narratives pertinent to: 'a single mum', 'a widow woman', 'an orphan' and 'a Muslim'. Such entanglements are deeply embedded within displaced people's

everyday life beyond an analytic dualistic mode of representation between binary oppositions of cultural differences.

Irene raised the issue of being a widow:

> *Turned out because my husband passed away, I loved him and he loved me, even though I was a child but life was good. I was very happy very happy. I was kind of flying, but after six months life turned opposite, and I struggled a lot. ... [I wanted to] run away from [my husband's family] because they were trying to keep me for the older brother. I was sixteenth, and they had children. ... The brother said, because it is kind of shame, and they think it is the case for a Muslim culture. ... They keep the wife for other brother yeh. But, if the wife accepts, that is it. If the wife doesn't, then goes.*
>
> *Even though they didn't ask me, they were trying to without my permission to keep me there, and then when my father came I ran away. ... And when I came to Pakistan I stayed with my parents ...first year...and I was so shamed because I got married and came back. It was shame for them for our culture to stay home.*

Irene has faced everyday struggles pertinent to being 'a widow', embedded within her everyday life's struggle. Such embodiment is intertwined with not only cultural assemblages but also shame-guilt-affective assemblages which are more complex and challenging than both our psychological-normative understanding of trauma-related mental health distress and the normative approach towards mental health discussion and intervention posited within the clinic that reduces human experiences to biological and behavioural differences and control (De Beauvoir, 2014).

Even though Irene struggled and was entangled with normative assumptions around being a widow, she resisted, as indicated when she said *"I struggled a lot and I ran away from them"*. While hearing Irene's story, a process of everyday resistance implicating ongoing intervention into Irene's lived experience becomes manifest. Instead of reinforcing negative logics, the process portrays how Irene enacts the positive-affirmative logics in her everyday interaction. The process of everyday intervention needs to be heard and acknowledged by health professionals. This is not only a part of being involved with the process of de-

terrorising and de-pathologising, but also implementing “a non-unitary version of the ethical subject” (Braidotti, 2006c, p. 36).

As gifted through my participants’ lived stories, these processes gradually and contingently became manifest with notions of transformation, both involving subjectivity and knowledge production, in what Braidotti (2011b) calls “in-depth transformation” (p. 229). Manifestation through participants’ stories is “process-oriented relational, and [has a] fundamentally affective structure” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 135) for inventing new modes of producing knowledge, power relations and cultivating ongoing responsibilities. Such a manifestation can assist health professionals and researchers to: refigure our subject as “a subject-in-becoming” (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 153); and to de-attach our ‘assumed’ prescribed interventions (e.g., using CBT). By refiguring our subject and de-attaching our prior knowledge, we take partial perspectives. Taking a partial perspective leads to the refiguring of the notion of subject, from subject as universal to subject as assemblage. Researchers are part of this subjectification, prioritised through displaced women’s participants in co-inquiring knowledge production so that their lived experiences can be understood differently and moved forward relationally.

Another important concept that has not been addressed in the existing literature is the relevance of social power relations that are beyond the relation between researcher and participants. While Theisen-Womersley (2021) urges us to focus our critical attention on power relationships that are inherited in the process of knowledge production in the discourse of trauma related to shame, they use intersubjective contexts and processes between researchers and participants to conceive the relationship. For example, Theisen-Womersley (2021) insists that to explore and reveal the complex-myriad manifestations of shame, it is a requisite that research exploration takes place within the intersubjective space between researchers and participants – “not belonging to the Self or Other” (p. 215).

The emphasis on intersubjective space implicates the notion of subject that is likely to be framed within dialectical models of intersubjectivity (Braidotti, 2014) resulting in a limited understanding of the dynamic, diverse and relational contexts of Muslim women and their subjects. The criticism implies that greater material and empirical complexity can be revealed with the purpose of bringing unheard relational narratives into presence. Narratives are not tied to a hegemonic or universal reality (e.g., ‘assumed’ trauma related to shame, guilt and

other emotional responses), but are intertwined in the movement of shame-guilt-affective-culture-assemblages and emerge as a result of the refiguring of the notion of subject.

A new line of flight that emanated from a river-veil non-human assembly: Postsecular assemblages.

A photograph that revealed the veiling and unveiling of the faces of my participants not only opened space for conversing with my participants, but also for furthering critical reflexivity while contemplating my assumed and simplistic understanding of Muslim religious practices. That occurred, for example, when wearing a headscarf to support our country's solidarity against anti-Islamic racism during a ritual of condolence for the tragic mass shooting event in 2019.

While feeling solidarity, I encountered gendered difference when I visited the local mosque. I went there to attend a workshop, arranged by a counsellor who came to support Muslim people locally in dealing with mental health issues that arose from the tragic event. I went there with my headscarf on. I was asked to move while I was sitting in the front row, leading me to experience a differential social structure in a situation where men were placed to sit at the front and women sat at the back. This experience drew me to particular discourses associated with not only western orientalism (Said, 2003), but also oppression. These discourses tied my stereotypical understanding with negative logics that are congruent with dominant narratives in regard to historical and contemporary western psychology, especially in relation to issues of women and gender (Bentley et al., 2021; Bowling et al., 2024; Manderson & Allotey, 2003; Murray et al., 2019; Øktedalen et al., 2015; Ussher et al., 2017). My stereotypical understanding reflected how my understanding of 'subject' was unified and static. Yet, I struggled to become with displaced women. My experience with these particular discourses stayed with me until the occasion when I saw my participants' photos without a hijab in front of the river, and started my inquiry and began to converse with them.

During our conversation, hearing Nara's narrative as it was enacted through a river-veil non-human assembly guided me to keep "staying with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016, p. 58), and open opportunities to reveal the new line of flight (postsecular assemblages) that emerged from lived experiences of the displaced woman participants.

Nara's photograph, showing her in with a beautiful dress without a hijab in front of a river troubled me to ask Nara about her practice of wearing a hijab. A new line of fight in relation

to Nara's 'just a life' struggles emerged from her stories associated with her veiling and unveiling practice. Nara raised *"when I go to work, usually I don't wear hijab, cause at my work[place] [doesn't] allow [me] to use hijab."*. However, she usually wore her hijab when she would *"come to school, … or any areas [when] there are lots [of my diasporic] women"*. Further, she surmised that *"if I don't wear my hijab, they will gossip behind me, …like, she come[s] to the different country and she left her hijab"*. Nara felt unhappy partly because she did not like people *"making jokes"*. Most importantly, Nara felt that *"there are lots of thing important than this one. Like our knowledge, our job, our family"*. For Nara, *"[these are] more important than just umm scarf"*.

I was troubled further by Raya's story. Raya *"cried in front of"* her children *"not even being able to sleep during the night"*. As Raya did not want to upset her children, she went to the river and talked to her "*god*" which had given her a "*kind of strength*". Listening to Raya's voice, I first thought she needed to gain strength from him, not from herself. My negative logic kept me attuned with not only Hirsi Ali's (n.d.) but also with Butler's (1997) notion of subjection. I had (re) encountered with my ethical conundrum, trapped within the dichotomous-discursive modes between domination and oppression and failed to acknowledge the multi-layered process of a Muslim displaced woman's specificity, a point that emphasises post-secularism (Braidotti, 2013b).

While going through the complex zigzagging patterns of being trapped within the dualistic modes of representation, I was engaged by a relational process of ethics of care associated with a hearing practice. In effect, Raya's voice led me to link with a new line of flight related to post-secularism (Braidotti, 2013b). Raya was having a conversation with god, not to gain strength from 'him', as I rationalised with my own embodiment through the simple process of 'listening to' the story.

Once the hearing practice was enacted through the river-veil-Raya-god assembly, it encouraged me to think with Raya differently. I started to hear Raya engaged with a state of negotiation as part of her 'just a life' conditions. Raya's conversation with god was about rationalising why she is still living her life. While she said *"I was pretty struggling, but still when I told those kinds of things, with me standing in front of the river"*, and conversing with god, she told herself to hang in there. She told me that god *"just wants me to get up and get over my difficulties. He wants to make me stronger"*. Hearing what Raya said this time, I was moved by her story through the process of becoming in relation with god.

Hearing Nara's and Raya's narratives had gifted and enabled me to take a different line of flight by intersecting with the notion of postsecularism through the process of thinking with Ahmed (2011). Ahmed (2011) addressed Muslim women wearing hijabs as part of their revolution in the Middle East and in America. Ahmed (2011) challenges and provides a counter-discourse in response to a myth of secularism: the myth that misrepresents acts of religious resurgence and questions how such acts react to progress and modernity (Jakobsen & Pellegrini, 2008).

To become with others (becoming through being minoritarian), I extended Ahmed's (2011) analysis using the epistemological grounds of postsecularism that explore material-emotional-relational conditions associated with displaced women's specificities. Hearing Raya's and Nara's narratives, there are multiple and different material-emotional-relational assemblages that emerged from my participants' movement in their lived experiences. For example, Nara indicated that wearing a hijab is intertwined with material-relational conditions that affect her life and her lived conditions, including knowledge and careers. In effect, Nara is entangled with a normative understanding of veiling among members of her diasporic group, as she relates choosing to wear the hijab in their presence. Her narrative of choice resonates with Braidotti's notion of 'materialist vital ethics'. Making this choice indicates how Nara negotiated with dominant values, embedded within unequal power relations, which increased her capacity to engage with a state of negotiation, including different ways of improvement in her material living conditions, part of transforming her lived struggles.

Becoming-minoritarian from multiple connections through a range of movements and a range of increasing capacities

To become-minoritarian, I further shifted my assumed and simplistic understanding of Muslim religious practices by constantly enacting with the hearing practice inspired by a veiling and unveiling practice, and infusing further with Braidotti's (2011b) nomadic theory underpinned with positive-affirmative ethics so as to establish multiple connections of thinking with and being affected by not only other scholars but also multiple stories of the displaced woman's participants.

Raya's story

I was gifted and guided by my participants' stories that emerged from multiple connections through a range of their movements in relation to how they have increased their capacities. Raya's multiple movements, for example, opened spaces for me to take different lines of flight that were disassociated from the clinical-universal conceptualisation of shame that is linked with conventional discourses of trauma.

The emergence of the river-veil non-human assembly led Raya and I to converse about Raya's practice of wearing a hijab. Raya considered that *"wearing hijab is good…just simple and normal"* and that related to how she has the option of wearing or not wearing, especially when facing *"the bad weather"* in New Zealand where the *"[hijab] helps to protect…from the sun, from bad weather, and from being cold"*. While Raya emphasised such an option, there was a sense of some uncertainty in her narrative: *"I think I don't need to wear it but umm it should be fine if I wear it"*. Her uncertainty appeared contextually embedded in her diasporic group's cultural norms of veiling practice, rather than religion: *"lots of people from our country they wear hijab. Because they were born with hijab."*

The uncertain feeling; however, was mixed with *"good"* feeling when receiving a compliment from her diasporic group when she wore a hijab as they said *"you look beautiful"*. In addition to these mixed feelings relating to cultural norms, there is a sense of respect from elder people as *"when you wear a hijab they would like you. When you don't have that, they are kind of looking at you weird"*. Raya has chosen to wear her hijab as she would like to be accepted by the members of her diasporic group. Raya linked her desire to be accepted with how she learned from her mother. Acceptance is part of community relations.

> *…Like my mum was all the time saying … you have to be the same with the people and accept whatever they have, so [that] they can accept whatever you have, and I think that's the same thing in here if we are trying to be accepted in other communities. We are trying to be the same as them, so they can try to be the same as us. Rather than just going to say, hey you are not wearing hijab, you are not us. Yeh.*

Raya's narratives involve a range of movements and entanglement in relation to veiling or unveiling, which is different from Nara. The difference led me to make multiple connections

and gain insight into the range of increasing capacities that sustain displaced women as part of becoming-minoritarian. The range of movement for Raya represents Raya's immanent life. Through a new material approach, such an immanent life, or 'just a life', emerged through a focus on matters as active material and entanglement (Barad, 2007). Veiling or unveiling for Raya involves her past experience related to religious practices, places/spaces across times, environment (weather), as well as a matter of choice, and how she might be accepted from elderly members of her diasporic group, together with how she chose to be accepted.

The new line of flight of postsecular assemblages is intertwined with Raya's immanent life. While it seems Raya has options for wearing the hijab in New Zealand, *"it is hard"* in her country to not wear a hijab. Not only the hot climate, wearing a hijab is associated with women's role, social-cultural norms, their everyday activities and places/spaces: *"when women go outside, they do lots of work, in the city, in the restaurant, they work. They all the time have to round that up around their neck"*. However, in some capital cities, *"nowadays lots of people they don't wear it"*, but at the small, more local city where Raya came from, she needed to wear it. In that location, the hijab practice is associated with religion and gender:

> *Over that local city, there are lots of religious people you have to wear it. Otherwise, they would just say hurr you know your blouse is too short or your pant is tight. They would just gossip they would just say something. You need to wear it.*

Raya's imminent life further unfolds through her new line of flight, flowing through postsecular assemblages interwoven with gender, morality and humanity. Raya *"was born as a Muslim woman or Muslim child"*. Raya did not know about *"what was its side effect or the benefit of being a Muslim"* until she went to another country where Raya encountered religious Islamic protocols in terms of not only physical appearance including *"having a long gown when we go outside, or in holy places as well as just keeping an eye on having your scarf all the time, whenever you see a boy"*, but also how being a women was *"different"* through such protocols.

She wondered *"why are we different, why should we have to accept all of these kinds of things and the man does not"*. She went to holy places and *"did lots of pray[ing]"*, as well as reading poems that *"taught in terms of our morality"* together with *"acting to be nice with*

each other… to say that oh yeh we are good”. Raya further said, *“believing in a good religion is good but some of them you know they might push us down”.*

While encountering the religious norms, Raya said that *“but I think there is a point that we are all as humans we need to first realise that who we are”* so that she can find *“which religion do I want to choose”* and practice. However, what she has found *“is just costing me, and it does not make any sense”* in term of *“humanity”*. While Raya questioned *“what was the point of having a religion, … like for me, I didn't even know what was the point of being a Muslim”,* simultaneously she contemplated, *“and then I just suddenly, I am still confused I figure out that I could not accept any of them. I only accept god that I know he would exist”.*

Despite Raya's confusion, the new line of flight associated with postsecular assemblages emerged from Raya's narratives, intersected with Raya's imminent life, her religious practices and beliefs are dynamic, diverse, and relational. For Raya, she believed that "*we can have different religions… I know we can't choose the best one, but still the one that would make more sense”* even though she *“still struggle to find a good one, but ummm, and also I struggle to live being a Muslim”.*

My analysis was guided by Raya's stories. The presentation of complexity and insightful meanings through ranges of movement, albeit entanglements, have been missing in the existing literature on the discourse of trauma related to shame. Here, the complexity and richness of Raya's experience can be linked with a particular theme: morality related to custom and protocols. Kizilhan (2014) raised issues about Muslim women having high moral notions and restrictions, influenced by patriarchal-Islamic customs and traditions. Kizilhan (2014) theorised that these issues can lead Muslim women to face considerable angst and a particular psychological distress because "they run the risk of having their honour wounded at any moment" (p. 336). Kizilhan's (2014) analysis led narrowly to a postulated need for psychological treatment among Muslim women to involve specific cultural considerations. Even though Kizilhan's (2014) analysis forms an intervention from a "collective health management approach" (p. 336) because individuals consider themselves as part of a solidarity group, I argue that such analysis ties knowledge production to 'psychological' intervention in a way that is grounded upon negative logics and binary considerations (western versus non-western culture).

Through the process of de-territorialisation involving epistemological and ontological stance tied with negative logics, different narratives are elucidated. Raya's imminent life emerged from her positive-affirmative actions including making a choice of veiling or unveiling. Raya's questioning of religious practices does not narrowly enact from Raya's moral intentionality, influenced by patriarchal-religious protocols and practices or a collective stance. Such enactment is complicated with a liberal individualism that underpins unilateral subjects (Braidotti, 2006c). Rather, with the choice made and her own evaluation of religious protocols, she enacted with an ethical subject: a process-oriented nomadic subjectivity where Raya confronts and tangles with the multiple-complex layers and affective challenges associated with members of familiar and non-familiar diasporic and religious groups, posited in different social locations across places/spaces through times.

Nara's story

The practice of veiling and unveiling also opened spaces and possibilities to shed light on other related but hidden challenges and complexities related to Nara's living matter (stories). Nara shared her views of how she had been confronted and became entangled with the complex challenges of being affected by her peers and other marginalised people who were treated unjustly by a fundamentalist government.

Nara mentioned that she was affected mentally during and after *withnessing* the pains of her peers and marginalised others through technology, including facebook and media.

> *[Through] facebook, I have a lot of friends and they still live in my country yeh, and even my close friend, she is [living there]. And when I heard something about them, like they said, you know, my friend, she studied journalism for two years in the university, but now she doesn't have any job, just stay home and always. She ummm wants me to help her like if I know some people who can help her and support her to leave the country and come to different countries. …*

Apart from being affected mentally, there was a sense of guilt, as Nara narrated, *"I don't have any opportunity to find any person to help her, cause she is my best friend, but I cannot help her and I can't do anything for her".* Also, Nara felt their difficulty, when thinking with her peers:

> *My all friends are in the same situation. …Sometime I just think myself like my friends, if I am in that situation, oh, we don't have any way to do just you know it's very difficult, you just stay home and even you don't have rights to go outside.*

She also felt *"disturbed"*, as her peers and marginalised people cannot choose to live their life: *"[a fundamentalist government] choose your styles, choose your subjects to do and even they choose your ways to do"*. *Withnessing* her peers and marginalised people in her home country, makes her feel "*so mad*" and "*sometime very funny*" as they live their life for a fundamentalist group, *"not for yourself"*, *"they choose your dress, your character, your ways, your knowledge anything they just choose for you"*. People have no choice, they *"just have to accept. Otherwise they will kill you or arrest you [and put you in] the jail"*.

Nara further mentioned that her peers and marginalised people had been affected by the fundamentalist government regardless of gender. People *"don't have rights to choose"* even *"a pant"*. A fundamentalist *"choose for boys and men [laughed with a sad sound]"* whom are assigned to wear "a long dress".

The music is also *"forbidden"* as a fundamentalist group said *"music is not allowed in our religion"* which is against from Nara's situated knowledge. Nara insisted that *"it's not right in our religion, we have allowed to do anything, but they just want to make a new religion for themselves, and want to people to accept that religion."*

Nara's narrative resonated with Braidotti's (2011b) "process of ethical transformation" (p. 344). In Nara's case, Nara has been affected by, and her affect is inextricable from, that of her peers and other marginalised people. Even so, Nara was upset about the situation in her home country, especially because of limited rights, belief, ways of life, as well as a lack of social security, and further, a sense of guilt is involved. The latter two issues are involved in Nara's story, for example, when she contemplated her friend's living conditions: "*cause she is my best friend but I cannot help her and I can't do anything for her"*. Despite these elements and a sense of guilt, Nara was 'being faithful' to herself and to her negative experiences, while resisting and negotiating with the dominating forces (Braidotti, 2011b).

The faithfulness, resistance, and negotiation with dominance is framed under a notion of ""faithfulness" of the subject" (Braidotti, 2011b, p. 306) where Nara is situated interdependently with her peers and other marginalised people. Such a notion is the core of

nomadic ethics that is associated "with the awareness of one's condition of interaction with others" (Braidotti, 2011b, pp. 306-307) as a pathway to affect and be affected by others so as to sustain other lives.

Nara's embodiment is one among other stories voiced by my participants. These embodiments intersect with the notion of interdependency while encountering domination. My participants' lives are part of the affirmative flow embodied in the posthuman stance. They 'heard' and narrated other displaced women's stories which were different from the discourse of trauma and transformation. My participant's hearing practice opened new possibilities for me to 'hear' and tell their relational and interdependent stories differently from scholars who engage with conventional psychology through pathologizing the impacts of living a very tough life or the struggles of living 'just a life'.

The multiple, different sets of material and affective assemblages that emerged from Nara's and Raya's lived experiences of struggle vexes us as health professionals and researchers when we reflect on how displaced women's struggles are dynamic. Such dynamism implicates an ongoing transformation which can guide us to shift our understanding of certain sets of clinical interventions to sustain others, from prescribed intervention to everyday ongoing interventions that are related to and beyond the clinic. Such dynamism emerges from the process of refiguring our subject formations away from universal subjects, embedded within the discourse of trauma related to victims and vulnerability. Subjectivity, in reality, is not reduced and restricted to individuals but is part of a process of co-operative effort, involving positive-affirmative logic that flows across to displace binaries (Braidotti, 2019b).

To become minoritarian, we (health professionals and researchers) have been affected by the pains of marginalised others, such as the conditions, joys and hardships faced by Nara's peers, Raya's family members and other people treated unjustly by a fundamentalist group. Our affection is intersected with a compassionate ethics of care. When facing issues of violence: my participants (and I) stay with the trouble, resisting, while encountering and entangling with dominant forces, albeit differently. When my participants have stayed with trouble, their stances guide me to recognise that this is part of an affirmative, productive and positive flow in exploring and implementing "yet-unexplored alternatives" (Braidotti, 2022, p. 10). We (my participants and I) implement alternative ways to tell their stories so as to process their negative experiences differently.

Raya's second story

Raya extends her alternative views towards how women resist fundamentalist groups in her home country. Raya gifted me to think with women in her country as Raya thinks with them that *"they need to stand for themselves. They need to say no"*. Raya put herself in their position as collectiveness or togetherness, as she said, *"they don't have any other options but still if they get together, I think the world must be much more easier, for them and their life"*.

In terms of togetherness, she meant that women can *"stand up together and go and talk to [the fundamentalist group]"*, so *"they might be able to do something for them. And not just protesting"*. Rather, women can be 'faithful', by negotiating their desires with the fundamentalist group, for example, *"say, hey we do whatever you ask we just want our children to study. We want ourselves to be educated"*. If women do so, Raya said *"I don't think if [a fundamentalist group] would say no because they are also human they also have their own children and family"*. Such a narrative can represent the notion of faithfulness where women stand up for not only themselves and their children but also inter-relate with other human beings including fundamentalists. Fundamental groups as well as women and their children are relationally affected by the geo-politics of the country where they live: *"of course [the fundamentalist group] don't want their own family to be illiterate to not being able to study. As just because the way that the country has developed like since back maybe 10 years or something"*.

Her analysis has advanced my understanding of how individualism can be rejected through relational-intersectional-posthuman notions of an ethics of care that involves faithfulness of oneself, interdependency, ethical subjects, materialist vital ethics, and just a life. In line with the relational notions embedded within posthuman stances, hidden complexities emerge and are not tied rigidly with the negative logics of trauma-related mental health disorders and oppression but move towards affirmative possibilities. Raya, for example, had been affected by others and found alternative ways to imagine, embedded in compassion, to consider different possible actions and desires rather than following through to protest as a normative form of political practice.

Raya's subject formation shifted from individuals (or victimised, universal subjects) to relational subjects (or subject as assemblages), and I am part of this subject. Braidotti (2022) argues that humans are being refigured. After hearing Raya's story, as well those of my other

participants, I connected with their ranges of lived movement through Braidotti's (2011b) insight:

> Paradoxically enough, it is those who have already cracked up a bit, those who have suffered pain and injury, that are better placed to take the lead in the process of ethical transformation. Their "better quality" consists not in the fact of having been wounded but of having gone through the pain. Because they are already on the other side of some existential divide, they are anomalous in some way—but in a positive way (p. 344).

We (my participants and I) learned about the becoming of a "better quality" of life for displaced women as I conveyed meaningful stories, which were narrated collectively and differently from the dominant trauma discourse. Even though we are entangled within the historical status quo, we keep moving towards "the collective construction of social horizons of hope" through the composition of subject as assemblages (Braidotti, 2019b, p. 41). In effect, what I have learned is that displaced women's lived struggles are intertwined with these three relational assemblages that are dynamic: shame-guilt-affective assemblages, cultural assemblages and secular/postsecular assemblages. We keep negotiating through different and multiple sets of relations and I am part of these relations that increase our relational capacities for resistance and negotiation in unequal social power relations. When the life I inhabit is not mine, I am taking responsibility to sustain others (displaced women/displaced people/a missing people) so as to sustain myself in a dynamic network of connections and becoming. I am responsible to tell and retell stories, which emerge from the process of refiguring the three relational notions of subject, trauma and transformation.

The three relational notions above have historically been centred on processes of pathologisation and categorisation and associated with negative logics but can be ontologically and politically refigured. In the substantive sense, displaced participants shed light on ways in which alternative ontologies, knowledges and practices have allowed movement and change towards affirmative, productive, and positive ethics, not to mention power imbalance and social justice.

Chapter 6: Can ‘we’ be called in (and out) together through displaced women’s everyday ‘just a life’?

My research journey began with hearing and *withnessing* the painful stories of geographically displaced peers at a local English school in 2019. I followed a posthumanist, relational ethics together with Braidotti’s (2010) process of working by heart and by memory to connect with these painful stories; to critique the existing literature on subject, trauma and transformation; and to co-produce knowledge with displaced women grounded upon their politics of location, contextual live experiences and potentials that are assembled in their everyday understanding. My research question emerged in full as: *How do displaced women experience and transform their situated struggles through both relational disruptions and capacities and what relational contexts are involved?*

I conversed with five displaced women in places where they felt most comfortable, sometimes at their homes, gardens; and some allowed me to walk and talk and accompany them as they went about their day. The stories that they gifted enabled me to stay ‘with the trouble’, opening new lines of flight or any unknowns for different and diverse ways of knowing and understanding through the process of becoming with displaced women.

My research journey through literature, theory, analysis and discussion, was zigzagging, unsettling and exhausting at times. Through this process, I became entangled with how my subject was formed through my own subjectification. Every now and then I reshaped how I knew and understood the women who accompanied me, as I realised that old patterns of oppression were limiting potentials, theirs and mine.

A unique hearing practice encouraged me to enable an emergent process of methodological inquiry, informing an analytic process articulated within the women’s everyday contexts, unknown and/or silenced through a dominant discourse of trauma. This hearing practice challenged me and shifted my understandings as I co-produced knowledge with the women. Such a practice was not only meaningful in strengthening relational-affirmative ethics throughout the research process but is also ongoing in my everyday life: for resisting stereotypes, prejudices and assumptions that are embedded within dominant knowledge production and practice.

The emergence of unknowns facilitated the mapping out of assembled relations with different networks involving a more than human world, situated and embedded within dynamic and heterogeneous non-humans in assembling subjects with human relations, to advance our understanding of how the women were embodied, engaged and transformed through unequal social power relations. The different networks of such a more than human assembly act as affirmative forces in enfolding diverse new lines of flight related to the women's lived stories and experiences. The process of thinking with one of the women in relation to her notion of a tough life led me to think with the notion of lived struggle that emerged from the majority of the women's stories. Both notions led me to explore the dynamic power relations embedded within their everyday struggles. This dynamic process revealed how the women withstood their struggles even when facing multiple forms of oppression. Such narratives indicated that they were relational subjects, interdependent with the lives and the safety of others and were not subjects who became victims of reified 'master narratives'. Their subjective relationality opened another unknown that was related to the Deleuzian (1997) notion of 'just a life' which communicated how their lives were involved in everyday negotiation and resistance as they transformed their unequal power relations in a dynamic way.

The larger notions of subject, trauma and transformation were refigured as embedded in the storied situations, affects and embodiments that emerged from the unknowns in relation to socio-historical contexts and geo-political localities across time. These unknowns shed light on the women's everyday 'just a life' situations which may be interpreted as small, mundane and unimportant in the light of dominant understandings in psychology informed through reductionism and individual difference. Nevertheless, when 'just a life' situations are interwoven with different forms of everyday struggles including language difficulties, feelings of disassociation with workmates and diasporic groups, normative-stereotypical understandings of single motherhood, and with normative ways of raising children in New Zealand, a combination of situated and contextual lived experiences emerge, impacting on the relational interconnected aspects of their lives, and compelling the women and their diaspora to live their lives individually rather than collectively.

Additionally, the women's stories unravelled normative understanding of shame and perspectives related to cultural and religious practice, interconnected with the discourse of trauma. The construct of shame has diverse characteristics in accordance with the different contexts of the women and could not be reduced to one singular understanding. Differences

and multiplicities among the women's stories led me to refigure the notions of shame, culture and religion into shame-guilt-affective assemblages, cultural assemblages and postsecular assemblages. These assemblages are dynamically intertwined with lived experiences.

The women were in the process of becoming with others when encountering normalisation, pathologisation and devaluation through a network of human and non-human assemblages. The lives they inhabit are not isolated and individualised but are interdependent with others in order that their lives can be sustained and vice versa. Through networks where relational displaced woman subjects are dynamically situated, unequal power relations manifest and keep moving through the displaced women's everyday negotiation and resistance. The women enacted affirmative ethics in their everyday lives, prioritising subject formations as assemblages, working through confrontation with and transformation of everyday 'just a life'. They are the knowers of their own experience that is related to their everyday lived struggles, related to a tough life, bad life, good life, happy life, their humanness, their differences and their desires for justice. Their stories offered alternative, more embracing meanings compared to the dominant discourse of clinical trauma, moving away from the narrow and individualised pathologisation involved in clinical models, diagnoses and interventions. The new meanings, instead, challenge the existing ontologies, knowledges and practices that are produced through dualism, eurocentrism and colonialism and are embedded in the discipline of psychology. Substantively, these new meanings enabled the women's experiences, together with their unrealised potentials, desires and imagination to be recognised and respected. A consequence is that negative experiences categorised as trauma and shame can be understood, processed and transformed differently, enabling different pathways for relational interventions where the women's stories of their experiences can be heard and unequal power relations can be mobilised ethically and politically.

Despite my research journey being a troubling and challenging process, it was rewarding, exciting, and transformative. I believe that the theoretical-methodological approach that emerged through co-creation with the women can be undertaken to work with the excluded, dehumanised, sexualised, and pathologised others in psychology, in other research areas and with new research themes through a consideration of decolonising processes. It can be utilised in multiple ways that enable various processes of becoming to emerge in accordance with the situated knowledges and practices of everyday life, affection, negotiation and accountability, in an interdependent way: potentially opening up manifold opportunities for

undoing our humanness and activating our ongoing commitments and responsibilities. While the use of this approach can be an ongoing journey for disrupting old patterns of thought, this approach can navigate different ways of knowing and resistance so that we can serve those multiple others in gaining powers of discursive representation for social justice and transformation through decolonisation in our everyday life.

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Appendix A: Ethics approval documents

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

Displacement, women's experiences of struggles and transformation

INFORMATION SHEET

Introduction

Tēnā koe. My name is Dolruedee (Ruedee) Kramnaimuang King. I am conducting this research for the fulfillment of requirements for a Master of Arts degree, under the supervision of Dr Ann Rogerson from the School of Psychology, Massey University, Palmerston North. I have been working as a Community Support Worker for the past 2 years. I am also a migrant and have experiences of struggles.

Invitation

You are invited to take part in a research project to understand your experiences of refugee migration for women in our community. You will have received this information sheet from a trusted community member that I trust if they feel that you fit the criteria and you may be interested in being a part of my research project and sharing your story with me.

If you are a refugee woman over 18 years old, currently living in the Manawatu Region and feel comfortable speaking English, you are most welcome to take part. You can also bring a support person or persons with you if you would like to when we have our conversations together.

Research project:

Refugee women's experiences have often been interpreted in research as mental health distress, rather than a response to diverse and complex histories and struggles. This means women's experiences of their own transformation is missing in our research. My research recognises that, as women, we are from diverse backgrounds, and we have our own knowledge based on our situations and experiences. I would like to hear your stories of struggles, strength, and transformation so that they can be recognised, respected, and collectively told.

Our meetings will be conversational and if you have photos, images, art or objects you would like to share with me, we can talk about them also if you would like to. Our conversations will be recorded to ensure that your voices are heard, unless you would prefer that I just take notes. When I have gathered all of the stories, I will put them together to tell a

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Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
T +64 6 951 8071 | **F** +64 6 355 7966 | psychology.massey.ac.nz

collective story with all its diversity that will lead to better understandings of a dignified response to refugee women in Aotearoa, NZ.

What this study will involve:

If you decide you want to share your story, please contact me and we will talk through the research project, and any needs you might have, for example, bringing a support person, and cultural considerations. Should you wish to continue, we will organize a time and a place for our conversation to take place. I will ask you to sign a form consenting to participate, before our conversation begins and we begin the recording, or you may prefer to provide me with oral consent. Our conversations may take around an hour, or longer depending on if you wish meet at a place of your choice, such as at Massey University or the Palmerston North Public Library, or you would prefer to meet at your house.

I love to walk and talk so if you are comfortable, an alternative is for me to accompany you on your daily routines such as going for a walk, having a cup of tea, cooking, chatting, and sitting in the park. If you prefer, we can do both.

Talking about your experience of struggle has the possibility to raise thoughts and feelings that may be uncomfortable or distressing, so there will be time at the end of our time together to debrief about how you are feeling. There are also details about support agencies listed on the last page. You can either contact the support agencies directly, or, if you would like me to, I can support you through the process by being present while you call the agencies or offer the use of a phone to do this. Most importantly, if you feel you would like to have further support following our conversation, for example, if you do not wish to contact a support agency directly, or if you like me to contact a support agency on your behalf, I will consult with my supervisor, Dr Ann Rogerson, about process and options that can help us moving forward, and we can discuss the process and options together. I will not be making any direct referrals without your consent.

Project procedures:

If you would like to participate, it is important that you have a clear understanding of the research purpose and process. This will be carefully explained to you at the initial meeting. Participating in this research is confidential, and your privacy will be protected throughout. If you consent, the conversations will be digitally audio recorded and stored in a password-protected format. I will transcribe the conversations myself into a written digital format and you will be offered the opportunity to read, contemplate, discuss and make edits to the transcripts. If you are happy with the transcripts at this point, I will ask you to sign a Transcript Release Form and return the transcripts to me. The choice to participate is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study if you wish up until the transcript release form has been signed. If your circumstances do change after this time, please contact me.

No identifying material will be transferred on to transcripts. You will have the opportunity to choose a pseudonym if you wish, otherwise one will be allocated to you. The

digital audio-recording will be deleted after transcription. Digital notes will be kept in a password protected format until my thesis has been graded at which point the notes will also be destroyed. The consent forms and transcript release forms will be kept securely in a separate location to the transcripts in the School of Psychology, Palmerston North, for a minimum of five years. Only myself and my supervisors will have access to the consent forms, transcripts, notes, and will participate in the analysis of our conversations. Once the research is completed, if you would like me to, I can contact you to discuss the outcome of the research.

Once you have read your transcript if you wish to be recorded, or, once you have read your notes if you do not wish to be recorded, I will meet with you to discuss any changes you might make, or any thoughts you want to add. If I do not hear back from you after two weeks, then I will get in touch with you to see if everything is okay for you. If you have decided not to take part, for whatever reason, I will make sure that your transcript is not included in the analysis process.

Should participants decline to be recorded, I will seek their consent to take notes during the conversations and will provide them with the notes to review subsequently.

You are welcome to bring a support person or persons, up to two persons, with you to all our meetings together. The support person or persons will also be asked to sign a form which outlines confidentiality and expectations of being a support person.

Limitations of confidentiality

The information obtained in this study will be treated confidentially. However, if you become distressed, we will together make a plan for you to receive support. The process would involve you, and I will remain as a support person until your safety has been established.

Participants' Rights:

Although you have been given this information you are under no obligation to accept the invitation. However, if you would like to participate you have the right to:

- Not discuss any topic or answer any question that you would rather not talk about
- Ask questions regarding the study at any point in the process
- Understand the process thoroughly
- Understand that your name or identifiable information will not be used
- Have time to read, consider, discuss and edit the transcripts prior to analysis
- Ask for the audio tape to be stopped at any point during our conversation
- Have a copy to a summary of the research findings when the research finishes
- Withdraw from the research at any point up until you have signed the release of transcript form
- You are welcome to bring a support person or persons with you to each meeting

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. Participating in this research is voluntary and confidential. The person who gave you the sheet does not need to know if you intend to contact me and I will not tell them who contacts me. If you decide you would like to participate or discuss the research with me in person, please contact me either via email, phone or text and we can arrange an initial meeting, either face to face, phone or Zoom, to talk through the research process.

Ngā mihi nui

Dolruedee (Ruedee) Kramnaimuang King

Researcher Contact details

Dolruedee (Ruedee) Kramnaimuang King: [redacted], dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com

Ann Rogerson: (06) 356 9099, ext. 85052, A.L.Rogerson@massey.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application SOB 22/67. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Gerald Harrison, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 06 356 9099 x 83570, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.

Support Organisations

Need to talk: 1737
This organization offers free call or free text 1737 with a trained counsellor or talk with a peer support workers when you are feeling stressed or just need someone to talk to, feeling down or a bit overwhelmed. While this organization provides support in English, they can connect you with someone from your language of origin. More information can be found at https://1737.org.nz/

Depression Helpline: 0800 543 354 (free 24/7), 4204 (text)
This organisation offers free call and text with a trained counsellor when you are feeling down or worried and that getting through each day is a real struggle. More information can be found at https://depression.org.nz/

Women's Refuge, Palmerston North: 06 3545355 (crisis line, free 24/7)
This organisation provides support and help for women and children experiencing family violence through various advocacy groups including lawyers, Police, Work and Income (WINZ), Oranga Tamariki (OT), District Health Boards (DHB), Housing New Zealand (HNZ), etc. More information can be found at https://pnwomensrefuge.org.nz/

Abuse and Rape Crisis Support, Manawatu: 06 356 5868
This organisation helps women experiencing sexual violence with various services including counselling, social work, ACC sensitive claims therapy, and community education. More information can be found at https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/

Youth One Stop Shops, Palmerston North: 0800 0800 274; 06 3555939
This organisation helps and empowers the young person (aged 10-24 years of age) to make informed choices to enhance their positive well-being and self development. Various services are provided including youth work, counselling, clinical psychologists, health services, and social workers. More information can be found at https://arcsmanawatu.org.nz/

Mental Health foundation
While this organization does not provide a counselling or clinical service, this organisation helps connect individuals with mental health support as well as promoting general mental health and wellbeing. More information can be found at https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/

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TE KURA PŪKENGA TANGATA

Displacement, women's struggles and transformation

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read and I understand the Information Sheet. 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.
2. I agree/do not agree to written notes being taken during the conversation.
3. 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: ___________________________

School of Psychology - Te Kura Hinengaro Tangata
Private Bag 11222, Palmerston North 4442, New Zealand
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Displacement, women's struggles and transformation

RESEARCHER'S RECORD OF ORAL CONSENT FORM

Participant name (or number): ______________________________

Date: ______________________________

Project explained (Yes/No): ______________________________

Conversation recorded or notes taken: ______________________________

Print name of researcher: ______________________________

Signature of researcher: ______________________ Date: ______________________

(Documented in the presence of the participant to confirm oral consent)

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Displacement, women's struggles and transformation

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR SUPPORT PERSONS

I ____ [print full name], agree to keep confidential all information concerning the project: Displacement, women's struggles and transformation.

I will not retain or copy any information involving the project.

Signature: ____________________________________ Date: ____________________

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AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the conversation(s) conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature: ___________________________________ **Date:** __________________

Full Name – printed _____________________________

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Appendix B: Written permissions

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

Seeking permission for using the figure

Iran Wire <info@iranwire.com>
To: Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

3 April 2025 at 04:09

hi there, sure, you can have the permission. Please give IranWire credit.
Regards
IranWire team

On Wed, Apr 2, 2025 at 9:32 AM Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com> wrote:

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

Iranwire
83 Cambridge Street
London SW1V 4PS, United Kingdom

2 April 2025

Dear Samaneh Ghadarkhan and Iranwire team,

My name is Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King. I am a postgraduate student, doing a masters thesis in arts (psychology), at Massey University, New Zealand. My thesis topic is 'Just a life': A feminist posthuman reading, thinking and hearing practice with displaced women's struggles and transformation.

I am using the figure of a Chador in my thesis and I am seeking your permission. I am using the figure to explain the difficulties women might have when they are required to wear a Chador in complex cultural situations. The figure details and a full reference to the work as it appears on page 58 of my thesis are:

Figure 3
A Chador

The claim that Iranian women would choose to wear the most all-encompassing, conservative form of hijab if only they could afford it is periodically promoted by Tehran-aligned news agencies

Note. Linking with this photograph, I was able to see how a chador looks. From "Iranian media: Women oppose forced hijab because 'black chador is too expensive'", by S. Ghadarkhan, 2022, August 8, *Iranwire* (https://iranwire.com/en/women/106436-iranian-media-claims-women-oppose-forced-hijab-because-black-chador-is-too-expensive/).

Reference: Ghadarkhan, S. (2022, August 8). Iranian media: Women oppose forced hijab because 'black chador is too expensive'. *Iranwire*. https://iranwire.com/en/women/106436-iranian-media-claims-women-oppose-forced-hijab-because-black-chador-is-too-expensive/

I would be grateful to receive your permission to use the figure so that it can help me narrate displaced women's voices when wearing a chador.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kind Regards,
Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

Gmail

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

Letter of permission

Wongpun Amarinthewa <wongpun.am@gmail.com> 3 April 2025 at 20:44
To: Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

Dear Khun Dolruedee,

The101.world allows the use of this photo in your thesis.
Hope your thesis is going well. :)

Best Regards,
Wongpun

On Thu, Apr 3, 2025 at 2:54 AM Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com> wrote:

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

Wongpan Amarinteva
The 101. World
83/2 Ari Samphan 1 Alley, Phaholyothin Road,
Phaya Thai, Bangkok 10400, Thailand

3 April 2025

Dear Wongpan Amarinteva,

My name is Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King. I am a postgraduate student, doing a masters thesis in arts (psychology), at Massey University, New Zealand. My thesis topic is 'Just a life': A feminist posthuman reading, thinking and hearing practice with displaced women's struggles and transformation.

I am using the figure of gates or checkpoints in my thesis and I am seeking your permission to include it in my thesis. The figure details and a full reference to the work it appears on my thesis in page 87 are:

Figure 6

Gates or Checkpoints along the Thai Border

Note. From "เรามีหวังเสมอว่าจะได้กลับบ้าน" เสียงจากริมน้ำเมย ชะตากรรมที่เลือกไม่ได้ของผู้หนีภัยกะเหรี่ยง ["We always hope that we can go home", voices from the Moei riverbank, a destiny that cannot be chosen by displaced people who are Karen], by W. Amarinteva, 2022, 30 January, *The 101. World* (https://www.the101.world/mae-sot-karen-refugees/).

> Reference: Amarinteva, W. (2022, 30 January). "เรามีหวังเสมอว่าจะได้กลับบ้าน" เสียงจากริมน้ำเมย ชะตากรรมที่เลือกไม่ได้ของผู้หนีภัยกะเหรี่ยง ["We always hope that we can go home", voices from the Moei riverbank, a destiny that cannot be chosen by displaced people who are Karen]. *The 101. World*. https://www.the101.world/mae-sot-karen-refugees/

I would be grateful to receive your permission so that the figure can help me narrate the complex lived experiences of displaced women and their limited rights.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kind Regards,
Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

Gmail Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

RE: [EXTERNAL] - Letter of permission

Maggie Hedge <Maggie.Hedge@rnz.co.nz> 28 April 2025 at 10:06
To: Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>

Good morning, RNZ grants permission to use the image outlined in your email below. Please ensure it is acknowledged as per your email.

Many thanks

Maggie Hedge

RNZ | L1 31 Dundas Street, | P O Box 1531| Christchurch 8011

maggie.hedge@rnz.co.nz

04 474 1776

From: Dolruedee Kramnaimuang <dolruedeek.earth@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, 25 April 2025 2:19 PM
To: OIA Requests <OIARequests@rnz.co.nz>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Letter of permission

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

RNZ

P O Box 123
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

25 April 2025

Dear the RNZ Official Information Act Requests team,

My name is Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King. I am a postgraduate student, doing a masters thesis in arts (psychology), at Massey University, New Zealand. My thesis topic is 'Just a life': A feminist posthuman reading, thinking and hearing practice with displaced women's struggles and transformation.

I am using the figure of our former Prime Minister wearing a headscarf in my thesis and I am seeking your permission to present it there. I am using the figure to help explain the discourse of 'they are us' and the symbolic acts of residents in supporting displaced women nationally after two mosque shooting events in 2019 in Christchurch.

The figure details and a full reference to the work as they appear on my thesis in page 101 are:

Figure 8

Former Prime Minister Wearing a Headscarf During Condolences

Note. From *Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern Will Be among Leaders Praying Alongside the Muslim Community in Christchurch* by A. Tovey, 2019, *RNZ* (https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/385288/pm-urges-people-to-pay-their-respects-as-nation-mourns). Copyright 2019 by A. Tovey, RNZ.

Reference: Tovey, A. (2019, March 21). *Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern will be among leaders praying alongside the Muslim community in Christchurch* [Photograph]. PM urges people to pay their respects as nation mourns. *RNZ*. https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/385288/pm-urges-people-to-pay-their-respects-as-nation-mourns.

I would be grateful to receive your permission so that the figure can help me narrate the complex lived experiences of displaced people.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kind Regards,

Dolruedee Kramnaimuang King

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